

FOREWORD

There is an increasing interest towards music stored in digital format, which is witnessed by the widespread diffusion of standards for audio like MP3 and of web-based services to listen or purchase music. There is a number of reasons to explain such a diffusion of digital music. First of all, music crosses the barriers of national languages and cultural backgrounds and can be shared by people with different culture. Moreover, music is an art form that can be both cultivated and popular, and sometimes it is impossible to draw a line between the two, for instance in the case of jazz or of ethnic music. These reasons, among others, may explain the increasing number of projects involving the creation of music digital libraries. A music Digital Library (DL) allows for, and benefits from, the access by users from all over the world, it helps the preservation of cultural heritage, and it is not tailored only to scholars' or researchers' needs.

The availability of music collections to a wide number of users, needs to be paired by the development of novel methodologies for accessing, retrieving, organizing, browsing, and recommending music. The research area devoted to this aspect is usually called Music Information Retrieval (MIR) although retrieval is only one of the relevant aspects. Given the particular nature of music language, which does not aim at describing objects or concepts, typical metadata give only a partial description of music documents. Thus great part of MIR research is devoted to content-based approaches, aimed at extracting relevant descriptors, computing perceptually based similarity measures, identifying music genres and artists, naming unknown songs, and recommending relevant music items.

In recent years, most of the published research results focused on the extraction of relevant features from audio recordings, aimed at providing tools for retrieval of and access to popular music for music consumers. Yet, we believe that there is still the need of a forum devoted to the investigations of new paradigms of interacting with music collections for a wider variety of users, including musicologists, theorists, and music professionals, in order to promote the dissemination of cultural heritage. This goal is achieved by means of research on the formalization of users' needs, on novel paradigms for browsing personal collections and music digital libraries, and on the role that music theory plays on the concepts of relevance and similarity. To this end, music content should thus include the symbolic representation of music works and the information on the structure of music pieces.

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<http://www.dlsi.ua.es/wemis09/proceedingswemis2009.pdf>

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