

Report from the MusicXML Community Meeting

Musikmesse, Frankfurt, 14 March 2014

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Introduction

In 2013 we held the first MusicXML community meetings at the NAMM and Musikmesse trade shows. After this experience the community requested a single meeting at Musikmesse. The Musikmesse show was attended by over twice as many people as NAMM and is more affordable for the meeting sponsors.

This year's MusicXML Community Meeting was held on Friday, March 14 at Musikmesse and sponsored by neoScores. In last year's meetings we collected wish lists for how MusicXML should develop in the future. This year, we instead focused on some specific topics:

- An introduction to MusicXML for those new to the format
- MusicXML community progress over the past year since our last meeting
- The relationship between MusicXML and the Standard Music Font Layout project (SMuFL)
- A proposal for an open-source MusicXML sanitization tool
- MusicXML and the MIDI Manufacturers Association / Association for Musical Electronics Industry (MMA/AMEI)

The slides from the Musikmesse presentations are available online at the www.musicxml.com website. The presentation includes material on SMuFL from Daniel Spreadbury at Steinberg, and a proposed open source MusicXML sanitization tool from Bob Hamblak at neoScores. This document summarizes the discussions about SMuFL, the sanitization tool, and possible future MMA/AMEI relationships that occurred during and after these presentations.

Attendees

We had 52 people who signed in at the Musikmesse meeting. The attendees for each meeting are listed here alphabetically by organization. People came and went during the meetings, especially at Musikmesse, so not every attendee may be listed here.

- Chris Adam, Apple
- Manfred Knauff, Apple
- Dominique Vandenneucker, Arpege Music
- Sam Butler, Avid
- Urs Liska, beautifulscores.net
- Ainhoa Esténoz, Blackbinder
- Sergio Peñalver, Blackbinder
- Michaël Brouard, self
- Brenda Cameron, Cambrian Software
- Bernd Jungmann, capella-software
- Johannes Buck, Columbus Soft
- Christof Schardt, Columbus Soft
- Carl de Marcken, Cryodendra
- James Sutton, Dolphin Computing

- Daniel Eyer, Eduart Music
- Etienne Fréjaville, self
- Jonas Gössling, Flowkey
- Alexander Heesing, Flowkey
- Janek Warchol, GNU LilyPond
- Raymond Lintzen, engraver
- Michael Good, MakeMusic
- Julie Sopoci, MakeMusic
- Beth Sorensen, MakeMusic
- Karen VanDerBosch, MakeMusic
- Thomas Bonte, MuseScore
- Magne Fossum Løudal, Musikk-Husets Forlag
- Jonas Coomans, neoScores
- Bob Hamblok, neoScores
- Jethro Van Thuyne, neoScores
- Hans Vereyken, neoScores
- Skjalb Raithaub, Norsk Musikforlag
- David Hoffmann, Notation Software
- Reinhold Hoffmann, Notation Software
- Martin Marris, Notecraft Services
- Martí Ferrer, Notes in Cloud
- Francesca Galofre, Notes in Cloud
- Peter Trubinov, notovodstvo.ru
- Patrick Schmidt, Philomelos
- Hiroyiki Koike, plusAdd
- Chris Swaffer, PreSonus
- Martin Losch, PuR Music
- Robert Neher, PuR Music
- Robert Schäfer, Schott Music
- Jan Rosseel, Scora
- Johannes Feulner, Scorio
- Dominik Hörnel, Scorio
- Karin Höthker, Scorio
- Carsten Bönsel, Technical University Ilmenau
- Johannes Kepper, University of Paderborn
- Julien Colafrancesco, Weezic
- Shaun Riordan, Yaacomm
- Arnand Zeller, Zels

In the remainder of this report, I will identify each contribution and suggestion by the first name of the contributor. These requests are listed in chronological order as received during the course of the meeting. We did not rank or prioritize requests during these meetings.

MusicXML and SMuFL

Daniel Spreadbury from Steinberg was unable to attend due to two flight cancellations, so I presented the SMuFL introduction in his absence. Questions and comments regarding the relationship between MusicXML and SMuFL included:

- SMuFL details seem similar in level to things like Bezier points in slurs. (James)
- Which positioning information is dependent on a font, which is not, and what happens if the font in a MusicXML document is different? (Carl)

- Is there a way to indicate which positioning information is font-dependent and which is not? (Carl)
- Standardization of hotspots in SMuFL should reduce positioning issues. (Chris)
- SMuFL's support of text editing is reminiscent of former typesetting using musical type. How far does SMuFL go in that direction? (Peter)
- Does SMuFL support slurs, crescendos, beams, etc. within text editing use? (Peter, James)
- Will we be able to compose text strings for tempo marks etc. using SMuFL, or are there different fonts and/or different mappings? (Martin)
- Do we still need specialized fonts like Opus Text and Metronome, or can SMuFL handle items like mixed tempo / metronome marks based on context?
- MusicXML 4.0 could use an escape for specifying non-standard SMuFL characters. (Martin, Peter)
- Not all SMuFL glyphs should be in MusicXML, especially similar glyphs (Peter)
- Semantics in MusicXML are important, not just the SMuFL glyph number (Karin)
- Please, not all 3000 SMuFL glyphs; documentation and other areas are much more important for MusicXML improvement. (Christof)

In general, the idea of SMuFL 1.0 support being the main new feature for a MusicXML 4.0 seemed well received, with reminders that the MusicXML support system needs improvement, not just adding new features and fixes. One of those areas was a sanitizer tool, which led directly into the new section.

An Open-Source MusicXML Sanitization Tool

Bob Hamblok presented a proposal from neoScores for the creation of an open-source MusicXML sanitization tool. Questions and comments regarding this proposal included:

- Should an upgrader from earlier versions of MusicXML to MusicXML 3.0 / 4.0 be included, or available as a separate tool? The separate tool appeared to be preferred. (Karin, Peter)
- Suggested an MIT License or similar that is friendly to all types of software development projects be used for this tool. (Michael)
- A logger for reporting problems in the original file without the automatic or interactive sanitizing would be a valuable option, since changes are often best made in the original source file rather than the MusicXML file. (Martin)
- Python or another more general-purpose language would be preferred to a web-centric language like JavaScript. (Janek, Urs)

MusicXML and the MMA/AMEI

Michael discussed the tentative proposal from the MMA and AMEI organizations that MusicXML and other related formats might serve as an eScore standard within their organizations. When asked about people's feelings about the MMA or other standards organizations as a potential future home for the MusicXML format, there was little discussion. Reinhold endorsed the work that MMA has done with MIDI and thought MMA would be a good home. Someone asked what MMA has been doing for 30 years if MIDI is still on version 1.0. Chris responded that MMA got lots of things right in MIDI 1.0 which is why it has lasted so long; Michael mentioned the many new messages, parameters, and higher-level standards like General MIDI that have appeared over the years.

Conclusion

We once again received very good feedback from the people who attended the Musikmesse meeting. The reception sponsored by neoScores was successful with people staying for an additional hour

after the meeting to talk in smaller groups. Thanks to neoScores for hosting the meeting and providing the refreshments for the reception. As before, the audio/visual and other meeting support was first rate. As long as Musikmesse provides this venue for these types of meetings and is willing to include us, we plan to keep this an annual event.