

MusicWeb Connect: A European Project for creating web-based Tools and Resources for Music Education

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Abstract

With the cornucopia of online education packages appearing on the web, Glasgow University in collaboration with the Royal Conservatory of Den Haag is again at the forefront of a collaborative project to create and to facilitate the production of music education resources. As with Netmuse, which was a previous collaborative project of Scottish music departments utilizing high performance networks (ATM) and creating university level musical educational resources, the Centre for Music Technology is co-ordinating the technical side of another internet / intranet-based project, MusicWeb Connect, in collaboration with five other European institutions.

1. Who is MusicWeb?

The MusicWeb consortium of c. 15 partners has been in existence since 1995, with its main focus being to enable the creation and development of music-educational materials and to make music education and learning via the web a primarily musical experience. The MusicWeb project is currently funded through a 14-month funding venture by the European Commission through the CONNECT programme, and is supported by Naxos music publishers.

The members of the MusicWeb CONNECT consortium are:

- The *Royal Conservatory of Den Haag*, which is responsible for the management and coordination of the project. Den Haag has so far developed educational applications and authoring tools, and set up and maintained the central multimedia server.
- The Centre for Music Technology, *University of Glasgow*, which coordinates the technical side of the project. Existing servers are linked to the central server in Den Haag, and together with the IICM Graz, Glasgow University is adapting existing products for learning technologies (Hyperwave information server and GENTLE web based training environment, both developed by the IICM) to the MusicWeb environment. In addition, together with Darmstadt University, technologies regarding structured music (SMDL-MuTaTED and GUIDO) will be integrated. Glasgow is also coordinating the evaluation and dissemination of the project results.
- The *Hanover University for Music and Drama* (Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hannover) has developed content material specifically for use by young students and children in primary and secondary education.
- The *IRCAM Research Institute* in Paris (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique / Musique) is one of the world's largest institutes devoted to

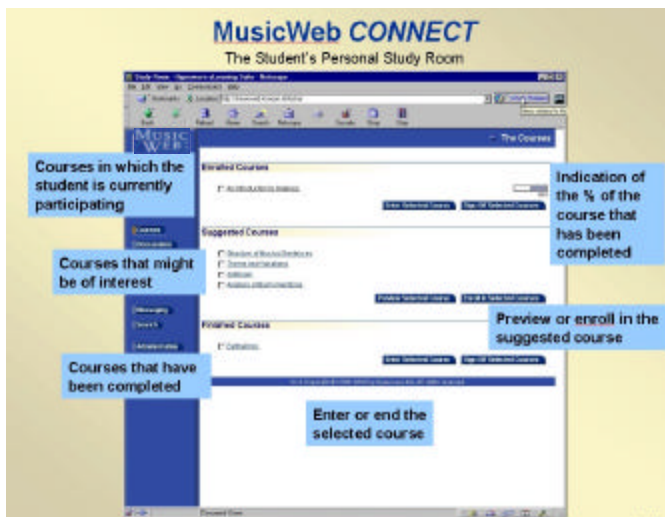
musical creation with new technologies, developing software for music composition and multimedia tools for education. IRCAM has contributed educational materials on twentieth century contemporary music.

- The *IICM Institute* in Graz (Institute for Information Processing and Computer Supported New Media) has developed the Hyperwave information server and the GENTLE web-based training environment, which are the core of the MusicWeb structure. Together with Glasgow University, the IICM is adapting their products to the MusicWeb environment.
- The *Technical University of Darmstadt* is concerned with the integration of their GUIDO music representation language within the MusicWeb environment. Together with Glasgow University, they are integrating technologies regarding structured music (SMDL-MuTaTED) and their connection to GUIDO.

MusicWeb is open to those who decide to join the MusicWeb group and use the music education resources and skills therein, or who want to use the authoring tools and facilities provided by MusicWeb to add to and enhance current materials with their own tools, specialist skills and music education modules.

2. What is Music Web?

The MusicWeb group has created the tools to enable anyone, as a member of MusicWeb, to access these webpublications, and to facilitate the creation of new modules with maximum ease.



The music-education resources and materials made available through the MusicWeb project are designed in a modular and highly flexible way to assist their integration into a wide variety of music courses and independent-learning scenarios.

More common features found within educational web-based applications are present within the MusicWeb System, such as password restricted access, discussion forums, progress tracking, version control, conferencing support, WYSIWYG editors, etc. Moreover, the consortium has provided tools for the specific needs of music education, unlocking the specialist skills and resources available within individual institutions so that they can be exploited to the general educational benefit of the music community at large. This means that the varying pedagogical approaches and characteristics of the courses offered by individual institutions can be maintained and preserved while utilising the resources

and materials and creating their own courses and modules within the MusicWeb framework.

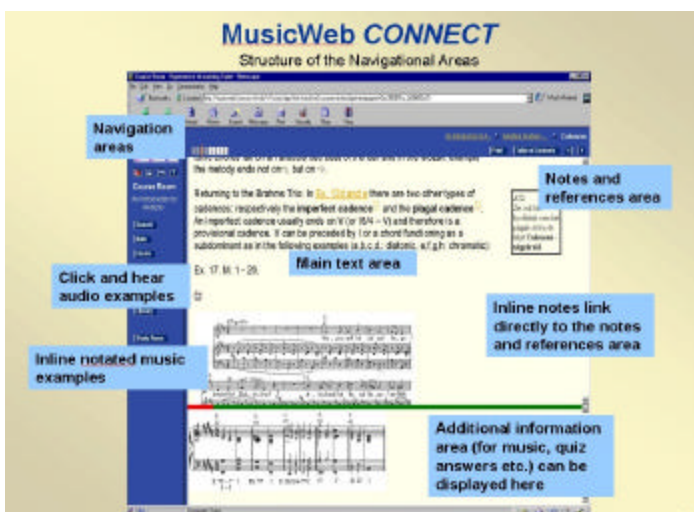
The project provides the means whereby new modes of learning and the delivery of learning are developed for the study of music. The emergence of universal networking and easy access to information via the internet enables self-paced, open learning, which can provide higher standards of learning-outcome than traditional methods by providing a high quality, highly flexible computer-based complement to classroom learning which encourages and sustains student confidence and independent learning skills.

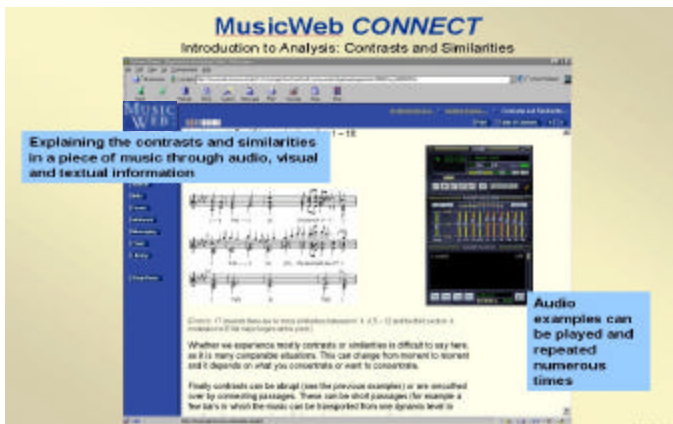
The physical outcome of this project is a pool of music-education related modules (weblications) that are available to be used in a variety of ways by a variety of people. When creating and using MusicWeb materials, flexibility and re-usability of resources is encouraged. As such, each of these modules can be used:

- in whole or in part,
- individually or in conjunction with one another,
- in a classroom or distance-learning situation,
- in a group, or as an individual
- or in any other possible combination of music learning-scenarios

This flexibility of use is designed to enable each user to adapt the modules and how they are used to suit their own individual needs as student (primary, secondary, higher, further and continuing education), teacher or professional, and as such, MusicWeb can be used both to complement, and as an alternative to, conventional classroom methods. Weblications can also be used for core study, preparatory material, supplementary material and as a further research resource. In addition, the modular design of the weblications enables the user to select sections and individual parts from each module (quotes, visuals and audio examples) to enhance and complement their teaching or learning styles.

This initial resource collection already comprises several hundred notated and performed examples of classical and contemporary music which have been embedded into the existing weblications, and the additional music tools and weblication-creation tools that are provided by the MusicWeb group are specifically designed to ease the process of creating new weblications. The topics for weblications and courses can be as diverse as the types of people creating and using them, and they can concentrate on core musical skills and on more specialist areas.





The aim of MusicWeb is not simply to encourage members to re-use all or parts of these resources for learning and teaching, but also to encourage the creation of additional weblications to enhance current materials with new own tools and specialist skills and knowledge. An editorial and management structure has been put in place to ensure that these new weblications meet the highest educational standards, and this creation of new weblications will continuously enlarge the resources and teaching and learning facilities available, and ensure that weblications stay up to date with ongoing pedagogical paradigms.



The MusicWeb group has created the tools to enable anyone and everyone access to these weblications, and to facilitate the creation of new modules with maximum ease. There are no specialist skills or knowledge required to use or author weblications, although knowledge of the internet is needed, and some knowledge of HTML is helpful. For more advanced users, additional training can be provided where necessary. As such MusicWeb encourages access for all, and facilitates pan-European communication between music education institutions, teachers, professionals and students wherever they are based in the world to help promote and create a positive relationship within the European music community.

All interest in joining, funding or supporting this project in any way is welcomed. For more information about MusicWeb, please contact: C.Boehm@music.gla.ac.uk or visit our website: <http://musicweb.koncon.nl/connect>

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