Using Digital Humanities to Connect Archives to Contemporary Community: The Klezmer Archive Project

Clara Byom and Christina Crowder

Description: The Klezmer Archive (KA) project is creating a universally accessible, useful digital archival tool for interaction, discovery and research on available information about klezmer music and its network of contemporary and historical people. Unlike traditional archives, this will be a digital native archival resource that will not hold physical objects. Instead, the project uses archival principles to document a conceptual abstraction of music, its manifestations (sheet music, cds, YouTube videos, etc.), events, movement of tunes, the networks of people associated with its past, present, and future, and will facilitate user-generated commentary and connections. This paper will introduce the KA project and the DH challenges it addresses.

Clara Byom, with a fearless curiosity and multi-instrumental virtuosity (clarinet, accordion, keyboard, electronics), has forged a successful musical career as a versatile performer, composer and arts administrator whose work stretches across multiple genres - from classical (new and old) to traditional folk, indie rock to electronic music. She serves as Development Director for the Klezmer Institute, Coordinator for Yiddish New York and Co-Director of the New Mexico Contemporary Ensemble. She holds a Master of Music degree from the University of New Mexico in clarinet performance and musicology (2017) and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Luther College (2012).

Christina Crowder is executive director of the Klezmer Institute, where she oversees the Klezmer Archive Project, the Kiselgof-Makonovetsky Digital Manuscript Project (KMDMP) and year-round programming in support of Ashkenazic expressive culture. Christina is a seasoned performer and experienced educator who plays klezmer accordion and tsimbl. Ashkenazic dance music is a passion, along with a continued exploration of the Moldavian/Bessarabian corner of the klezmer universe.