Virtual National Phonoteque

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Outline

• History of Czech sound
• What is the Virtual National Phonotheque (VNF)?
• How and why was the VNF created?
• Present situation
• Plans
• What next?
History of Czech Sound in Brief

• 1891 – First known sound recordings on wax cylinders in Czech lands

• 1901 – First known recordings on gramophone disc in Czech language

• 1923 – Czech Radio (originally called Radiojournal) first broadcast

• 1928 – 1934 Czech Academy of Sciences runs project recording contemporary performers, politicians and music. Project ends due to lack of funding and disputes regarding project governance

• 1930 – First Czech recording companies (ESTA and Ultraphon) are established
History of Czech Sound in Brief 2

• 1932 – writer Karel Čapek calls for “
  …a national discotheque in every country, acquiring and preserving both
  national folklore and exceptional works of local composers or performers and
  ensembles, when recorded on gramophone records. That way, a real archive of
  national music in authentic and peak performance are archived, serving to
  promote the national art, broadcast by the radio, research etc. – certainly a
  desirable thing.”

• 1932–1935 – Heavy taxation on imported recordings forces companies to
  form Czech branches.

• 1946 – Nationalisation of Czech recording industry.

• Supraphon becomes the unifying label.

• Gramofonove zavody (now GZ Digital media) is established.
At the End of the Century

• 1997–1999 – Meetings of interested parties (libraries, museums, archives, publishers, broadcasters and collectors) aim to establish a National Phonotheque either as an institution

• or, at least, as a database and a platform for cooperation.

• We were so close, but….

The Czech National Sound Archive never came into existence and no one takes care of SD
How and why the VNF was created

• In 2012 Moravian Library Brno held an unprocessed shellac collection
• Missing:
  ○ national sound institution = standards, methodology ....
  ○ centralised overview of sound collections
  ○ information overview about digitalization

• Follows from the efforts which began in the 1990s
• Creates a portal for metadata aggregation
• Building a digitisation lab
• Creates the 1st certified methodology: selection criteria for digitization
• Connects various metadata vendors
• Solves methodology problems along the way
The survey
What the Virtual National Phonotheque is

- **a web portal** - aims to fill a gap in understanding the Czech Republic’s national sound heritage
- Portal = specialised database, provides information about: **existence, placement and format**
- Not only a catalogue, but a **place for listening**:
  - allows playback of selected items
- Harvested data (mostly OAI-PMH), based on MARC21
- Adjustments and deduplications for display purposes
- Supplier guarantees the quality of the records
- Online access without any restrictions
https://www.narodnifonoteka.cz/
Kramerius
Mobile Kramerius
Why the VNF is unique

- The one union catalogue of sound in the Czech Republic
- Not only a catalogue or a discography
- Not only music, but oral histories, radio broadcasts, sound, etc.
- Free open source system
- Added value:
  - Different types of institutions - both private & commercial - involved
  - Enrichment of the "bibliographic" records of active lines
    - to digitised version (into elsewhere placed origin source)
    - into e-shops
    - on the owner’s website
Access map to VNF
Quick overview from CZE
(2014 - Present)

- „Roadshow“ – VNP on the road
- projects under Ministry of Culture Grant Program:
  - evidence, surveys, publishing
- State Culture Politics
- National Conservation Plan - proposal

- Lack of personal background
- MZK is not active - VNP stagnates
- Missing institution to lead this topic
- Czech Conception and other documents
- Ministry of Culture blind to topic of audio documents
The present

• Migration to National Library of Technology (NTK)
• Why only the NTK?
• Where we are right now
• Our plans and ideas
Why the NTK?

NTK Missions and know-how:

- Support projects on national level
- Support for science and research
- Try to find new effective solutions
- Connect academic, public and private sphere
- To provide services without barriers
- Experienced in IT technology
- Central repository, accessible by anyone
- Infrastructure exists to support a more ambitious application of VNF
- Good will ☺
Where we are right now

- Contains about **500 000 records**
- **24 institutions** = suppliers
- Trying to improve website structure (UX/UI)
- Working on a new web design proposal
- Preparing to conclude contracts with each supplier
- Starting research into metadata to find versatile solution
- Developing long-term vision
- Dealing with 3 new institutions to manage new metadata
- **Approximately 180 visitors every day**
Visitors - 2018

Audience Overview

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<th>Overview</th>
<th>Jan 1, 2018 - Nov 1, 2018</th>
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<td>44,736</td>
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<th>Returning Visitor</th>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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Basic plans

- Conclude a cooperation agreement with National Museum
- Ensure minimum viable operation and basic troubleshooting
- Acquire other significant contributors: (CRo, CT, Supraphon, ...)
- Analysis of relevant databases across the world
- Design of a new metadata structure
- Design of a new safety software solution
- Project preparation and search for funding

The main Aims:
- Collate complex information covering all of Czech sound production
- Enable direct access to most important sound recordings
- Offer an informational platform for education, digitalisation, research, etc.
- Become a National Sound Aggregator
What next?

- Expand cooperation beyond the Czech Republic
- Attract partners: Slovakia, Austria, Poland, Visegrád Four, … ???
- Create stronger work team
- Divide the burden and cover the required professional roles
- Share experiences, people, help each other
- Exchangeable work placements, training, workshops
- Take part in training the next generation of professionals
- Create new job opportunities
- Joint effort to preserve cultural heritage

Let’s do it together!
Our questions/considerations:

• Can we inspire others to do the same?
• Can we be inspired by examples from abroad?
• Can we increase cooperation?
• How and when?
An example of cooperation with a private recording company

Access to **Supraphon** Digital Archive for NTK
Virtual National Phonoteque
an Umbrella for Sound Documents

BAAC conference, Tallin, 8. 11. 2018
Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?

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