



# CHARM Newsletter

Annual newsletter

Issue 1 (May 2005)

**C**CHARM (the AHRC - formerly AHRB - Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music) came into being on 1 April 2004, so this Newsletter looks back on our first year of activity. A partnership of Royal Holloway, University of London, King's College London, and the University of Sheffield, CHARM is funded through a five-year grant from the AHRC, and its principal activities include a major on-line discographical project, a series of specialist symposia, and a portfolio of recordings-related research projects. In this newsletter you'll find some features about all of these, together with a short article 'The CHARM offensive' (reprinted from the RMA Newsletter) which sets out the context of CHARM's work, some details of other staff activities, and some views from experts in the study of recordings about the development of our field. For details of CHARM please visit our website at <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk>, where you can register with us to be informed of upcoming events – and next year's newsletter!

## WHO WE ARE

CHARM's staff consists of

- Carol Chan (Royal Holloway, Centre Coordinator)
- Nicholas Cook (Royal Holloway, Director)
- Eric Clarke (Sheffield, Associate Director)
- Andrew Earis (Royal Holloway, Software consultant from September 2005)
- Francis Knights (Kings College, Discography Project Manager)
- Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King's College, Associate Director)
- David Patmore (Sheffield, Research Fellow)
- John Rink (Royal Holloway, Associate Director)
- Craig Sapp (Royal Holloway, Research Fellow from September 2005)
- Renee Timmers (Kings College, Research Fellow)

You can find more about us at <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/staff/staff.html>. In addition to our own staff, CHARM's work is supported by a Management Committee (<http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/structure/mc.html>), Academic Advisory Board (<http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/structure/aab.html>) and International Advisory Panel (<http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/structure/iap.html>). Our thanks to all those who contribute to CHARM's success through their membership of these groups.

## COUNTDOWN TO CHARM

A mere seven months after its inception, CHARM received its official launch in the swanky surrounds of the Franklin Wilkins building, King's College London, on 18 November 2004. Bypassing the dazzling, neon-lit reception area and avoiding the strange architectural pillars and hordes of bustling students, the CHARM launch was a no less colourful affair attracting an audience of over 70. Attending the launch were academics, publishers, producers, performers, journalists and writers, and students: a real hotchpotch of individuals from different backgrounds all with an interest in CHARM—and maybe even the prospect of wine, *gratis!*

Nicholas Kenyon (CHARM Academic Advisory Board member as well as Controller of BBC Proms, Live Events and Classical Music Television) kicked off the affair with a CHARM-ing speech that emphasized the centrality of recordings in today's musical culture, followed by five minutes on the stand from David Sweeney, who is Chair of the CHARM Management Committee as well as a Vice-Principal at Royal Holloway. Next there were presentations from Nigel Llewellyn (AHRC and University of Sussex) and Nicholas Cook (Director of CHARM). Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, who is one of the Associate Directors, then whetted the crowd's appetite with a sample of CHARM's research, hinting at some of the things to come. Timothy Day (CHARM Academic Advisory Board Chair and in his spare time Curator of Classical Music at the British Library Sound Archive) rounded up the formal roll

of speakers before everyone made a beeline for the canapés.

All in all the launch was a hugely satisfactory affair providing like-minded individuals the chance to mingle and to add to the buzz about CHARM: we hope you're as excited as we are!

*Carol Chan (Royal Holloway, University of London)*

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## THE CHARM WEB PROJECT

*If we want to study recordings we have to be able to find them. At the moment that means searching through thousands of separate publications, most of them out of print. CHARM is gathering together existing discographies and publishing them on the web to create a single integrated online discography that is easy to use for anyone who wants to trace recordings.*

At the heart of the CHARM discography are the Gramophone Company catalogues and matrix lists assembled by Alan Kelly from the original company files. Kelly's generosity, providing us with copies of his work undertaken as a labour of love over many decades, is key to the whole project. And other collectors and specialists have increasingly been offering us their work as well. Over the

next four years we hope to attract still more, so that by the end of the funded phase of CHARM we should have a wide-ranging database of recordings made around the world throughout the 78 era (roughly 1898-1958), and into the age of LPs (1948 onwards—there was an overlap of around a decade when music was issued on both formats).

One of CHARM's first actions was to appoint a highly qualified Project Coordinator, Francis Knights, who has spent more than a year finding, preparing and formatting discographical data. So far we have dealt mainly with data already in electronic form—typically Word or Excel files. In these cases Francis has had to regularise the layout of each file line by line; he estimates that he's done around 18,000 pages so far, including the Italian, German, French, Russian and (part) English HMV catalogues, along with Alan Kelly's introductions to each. Then the files are passed on to Juan Garces at King's College's Centre for Computing in the Humanities (CCH): Juan writes software routines that automatically encode the material using XML markup (this is like HTML markup except that the codes indicate semantic categories, for instance artist, date, catalogue number, or matrix number). This approach is in line with many other current ICT-based projects in the humanities and offers significant advantages in terms of both flexibility of output and future-proofing. Once marked up, the data can be published in many different forms, both printed and electronic. At the moment we're generating HTML from the XML for purposes of conventional website publication; but in due course CCH will be adding a full search facility—so that it will function like a conventional database or library catalogue—and in the future there's no reason why the same XML-tagged data shouldn't be used to issue the discography in other forms, in ways yet to be imagined.

A trial website went live in November 2004 (<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/music/charm/index.html>), including part of the HMV Italian Catalogue and around 100 Schubert song recordings, supplemented by label scans, and has attracted valuable feedback. The rest of the Italian Catalogue, together with additional data generously given us by Michael Gray (matrix lists gathered over many years from European libraries and archives) and Karsten Lehl (a discography of Schubert songs on 78rpm disc), is expected to go live in June 2005.

Thanks to the decision to use XML, and to the expertise provided by CCH, progress has been unexpectedly rapid, and collaborations with other organisations have been both more numerous and more fruitful than we had dared hope. Among others, Jonathan Brown has shared with us his Wagner discographies, and James Evison a lute discography. Historic Masters (which among other things reissues historical recordings on vinyl discs) has provided additional files, shared the results of their own checking, and donated books, printed discographies and recordings. The EMI Archive is exploring ways in which its cataloguing resources can be shared with CHARM and vice versa, and other collaborations are also under discussion. As all this suggests, response to CHARM within the discographical community has been extremely favourable and very encouraging.

But the CHARM web project is not just about discography. We shall also be providing study materials, historical information, introductions to playing and transferring 78s, software for performance analysis, and links to as many other useful materials on the web as we can find – and there are a lot, as you'll see from the item in this newsletter on Peter Laszlo's work. Among other things that will be going live on the website during summer 2005 are a series of interlinked pages written for us by Roger Beardsley, whose kindness to CHARM is going to become legendary – as I write he is busy making a digital speed control for our newly-acquired EMT turntable. His

pages will look at ways in which the history of recording technology affects what we hear from early recordings, at transfer techniques, and at the equipment you need to do it yourself.

If anything about the web project makes us nervous it's how we're going to keep it small enough for Francis to manage. Even so, if you have data that you'd like us to consider publishing we'd be delighted to hear from you.

*Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King's College London)*

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## WRITING THE HISTORY OF RECORDING, 1925-32

The contribution of Sheffield University to CHARM brings together two relatively young disciplines, those of analyzing sound recordings and of business history, so as to examine in depth the interrelationship between commercial and cultural activity. More precisely, we will be studying classical recording between 1925 and 1932, principally—although not exclusively—in the UK. During this period two key factors played a vital role. The first was the introduction of electrical recording, a technology that completely changed the market for sound recordings by improving the sound quality available to domestic listeners, in turn stimulating commercial recording and generating major growth in the market. The second was the competition between the two major companies that dominated the market in the UK and Europe: fired up by the new recording technology, this resulted in intense commercial rivalry.

The market at this time was dominated by the Columbia Graphophone Company and The Gramophone Company (better known as His Master's Voice, its leading label). The competition between them had a hot-house effect on recording and hence artistic activity: both companies actively sought to record the most outstanding artists performing the mainstream repertory, as well as much else. Columbia in particular, under the leadership of Louis Sterling (who had purchased the American Columbia recording company in 1925 specifically to exploit the new electrical technology), became extraordinarily ambitious in its promotion of classical music.

An illustration of this entrepreneurial approach was Columbia's decision in 1927 to launch an ambitious programme of recordings of music by Beethoven, to mark the centenary of his death. This was so successful that the following year a similar project was launched to mark the death of Schubert, which included a competition for the first piece of music to be commissioned specifically for the gramophone: the winning work—Kurt Atterberg's Sixth Symphony—was recorded and available for sale at its first public performances. The period of competition between these companies came to an end with the slump following the stock market crash of 1929. Sales of recordings collapsed and Columbia was forced to merge in 1931/2 with The Gramophone Company to form EMI, which then exerted an effective monopoly in this market until after the Second World War.

This unusual and extremely intense period of activity in recording history allows for the detailed study of the impact of technological and commercial factors upon the musical life of the time, and upon its preservation through the sound recording process: this will inform the detailed studies of performance style being undertaken by the other projects within the CHARM portfolio. But we also hope to address the crucial question of why certain musicians and styles were well represented in the record catalogues while others were not and as a consequence have more or less disappeared from the recorded history of performance.

Some musicians were comfortable with the constraints of the recording process; others, often with different performing styles, found it difficult to come to terms with the processes of recording. It is the former whose approaches to performance are now regarded as representative of the period in question, but this may give a distorted picture of the performance culture of the time. In practical terms we shall contrast musicians who accommodated their performance styles to the requirements of recording with those who did not: for instance, in Chopin performance, the somewhat eccentric pianist Pachmann is much less well represented in recordings than his more commercially acceptable contemporary Rubinstein, while in the case of Schubert the same applies to Henschel in relation to Hüscher. Among orchestral conductors Weingartner, who achieved world-wide fame through recording, will be compared with Knappertsbusch, who remained uncomfortable with recording throughout his life: did their contrasting styles reflect or condition their contrasted relationships to recording?

Our project, 'Recording and performance style', will bring into focus the commercial strategies of record companies and their influence on the musical performances, both live and recorded. It is all too easy to regard the recorded legacy as a representation of historical performance styles—in other words to take the evidence of recordings too much at face value. The more complex and interesting possibility is that commercial and technological factors have played a highly significant role in shaping the very history of performance that recordings have been assumed to represent. By definition, recordings embody only the history of *recorded* performances—but the performances that made it onto record represent only a small subset of the performances and performance styles that were around at the time, and almost certainly not a representative one. The Sheffield project will investigate just what the impact of technological and commercial selection may have been on that pool

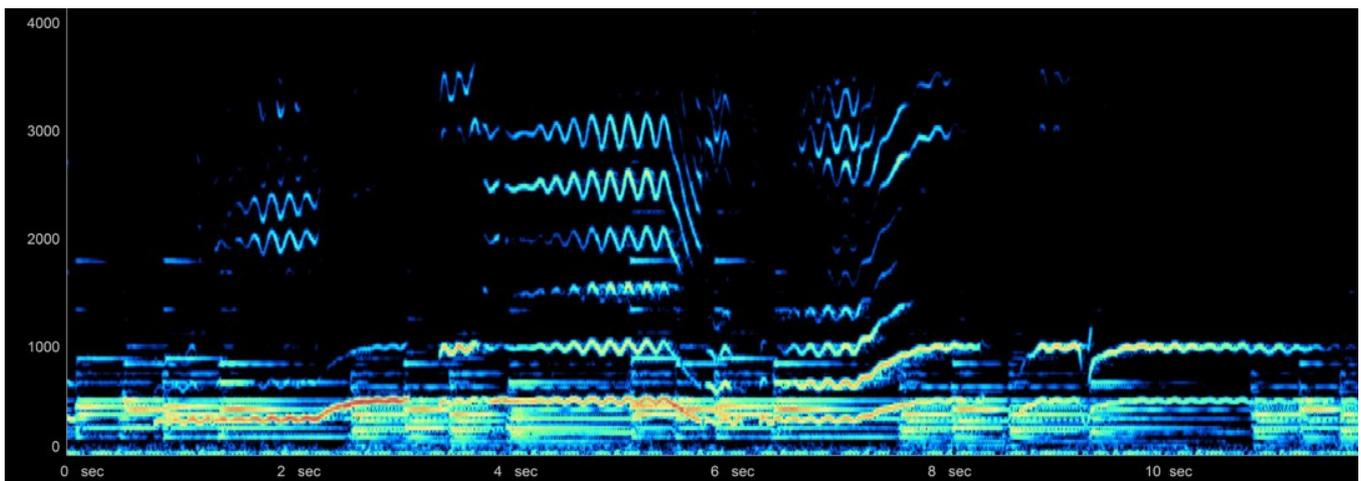
of performance styles, what it was that made certain attitudes to or styles of performance, recording-friendly—and the impact this has had on what we now think of as the history of twentieth-century performance.

David Patmore and Eric Clarke (University of Sheffield)

## ON EXPRESSIVE SINGING

Musical performances communicate something, often powerfully, but what, and how? There's a lot of interesting research by experimental psychologists into the ways in which we respond to sounds around us, to speech, and especially to music; and it sheds fascinating light on what happens to us when we hear a moving performance, and on what performers do to make one. In the CHARM project 'Expressive gesture and style in Schubert song performance' we're looking at recordings of Schubert songs to see how the psychologists' findings can help us understand expressive singing. One thing they've tended to overlook is that performance style changes. The way singers are expressive with Schubert now is quite different from the way they were 50 or 100 years ago, and since we have recordings we can study just how much has changed, and try to find out why. Another factor to consider is that recordings themselves may misrepresent what singers do, either because the sound quality is so poor (early recordings) or because they've been so heavily edited (since the tape was introduced in the late 40s, and even more so now it can all be done digitally). So our project has to consider all these issues, and try to isolate them and study their effects.

At the moment we're focusing on the sounds singers make at particularly expressive moments, so that we can see what may be causing the things we feel as listeners. Take as an example—which you can hear at <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/resources/2005soundclip.mp3> — Elena Gerhardt singing her child to sleep in Schubert's *Schlaflied* ('Lullaby') D527: 'Und ist von jedem Schmerz geheilt' ('And, [in sleep, he] is cured of every pain'). The horizontal axis in the spectrogram of this passage shows time; the vertical axis shows frequency, and the most prominent features are the different overtones of Gerhardt's voice, with the V-shaped patterns representing vibrato and the glides (e.g. before 6 and 8 seconds) representing portamento.



Gerhardt's portamento is extreme, even for her and her time (the recording was made in 1928), but it makes perfect sense as a sung representation of what the psychologists call motherese – baby talk. Motherese, or parentese as people are beginning to say, has similar characteristics in all cultures (something that not all current musicologists will feel comfortable to hear), and functions as a means for infants and caregivers to establish loving communication. You can hardly use it in a performance of art song without it awakening all sorts of powerful associations; and indeed this performance is very remarkable and moving. It makes a telling contrast with more recent recordings by Janet Baker and Elly Ameling, for whom period taste makes portamento on this scale impossible. Instead, they focus on expressive words, especially 'Schmerz' – not a word one emphasizes in lullabies if one wants one's child to feel good – so that their performances are inevitably less engaging and more adult.

All sorts of fascinating questions are raised by an example like this – far too many to mention here – but it gives a hint of just how rich recordings can be as subjects for discussion once one gets down to the details of what performers do. You can hear the whole performance, in a clearer though less cleaned up transfer, at <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/music/ksa/Cc12964-2.mp3>. Later on we plan to do some experimental work on the influence that sound quality has on perceptions of expressivity: does all that hissing and scratching on 78s hinder or (as some enthusiasts believe) does it help?

We're very fortunate to have, in the King's sound archive, a lot of early Schubert song recordings to work on, and thanks to the generosity of singer, collector and Schubert discographer Karsten Lehl we are receiving a great many more. As time permits, more will be appearing on the website ([http://maple.cc.kcl.ac.uk/ps/charm/web/content/schubert\\_songs/index.html](http://maple.cc.kcl.ac.uk/ps/charm/web/content/schubert_songs/index.html)). We hope people will download files freely, and perhaps come to their own conclusions about how expressive singing works.

A first study from this research project, by Renee Timmers, analyzing some characteristic expressive gestures used by singers of Schubert's *Die junge Nonne* ('The Young Nun'), D828, will appear on the website quite soon.

*Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King's College London)*

## THE CHARM SYMPOSIA

Expertise on recordings is dispersed among musicologists, performers, producers, recording engineers, collectors, archivists, and many others: the purpose of CHARM's specialist seminars is to bring together these experts to share their knowledge. Our **first symposium**, held at the Royal Holloway campus in Egham on 14-16 April 2005, was entitled 'Comparative perspectives in the study of recordings' and attracted 39 delegates; it included a session held jointly with the British Federation of Ethnomusicology and chaired by Keith Howard, the Director of our sister centre (the AHRC Research Centre for Cross-Cultural Music and Dance Performance). The purpose of this initial symposium was to open up the field by contrasting the different ways in which different musicologists (of Western 'art' music, popular music, and world music) work with recordings, as well as counterpointing these with perspectives from interdisciplinary performance studies. A full report, by Cecilia Wee, will be available on our website in July, and we shall also be placing the texts of the papers (together with sound clips where possible) in a web archive.

Our **second symposium** will take place on 17-18 September 2005 in central London and will form a strand of an international conference entitled 'The Art of Record Production'; this is being organized by Thames Valley University and the University of Westminster in collaboration with CHARM (<http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/events/symp2call.html>). The CHARM strand is entitled 'Towards a musicology of production' and will feature presentations from producers, performers, and musicologists spanning the worlds of popular and 'art' music: speakers will include, among others, Albin Zak, Andrew Blake, Colin Lawson, Paschall de Paor, Serge Lacasse, Simon Frith, and Timothy Day. With the development of tape, multitracking, and hard disc recording, production has become increasingly more important in determining the nature of the final product, but musicologists have

been slow to recognize the creative role of the producer in the age of recording: the aim of this symposium is to contribute to putting this right.

The **third symposium** is scheduled for 20-22 April 2006 and will be held at Egham; it will focus on the issues of transfer and interpretation presented by early recordings. For most people, period recordings are accessed through CD or, more recently, web-based reissues. Despite the enormous value of these reissues in spreading interest in these recordings, from the musicologist's point of view working with reissues is rather like studying composers' sketches from microfilm: transfers of the same original disc can vary enormously according to the transfer engineer's judgements about speed of rotation, what kind of stylus to use, equalization, and so forth, as well as the use of

noise reduction techniques. You can't really do serious research on recordings unless you understand these factors and so know what it is that you're actually studying. As usual, however, the problem is that relevant knowledge is split up between different experts (in this case transfer engineers, historians of technology, psychologists, and musicologists), and the aim of the symposium is to bring these experts together.

CHARM plans to hold three further symposia, in addition to a major international conference scheduled for 2007/08. Symposium topics have not yet been finalized but are likely to include the issues involved in writing histories of performance on the basis of recordings; the social, institutional, and commercial contexts of the production and consumption of recordings; and new techniques for the analysis of recordings, this last topic reporting, among other things, on the work carried out within CHARM's own research projects. To keep abreast of CHARM's programme of symposia visit <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/content/events/events.html> or, better still, register to be alerted of upcoming events.

*Nicholas Cook (Royal Holloway, University of London)*

# SMA STUDY DAY REPORT

## Representing performance: musical recordings in culture

*Study Day, hosted by CHARM and sponsored by the Society for Music Analysis, held on 30 October 2004 at Royal Holloway, University of London*

CHARM's first Study Day offered valuable new perspectives on the study of recordings, and a glimpse of the promise of future CHARM events. Contributions spanned practical and theoretical approaches to working with recordings. The inherently interdisciplinary nature of CHARM's business was also underlined in a number of papers dealing with recorded music and the visual. The day's proceedings displayed the vitality and breadth within the subject of recordings. Contributors and delegates alike shared an excitement born of a sense of exploration into scarcely researched areas. The day was crowned with a round-table discussion led by a panel from the Music Producers Guild who introduced their plans to start an archive of record production.

*In order to create a sound that the western market for world music will recognize as 'authentic', producers employ techniques alien to indigenous recording traditions such as bass compression and close microphone placement.*

Elizabeth Eva Leach's paper dealt with the anxieties of recordings. Working on the evidence of early twentieth-century responses to recorded sound, she argued that, with the audience's loss of access to performers, music was robbed of its sense of community. Comparing this process with the dawn of musical literacy in Medieval Europe, when song became 'writerly' instead of 'singerly', she cast new light on our understanding of recordings as performances. Naomi Waltham-Smith was similarly concerned with the risk of technological interference, which she understood to be extracting something uniquely 'musical' from musical experience. Drawing on a range of Foucauldian and Lacanian insights, she gave a guided tour of the virtual-reality prison in which YoYo Ma is seen playing on his 1997 DVD.

Charles Wiffen reflected on the problems attached to linking the manicured sound of a studio recording with film images. Referring to the same YoYo Ma film and a DVD of Fatboy Slim performing to an immense crowd on the beach at Brighton, he observed that while visual clues are given to remind the viewer that a performance is being shown, film and sound lead entirely different lives in the construction of the final product. The music we see being made is not necessarily what we are hearing. This complicated relation between diegetic music (music we can see being made on the film) and non-diegetic music (such as underscore) resonated with much that Aiden O'Donnell said in his paper about the film *Orchestral Rehearsal*. In this quasi-Dadaist drama, music is cast as a force of oppression. Because the soundtrack and the visual film were recorded at different times, the viewer is left with yet another layer of dislocation to deal with. Notions of continuity, a major theme of Wiffen's talk, also featured prominently in Uri Golomb's paper on televising the Bach Passions. Drawing on two productions aired on German television in the 1970s, he highlighted links between performing style and visual imagery. He emphasised moments during chorales when the text was displayed, as if to invite the viewer to take part, and other more overtly dramatic film techniques.

Stephen Cottrell delved into personal experience to give an account of recording sessions in terms of their social dynamics. Backed by examples from recordings in which he had been involved, Cottrell discussed how recordings are affected by events during the recording process. Neil Heyde, on the other hand, explored what recordings do not record about the way the music they carry was made. After making reference to the opinions of the Kolisch Quartet, Arnold Schoenberg and Glenn Gould, Heyde proposed a parliamentary model for the way in which recordings are made: performers act as the lower, executive house, whose decision is ultimately final, while producers scrutinise in the manner of an upper house. Simon Zagorski-Thomas exposed the illusion of authenticity in world music records: in order to create a sound that the western market for world music will recognize as 'authentic', producers employ techniques alien to indigenous recording traditions such as bass compression and close microphone placement. His amply illustrated paper showed how indigenous recordings sound inauthentic to western ears because of their overt use of modern sound technology, notably synthesisers.

The round-table panel from the Guild of Music Producers, chaired by Jim Barrett, focused on the role of production in the creative process that starts with musical sound and ends with the recorded product. Their starting point was the way in which performers traditionally take exclusive credit for the creative input into recordings. Each panel member in turn demonstrated different ways in which producers make creative contributions: Mike Howlett described the producer as a performer; Andy East talked about the producer's task of interpreting the artist; Mark Irwin illustrated the role of production in live contexts; Pip Williams discussed the collaborative approaches between bands and producers; and Paschall de Paor portrayed the studio as an instrument in itself. Apart from providing delegates with a sorely needed education in the principles of record production, the panel explained their own agenda. In the ensuing discussion the panel referred to a planned archive of production materials, to be coordinated by the Guild of Music Producers. This development was widely

welcomed, given the difficulties that currently face scholars wanting to research record production. Elsewhere in discussion it was agreed that sound production can make a strong claim to better representation on general undergraduate music courses—though financial constraints have unfortunately been a deterrent to efforts in this direction. While the panellists' call for greater public and professional recognition was widely welcomed, their plea for better remuneration probably never reached those in a position to do something about it.

*Jonathan Tyack (Royal Holloway, University of London)*

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## DISCOGRAPHIC TRAINING

One of CHARM's aims is to build up research capacity in recorded music for the future, and for this reason research training is firmly on our agenda. All prospective music PhDs get bibliographical training, but discographical training is practically unknown: if the study of recorded performances is going to become an integral part of musicology, that is going to have to change.

An opportunity to do something about this arose when the AHRC (then AHRB) approved an application from a group of London-based institutions to establish a national research skills training programme for doctoral students in music. (The institutions in question are the British Library, Goldsmiths College, King's College London, the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, and SOAS, together with Royal Holloway as coordinating institution; details may be found at <http://www.music.training.rhul.ac.uk/index.html>.) The scheme lasts for two years from 2004/05, and the programme includes a number of distinct modules ranging from oral history to digital musicology.

One of these modules is 'The development, use and interpretation of discographic sources', and in

2004/05 it consisted of three two-hour sessions coordinated by Amanda Glauert (RAM) and covering as many aspects of the study of recordings as could be fitted into the time available. The first presentation was given by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson under the title 'What are recordings?' and dealt with the fundamental nature of recordings as historical documents—with the technological limitations of early recordings and the assumptions involved in their interpretation, in particular as regards how representative they are of the ordinary performance practices of their time. The second session was given by Timothy Day and Andy Linehan, both of the British Library Sound Archive, and was called 'How to find recordings': it provided an introduction to the joys and tribulations of discographical searching, covering both 'art' and popular music. Finally Nicholas Cook spoke under the title 'What to do with recordings', covering a range of software tools for the analysis of recordings, and considering the relationship between understanding 'the recording itself' and understanding it in its social context.

You can access handouts and bibliographies for this module, which will be repeated in 2005/06, at <http://www.music.training.rhul.ac.uk/disco.html>.

*Nicholas Cook (Royal Holloway, University of London)*

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## A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF...

Carol Chan, CHARM Research Centre Coordinator

*It has been more than a year since I came aboard the CHARM project and in that time I have experienced in excess of 52 CHARM-filled weeks. I know it may sound clichéd, but no two weeks have been quite the same - at least, not yet...*

My office is located bang in the middle of the Music Department at Royal Holloway: the room is cosy, yet practical (this is estate-agentese for small), and all amenities including the all-important staff kitchen are literally just footsteps away. Best of all, I have a fantastic view overlooking the backyard grown with trees and other foliage. So far I have seen squirrels, cats, birds and even a deer wander below - but enough of what goes on outside! I share my office with a printer, and as you might imagine, conversation is a bit thin on the ground so life can be on the quiet side – not a bad thing if I need to concentrate. Though what conversation I miss out on is very much made up for by the sackfuls of emails that come my way each day, concerning

organisation of events, scheduling meetings or responding to enquiries and requests.

To date one of the most fun weeks for me was the one encompassing the first CHARM symposium in mid April 2005. Last-minute requests, alterations to plans, changes to the conference pack and so on resulted in an intensely manic period before the symposium had even begun. In the immediate lead-up numerous hours were spent dashing around the Royal Holloway campus finalising details with the Events team and ensuring that everything was in place. Back in the office I would be preparing documents for the conference pack and emailing the

delegates last-minute information about transport, accommodation, schedules and just about everything else under the sun. Then, with all delegates assembled and the symposium officially open midweek, my role became that of troubleshooter, ensuring that everything ran smoothly and that sudden requests could be met with the resources available. The team of helpers assisting me throughout the duration of the symposium were incredible and included a conference assistant, caterers, audio-visual specialists, security and other administrative staff.

Thankfully the symposium itself ran without major hiccups and the pool of delegates made for a convivial atmosphere full of discussion and interaction. The culmination of six months of planning, preparation and hard work from all parties involved certainly paid off with a display of the

*Thankfully the symposium itself ran without major hiccups and the pool of delegates made for a convivial atmosphere full of discussion and interaction. The culmination of six months of planning, preparation and hard work from all parties involved certainly paid off with a display of the delegates' thanks and appreciation at the end of the conference.*

delegates' thanks and appreciation at the end of the conference. Talking of the delegates, the most enjoyable aspect of this symposium week was the opportunity to finally put faces to the names of the two dozen or so delegates with whom I had been corresponding on a frequent basis over the past few months. Inevitably we develop visual images of the individuals on the other end of an email address and it's fascinating to have those speculative photofits finally confirmed or otherwise (usually otherwise!). A definite 'high' had built up over the course of the symposium and so with the departure of the delegates on the last day, it was hard to avoid a sense of anti-climax. Still, my experience of the symposium week has undoubtedly left me with numerous fond memories and I thoroughly look forward to working on CHARM's remaining five symposia and other future events.

*Carol Chan (Royal Holloway, University of London)*

## POINTS OF VIEW

*CHARM is based in the musical academy but its concerns extend across such varied fields as transfer engineering, history of technology, curation, archival research, discography, record collection, and the media. We asked a prominent representative of each of these fields what they saw as important current issues in the study of recordings. Here's what they told us...*

### ROGER BEARDSLEY

#### *The study of music performance – where is it going?*

From my perspective, the transfer of catalogue and other recording data to the CHARM discography appears to be moving ahead well, although only a small fraction of total output will be available at first. Tracking down, coordinating and getting the publishing rights to the myriad discography projects in process worldwide will not be easy, but needs to be achieved if the database is to be anywhere near 'complete'.

On the musical side, study depends upon the availability of recordings in accessible formats. Historical CDs are not generating the sales necessary to sustain the activity of some 10 years ago. Downloading has yet to take off for commercial re-issues: origination costs are relatively high and the processes time consuming. And so in the commercial world we're in many cases seeing the same successfully sold material re-issued over and over. The Beethoven 5th symphony syndrome is still with us. CHARM can help here by providing new material.

A further threat to musical understanding comes from the increasing use of technology in commercial reissues to remove all noise from early recordings without regard to the effect it has upon the music and performance. Many effects are quite insidious and subtly degrade the performance, others are all too obvious. Over-use of some processes removes the reverberation tails and presence frequencies, which are then replaced by artificial reverberation and electronic 'enhancers'. The result is a travesty. Slavishly going down the 'no noise at any cost' road destroys the very thing we are seeking to preserve. CHARM can play a part in educating reviewers and other arbiters.

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### GEORGE BROCK-NANNESAD

#### *Modern musical scholarship and our recorded heritage*

Numerous musicologists worldwide and in all fields have realized that our recorded heritage does go back a century and that recordings to some degree do represent performances that may teach us something. Apparently, however, the use of such recordings has mostly been based on the assumption that recording and reproduction

have always been as transparent as they appear to be today—'apparently' because in some instances lip service has been paid to the problems of early recordings, but results are invariably presented without any documentation of how these problems were overcome, what assumptions were made, etc. Much scholarship is content with using commercial re-issues, thereby leaving problems of extracting sound from early recordings to the commercial transfer engineer. The musicologist must master a new discipline relating to these source-critical problems. However, such a discipline is almost invisible in current curricula.

Without precise accounting for the source value of a given recording, considering recording technology and commercial practices, and the intentions of the people involved, the results may be artistically but not academically satisfying. Unreflected impressions will become more prominent and myths will be generated because the steps of a writer cannot be retraced when there is no precise description of methodology.

It is possible that real progress, drawing on a large body of recordings having an extreme variability in their characteristics, will be made only through cooperation with specialists in early recording, just as the use of certain statistical approaches is frequently best left to consulting statisticians. However, unless joint papers are written, the responsibility still remains with the musicologist.

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## **TIMOTHY DAY**

I spend much of my working life assisting students and scholars work with the collections of recordings in the British Library. Almost invariably now, everyone asks about CHARM. Everyone knows about it, whether they're from Chicago, or Hong Kong, or Witwatersrand, or Wellington NZ; everyone is enthusiastic. But nobody seems quite sure what CHARM's 'angle' is, what particular line of research CHARM is going to favour. Are they going to concentrate on measuring performances, or on the histories of performance practices over decades, or on reception, or on cultural history? It's not clear. All of these and more, I reply, hoping I'm not misrepresenting the intentions of the CHARM directors, and pointing to the programmes of the study days and the symposia and the research projects of each contributing department. Andrew Porter once declared his belief in what Busoni, in not quite in the same sense, called *der Einheit der Musik*, 'a belief that composers, executants, impresarios, managers, publishers, historians, musicologists, critics, and audiences are engaged in branches of the same activity, and that the critics should in some way be a bridge between the others.' But shouldn't musicologists be in a position to perform this function even better than critics? The study of music in performance, which engages the intelligence, the emotions and the musicality of the historian, surely suggests wide agendas and idiosyncratic bold syntheses. It's a not inconsiderable achievement that CHARM is so well known after a year, and that it's perceived as being so bold, so adventurous, and so undoctinaire.

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## **JENNY DOCTOR**

The study of music as mediated through sound technologies – whether recorded or broadcast – is enormously multi-faceted, involving scholars and specialists with different talents, experiences, backgrounds and kinds of knowledge. As the CHARM gatherings show so vividly, this 'field' – as it is only beginning to be circumscribed – encompasses a wide array of dedicated personalities offering very different points of view and interests. The confluence of these myriad approaches is sometimes jolting, as intellectual co-mingling juxtaposes those with primarily technical, collector or content-based interests – analyzing repertoire, performance practice or production techniques – with those who approach or use recordings from a media-related stand or from anthropological, ethnomusicological, social, economic or theoretical points of view. The overlap between these approaches may sometimes seem slim, to some discussion across them unnecessary. Is there indeed 'a field' or has the formation of CHARM brought together specialists with different interests who happen to have sound recordings in common?

My perhaps idealistic view of where the field might travel comprises two levels of impression. Macrocosmically: if indeed this is shaping up to be a recognised 'field', then it should encourage and celebrate different approaches and personalities, offering rich opportunity for those involved to acknowledge, respect and learn from each other. However distant one approach might seem to someone with quite other interests, opening one's mind to unexpected possibilities evoked by recordings represents a significant, thought-provoking advance over individuals or groups working in isolation, as has been the case until now. Microcosmically: it seems artificial to me to separate music in various sound media from one another. Historically, their existences are inextricably linked, and to look at one without another suggests incompleteness. Thus, I would hope that this new field would include, as a constituent area of interest, recordings of broadcasts. Whether of concerts, stage productions, live studio performances, features or speech, this area of study provides much of inherent interest for exploration and discussion, as well as significant contrast to the more widely-considered terrains of commercial studio and field recordings. Though overlooked until now, this area should, I believe, be offered a lasting niche within this consolidating field, 'devoted to the study of sound recording in the broader sense'.

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## **MICHAEL GRAY**

### *Where we've been*

During the past two decades, the archives of the world's record industry have yielded the dates and locales for thousands of discs of 'serious music' recorded during the first three decades of the electrical recording process. While the files of organizations in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union will no doubt yield further valuable information, it is already possible to know today when many of the recordings contained in the three volumes of "The World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music" were made in studios in America, Canada, Europe and Japan. When original recording documents no longer survive, researchers have created chronologies of companies such as for German VOX (<http://home.allgaeu.org/cgallenm/Lotz/VOX.htm>) whose activities document historically significant artists and repertoire recorded during the early electrical era. More work is yet to come.

### *Where we're going*

As all kinds of discographic information have moved from print to digits, and from digits on a PC to digits accessible via institutions such as CHARM, researchers can for the first time easily place recorded documents in their proper historical context. While purely musicological research has been enhanced by knowing exactly when and where a particular artist has recorded a work, and, more importantly, when all the recordings of a particular work were made, researchers can also explore the 'patrimonies' of individual artists and ensembles, investigate the operations of the recording industry itself and determine, by examination of contemporary reviews, the reception of recordings by the general public, and by other evidence, their reception and possible influence on other musicians.

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## **KARSTEN LEHL**

### *A matter of balance*

With the vast improvement of digital audio restoration tools during the last two decades, the old dream of finally being able to listen to everything that was recorded on an old disc or cylinder as recorded seems about to come true. However, more often than not such high hopes are disappointed when dealing with commercially issued CDs. Apart from the desire to eliminate all audible noise, even at the cost of a good deal of the original audio spectrum, the problem to blame in many cases is incorrect equalization.

Whereas the use of a 'roll-off' for the high end of the audio spectrum to reduce hiss and crackle is irrelevant to recordings made before the late 1940s, with the introduction of electrical recording in the mid-1920s companies started to use a lower frequency "turnover" to prevent the cutting stylus from breaking through to the adjoining groove walls. Unfortunately, these turnover points were not standardized, and sometimes were adjusted by hand for each new recording session. Also, even with acoustically recorded masters there is a kind of involuntary turnover, dependent on the diameter of the recording horn.

Although the 'inner filter' of the listener can be sufficient when dealing with vocal recordings, the balance of an orchestra might be considerably altered when the turnover frequency is not properly selected. Adding to the problem is the question of speed; faced with recordings from an era when transposing was rather common, and pitch was anything but uniform, more often than not the determination of the correct speed is a question of personal preferences. That makes it all the more important that such information is available on digital media.

To the music enthusiast the questions of speed, turnover frequencies and roll-off may be of little interest: to the scholar, they are not.

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## **NICK MORGAN**

I really enjoyed my first exposure to CHARM – thanks for letting me sit in! But I'm sure I wasn't the only one to miss the stimulating presence of the late Cyril Ehrlich. He was the person who made me realise that this most abstract of arts, music, offers the persistent, intelligent researcher just as much nitty gritty as any human business. Cyril's books on music as a business, and his almost single-handed creation of the British academic speciality of concert and repertoire history, seem to me to ask the kinds of questions that CHARM's social and economic arm – as opposed to the equally valuable text-analysis arm, brilliantly represented by Robert Philip – needs to ask: who, when, how many, how much, how long, why not? We just don't know enough basic facts about recording or recordings to start taking rigid theoretical positions a priori. And to get such data, CHARM will need the widest variety of approaches. If there are trends of production and consumption to be drawn, someone with a head for figures will have to scour record company ledgers. If there are questions to be asked about how we listen to records, they could usefully be framed by someone with experience in experimental psychology and cognition. And a field which, until recently, was left to the enthusiast and collector, can't afford to ignore their accumulated expertise either. CHARM wants to break down barriers: opening that symposium to the likes of me was a terrific first breach and it should keep right on worrying at the hole with its studentships, study days and meetings!

## THE CRAZY WORLD OF ONLINE DISCOGRAPHIES

Peter Laszlo is one of those who's been kind enough to give up his spare time to CHARM, searching for discographies on the web. So far he's been working alphabetically by composer, and since January has turned up thousands of listings: 203 As, 1089 Bs (why are there so many Bs?), 747 Cs, 476 Ds, 190 Es, and 428 Fs. We have high hopes that G will prove less popular. Along the way

Peter has turned up genre discographies for all sorts of unlikely things, including Heckelphones, Serpents, Ocarinas, and Arp Schnitger organs, not to mention Godzilla monsters, Dutch divas, and railway music. We hope to have categories for performers, national music, magazines, genres, record shops, MIDI links and much else. Our warmest thanks to Peter, and may his mouse lead him sanely to Z.

*Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King's College London)*

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## PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

*A priority of CHARM's researchers is, to course, to present their work at conferences and through publications. The following is a list of presentations and publications by CHARM staff relating specifically to the study of recorded music.*

**Eric Clarke** (University of Sheffield) gave presentations at the 'Music: Interpretation, Performance and Perception' conference (Sigtuna, September 2004), 'Le travail de l'interprétation' conference (IRCAM, Paris, October 2004), and at the University of Hull (November 2004); he also published an article 'Creativity in Performance' (*Musicae Scientiae* 9 [2005]: 157-82). Eric also co-edited *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (New York: Oxford University Press, September 2004) with Nicholas Cook, and together with Bryn Harrison, Philip Thomas, and Nicholas Cook he published an article entitled 'Interpretation and Performance in Bryn Harrison's *être-temps*' (*Musicae Scientiae* 9 [2005]: 31-74).

**Nicholas Cook** (Royal Holloway, University of London) gave presentations at the Orpheus Institute (Ghent, April 2004), at the Symposium of the International Musicological Society (Melbourne, July 2004), 'Le travail de l'interprétation' conference (IRCAM, Paris, October 2004), Kings College London (November 2004), the AMS/SMT Annual Meeting (Seattle, November 2004), the 'Performativity' conference (Copenhagen Doctoral School in Cultural Studies, December 2004), the RILM conference 'Music's Intellectual History: Founders, Followers, and Fads' (New York, March 2005), the Royal Academy of Music (April 2005), and Queen Mary's College, University of London (May 2005). He also published an article 'Prompting Performance: Text, Script, and Analysis in Bryn Harrison's *être-temps*' (*Music Theory Online* 11/1 [March 2005], <http://mto.societymusictheory.org/issues/mto.05.11.1/toc.11.1>).

**Daniel Leech-Wilkinson** (Kings College London) gave presentations at the Gesellschaft für Historische Tonträger (Vienna, March 2004), the 'Music: Interpretation, Performance and Perception' conference (Sigtuna, September 2004), and the RILM conference 'Music's Intellectual History: Founders, Followers, and Fads' (New York, March 2005).

**David Patmore** (University of Sheffield) published articles on 'Record Buying in Helsinki' (*Classic Record Collector*, Summer 2004), 'Musical Chairs: The Future of Musical Performance on CD' (*Classic Record Collector*, Autumn 2004), 'Rarissima: The Use of Personal Cassette Tape Collections' (*Classic Record Collector*, Autumn 2004), and 'F. Charles Adler and the SPA (Society of Participating Artists) Record Label' (*Classic Record Collector*, Spring 2005). He reviewed Robert Philip's *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (in *Classic Record Collector*, Summer 2004) and Colin Symes' *Setting the Record Straight* (in *Leisure Studies*), and published the following record reviews in *Classic Record Collector*: 'Leo Borchard conducts Glazunov, Tchaikovsky, Weber', 'Charles Mackerras conducts Ballet Music and Verdi', 'Leopold Stokowski Conducts Mahler', and 'Carl Schuricht conducts Beethoven'.

**John Rink** (Royal Holloway, University of London) gave presentations at the Symposium of the International Musicological Society (Melbourne, July 2004), 'Le travail de l'interprétation' conference (IRCAM, Paris, October 2004), the Royal Academy of Music (London, November 2004), the International Chopin Conference (Warsaw, December 2004), and the University of Hull (March 2005).

**Renee Timmers** (Kings College London) gave a presentation of her work there in November 2004.

## RECORDED MUSIC: THE CHARM OFFENSIVE

Reprinted from the RMA Newsletter (Vol. VIII/1, March 2005)

Musicology came into being in the nineteenth century as part of the grand project of forging national identities, and its approaches were modelled directly on classical philology, the reconstruction and study of written texts handed down from the past. Much has changed since then, yet the idea that music means scores still underpins a great deal of what musicologists, and especially theorists and analysts, do. We tend in other words to think of music as if it were a kind of literature. And to think about music that way means that performance inevitably becomes marginalized, in just the way that poetry reading is a marginalized area within literary studies.

The point, of course, is that music doesn't work like poetry. To be sure, Chopin's E minor Prelude exists on the written page. But very few people read scores the way they read poetry. For practically everyone except musicologists, music exists in performance—and that, obviously, brings a whole new dimension into play. Yet it is a dimension that so far has left little trace upon the writing of music history. It is still quite possible to publish a 'History of Twentieth-Century Music' which talks almost exclusively about compositions, as if performance (of both new and old music) and reception weren't equally central aspects of music's history. Seen in a more balanced way, the history of twentieth-century music might take equal account of the drastically changing performance styles documented on the century's worth of recordings that are now accessible in sound archives and on CD reissues.

This situation is changing, and—largely as a result of the work of scholars like Robert Philip and Timothy Day—the UK is at the forefront of the development of a musicology of performance, or as I would prefer to see it, a musicology in which performance forms as central a focus as composition. But there are obstacles to these developments. One is conceptual: it's rather like when theatre studies broke away from literary studies, reconceiving drama as primarily a performing rather than a literary art—and such paradigm shifts take time and effort. But it's also a very practical matter. If you do traditional musicology, you almost unknowingly build on the work of a generation or more of researchers who inventoried and described manuscripts and early printed music throughout the world's libraries, as well

as on a host of bibliographic resources such as are familiar in other fields of research. It's hard to imagine how you could do musicology without these resources. That, however, is exactly the situation you find yourself in if you work on recorded music. The recordings reissued on CD are just the tip of the iceberg. You very quickly find yourself needing to refer to the HMV catalogue for 1938 (and where are you going to find that?), or a composer discography self-published in a tiny print run by an Australian musicologist in 1964. Even when you have discovered that the recording exists, you have you have a problem of locating a copy of it. It's scholarship in the stone age.

That is where CHARM comes in. Funded by a five-year grant of just under £1M, the AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music—based at Royal Holloway in partnership with King's College London and the University of Sheffield—came into being on 1 April 2004, and is doing its best to turn around the situation I have

*Very few people read scores the way they read poetry. For practically everyone except musicologists, music exists in performance—and that, obviously, brings a whole new dimension into play.*

described. We are developing a major on-line database of European 78s (building in part on data from the well-known discographer Alan Kelly), together with a website containing further guidance and links; we have started

digitizing selected recordings and placing these on the website, working alongside other initiatives in web-based dissemination. We are also developing research training materials in the study of recordings, which are already being delivered within the AHRC's new collaborative doctoral research training programme in music.

But this is just one aspect of CHARM. One of the main problems in studying recordings is that knowledge is split up between different people who don't normally talk to one another, ranging from performers, producers, sound and transfer engineers, record collectors, and archivists to composers, musicologists, ethnomusicologists, and popular culture specialists: our programme of residential symposia brings all them together to discuss core issues. (Our second symposium, in September 2005, will form part of the 'Art of Production' conference co-organized with Thames Valley

*One of the main problems in studying recordings is that knowledge is split up between different people who don't normally talk to one another, ranging from performers, producers, sound and transfer engineers, record collectors, and archivists to composers, musicologists, ethnomusicologists, and popular culture specialists: our programme of residential symposia brings all them together to discuss core issues.*

University and the University of Westminster.) CHARM also has a portfolio of major research projects, two at Holloway and one each at KCL and

Sheffield: these cover both historical and analytical approaches to recorded music, the latter involving the development of cutting-edge computational methods.

Is CHARM's aim then to bring into being a new sub-discipline of musicology, the study of recorded music? No: our aim is both more modest and more ambitious than that. We don't aim to replace a musicology centred on the score with one centred on recordings: one of the characteristic things about

Western classical music is the way it exists as both score and performance, and our aim is a musicology that does justice to both these dimensions of music's existence. We aren't, for example, setting up a new *Journal of Recorded Music*, tempting as that might be, because we want to feed research based on recordings into the existing mainstream musicological journals. In short, we don't want to set up a new musicology but rather to transform the existing discipline. And we've got five years to do it....

*Nicholas Cook (Royal Holloway, University of London)*

## GETTING IN TOUCH WITH CHARM

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