



# Louisiana Librarian in Italy : A Journey to Three Music Libraries

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# Professional leave



- ⌘ 6 week professional leave, as per our faculty handbook (for librarians)
- ⌘ 2 weeks Italian language study
- ⌘ 2 weeks German language study
- ⌘ 2 weeks to organize visits to three music libraries



# Description of project

- ☞ Knowledge of foreign languages, primarily German, French and Italian, are crucial in the research and academic pursuits of music. As a music librarian, to conduct instruction sessions, bibliographic research, collection development, and to keep up with academic publications in the field, I must have more than a basic competency in German and Italian. The monthly job list posted on the Music Library Association's website (the primary job-seeking source for music librarians in this country) includes job descriptions requiring at least a reading level of German. This quote from an advertisement for a music librarian is typical: "Demonstrated ability to read bibliographic citations in at least two foreign languages, preferably a romance language and German." Further, from the Music Library Association's website, under the heading, "How do you become a music librarian?" is this quote: "Music and the literature about it are published in many countries and languages; basic cataloging and bibliographic research require a working knowledge of German and at least one Romance language." (<http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/isit/isit.htm> June 8, 2005)



# Preparazione

- ❧ Briefly searched for “Italian librarianship” and found Pietro Zappala, music librarian in Cremona
- ❧ Began an email correspondence; found Gianmario Merizzi and Licia Sirch
- ❧ Formed a trip around these three librarians, and the language study



# The libraries

- ☞ University of Bologna: Gianmario Merizzi
- ☞ University of Pavia, Cremona: Pietro Zappalà
- ☞ Conservatorio di Milano: Licia Sirch



# Osservazione....

- ❧ Students physically present, engaged, studious
- ❧ Buildings not ideal for library collections: climate control, shelving, work space
- ❧ Online databases similar to our core offerings: JSTOR, Oxford Music Online, RILM, etc.
- ❧ All three librarians active in professional organizations, striving for progressive movement in Italian librarianship



# Queries answered

- ❧ Tried to ask same questions to all three, concerning collections, type of library, budget, professional development, etc.
- ❧ Heard frustration from dedicated librarians who face cultural hurdles.



# The literature

## ☞ Sue Court in *Crescendo*:

- ☞ More complicated processes for accessing materials
- ☞ Not just at the Vatican; Italian students remarked it's a similar experience in undergraduate studies as well
- ☞ But Court liked it all, nonetheless



# More literature

❧ Pietro Zappalà:

- ❧ Musicological departments' libraries have more texts than music, and more collected editions than parts for performance
- ❧ Italy doesn't recognize any specialization with the library jobs
- ❧ Conservatory and academic libraries are very separate in identity



# More literature

☞ Niccolò Capponi:

☞ Catalogs often sketchy

☞ Documents could be withheld from consultation if it “should involve the loss of someone’s dignity or reputation”

☞ “What if you discover he gassed Ethiopians?”



# Conservatorio/accademico

- ❧ Difference between academic and conservatory libraries
- ❧ Emphasis more on preservation, and recently, librarianship and digitization, than on purchase of new materials
- ❧ Italian reputation of hard-to-get primary documents



# Back home

- ❧ Facilities & Space Planning Committee of the MLA
- ❧ Retro-fit: Come si dice in italiano?



# Was it worth it?

- ☞ You're kidding, right?
- ☞ Personally, a no-brainer. Professionally, has helped tremendously on several levels.
- ☞ <http://picasaweb.google.com/aandehansen/UnivOfPaviaCremona#>



# Sources

- ❧ Capponi, N. (2008). Clio, mars, and wine: Tracking down military documents in Italy. *The Journal of Military History*, 72(4), 1249.
- ❧ Court, S. (2004). Research in Italian libraries. *Crescendo*, (68), 9.
- ❧ Merizzi, G. (2007). *Personal email and interview*. Italy: Università di Bologna.
- ❧ Ponzani, V. (2003). A study on Italian libraries. *Herald of Library Science*, 42(1-2), 74.
- ❧ Sirch, L. (2007). *Personal email and interview*. Italy: Conservatorio di Milano.
- ❧ Zappalà, P. (2007). *Personal email and interview*. Italy: Università degli studi di Pavia, Cremona.



# Library websites

- ☞ <http://spfm.unipv.it/index.html>
- ☞ <http://www.muspe.unibo.it/>
- ☞ <http://www.consmilano.it/default.htm>

Thank you!

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