OpenScore Press Release

Kickstarter campaign to revolutionise sheet music

OpenScore is a new initiative to digitise and liberate all public domain sheet music, including the great classical works by the likes of Mozart and Beethoven. OpenScore will harness the power of the online community to take scanned copies of musical scores and turn them into interactive digital scores. MuseScore, the world's most popular sheet music notation software, and IMSLP, the world's largest online archive of public domain sheet music, are launching a KickStarter campaign on May 30th 2017 to make this possible.

The aim of the project is to transform history's most influential pieces from paper into interactive digital scores, which you can listen to, edit and share. The OpenScore sheet music editions will be made freely available to everyone to use for any purpose. The digital scores can also be parsed by software tools for research and analysis, and can even be converted to Braille notation for blind musicians. OpenScore editions will be released into the Public Domain using Creative Commons Zero, allowing unlimited copying and adaptation.

Edward Guo, founder of IMSLP, says: "Composers have been writing down their music for over hundred of years, leaving us with a wealth of sheet music. Unfortunately, these scores are often trapped in old manuscripts and dusty libraries. [OpenScore](#) is an ambitious project to bring music in the public domain to live, by digitizing it and making it available to everyone, for free."

Liberating music from the constraints of paper opens up a range of new music learning and consumer experiences, such as listening and adapting. One of the ultimate applications is that blind users will finally be able to read iconic music works, by assessing digital Braille notation."

Let's kickstart a music revolution

Backers can choose the composer and piece that they want to liberate by supporting the crowdfunding campaign. In return, they get the option to dedicate the work to someone.

The money from the Kickstarter will be used to coordinate the crowdsourced transcription process. Each of the works to be transcribed is divided into small sections a few pages in length. These are given out to MuseScore's users, who do the transcription and send it back after a few days. The transcriptions are checked and, once completed to a satisfactory standard, they are assembled together to create a preview of the full score. The preview is published for peer-review, and once the review is complete the score is marked as validated and ready for use. To this end, platforms for transcription and peer-review will be created, hence facilitating the automation process.

Thomas Bonte, CEO and co-founder of MuseScore, says: "It is my hope that OpenScore will have the same impact in the world of music as Wikipedia had for human knowledge. Moreover, the free accessible music data of OpenScore will push the development of AI music applications to a new level. This represents a whole new frontier in music history."

More information
- Website (www.openscore.cc) and press kit (https://goo.gl/MKuEWQ)
- Contact: Peter Jonas, OpenScore Project Manager (info@openscore.cc)

Partners

MuseScore

MuseScore is the world's most popular music notation editor. It is an open source program with hundreds of developers and contributors around the world. MuseScore also provides apps for Android and iOS, and a website where users can upload and share scores they create with the desktop software. The website is home to the largest online community of sheet music creators in the world.

MuseScore's community will use the software to produce the transcriptions which become OpenScore editions. MuseScore is rewarding transcribers with free membership of its website, which gives them unlimited score uploads.

Contact: Thomas Bonte, MuseScore co-founder (thomas@musescore.com)

IMSLP

The IMSLP/Petrucci Music Library is a wiki-based music library with one of the largest online collections of public domain scores and recordings and contemporary works licensed under a Creative Commons license.

IMSLP provides the sheet music scans which will be transcribed into digital scores for OpenScore. The copyright status of each uploaded scan is manually checked by IMSLP's legal team to ensure that the work really is in the public domain.

Contact: Edward Guo, IMSLP co-founder (eguo@imslp.org)

RNIB

RNIB is the leading UK charity for people who are blind or partially sighted. They provide support and assistance to over 2 million people with sight loss in the UK, as well as conducting research and raising awareness.

RNIB Music Advisory Service is providing assistance in the production of accessible scores in Braille and Modified Stave Notation.

Contact: RNIB Music Advisory Service (MAS@rnib.org.uk)

Music21
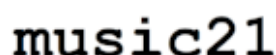
Music21 is an open source toolkit for extracting information from digital sheet music in MusicXML format. It is mainly used by researchers to analyse music and answer questions such as "how often does the composer do this?". The toolkit was developed at MIT and is written in the Python programming language.

OpenScore will utilise Music21's Braille converter to produce Braille music for blind musicians.

Contact: Michael Scott Cuthbert, Associate Professor of Music (cuthbert@mit.edu)

C82

C82 is the website of Nicholas Rougeux, a Chicago-based digital artist and web developer.

Nicholas is creating a unique cover image for each OpenScore edition, based on his Off The Staff music visualisations.

Contact: Nicholas Rougeux, digital data artist (rougeux@gmail.com)

People

Thomas Bonte - MuseScore Co-Founder and CEO

OpenScore has been Thomas' secret dream for a number of years. After a few failed attempts at setting up websites for sharing sheet music transcriptions, Thomas realised that the high price of commercial sheet music editors was the main barrier to progress. While looking for cheaper options, he discovered MuseScore; an open source music notation program created by Werner Schweer. Together with Werner and Nicolas Froment, another open source developer, he founded the MuseScore company to bring free notation software to the world. With the release of MuseScore 2.1, which brings the software on par with its commercial rivals, Thomas feels the time is right to revive his dream for OpenScore.
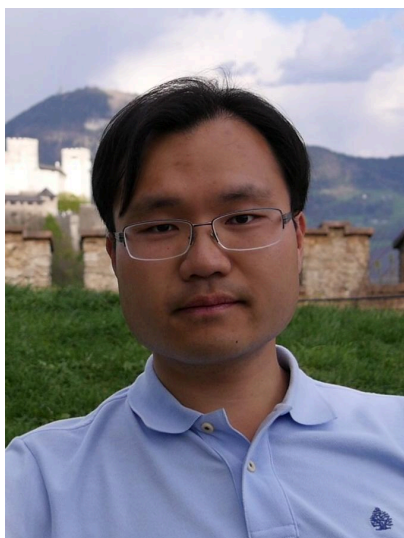
Edward Guo - IMSLP Founder and Leader

Edward created IMSLP while still at college, after being frustrated by the expensive price tag placed on modern editions of classical pieces and public domain works. Edward faced a number of threats and legal challenges along the way, but his degree in law and his passion for music gave him the skills and determination needed to succeed. Edward had started to allow people to contribute transcriptions to IMSLP in addition to PDF scans, but inconsistencies in quality and file formats led him to believe that a more organised approach would be beneficial.

Peter Jonas - OpenScore Project Manager

A recent graduate of Physics and Computer Science at the University of St Andrews, Peter contributed to MuseScore's open source development throughout his degree. In 2016, while working for MuseScore as an intern as part of Google's Summer of Code program, Peter approached Thomas with an idea for a crowdsourced transcription project. Thomas immediately recognised the idea as the same as his own dream for OpenScore and, deciding that the time was right, invited Peter on board to lead the project.