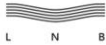# Promotion and Accessibility of Audiovisual Collections at the National Library of Latvia (NLL)

Maija Zvejniece and Zane Grosa
Audiovisual Reading Room
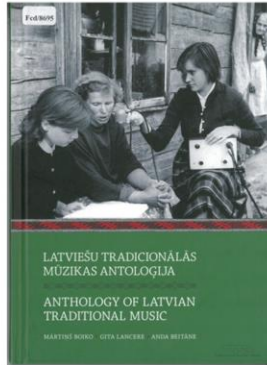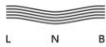NLL

BAAC conference
Tallinn, November 7-9

Audiovisual collection at the NLL

- First sound recordings acquired in 1961, established as a department in 1975
- Legal Deposit of Latvia's AV publications (since 2006)
- Materials pertaining to Latvia or Latvians published elsewhere, including diaspora
- Collection for lifelong education, research, leisure
- Currently more than 79'000 items - sound recordings (LPs, CD, audiocassettes, shellacs, other), video recordings (VHS, DVD, Blu-ray), multimedia materials, language and other subjects teaching kits with AV component, born digital sound recordings

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Sound recordings - content

- Music – classical, popular, world, folk, jazz
- Audiobooks, recordings of plays, oral histories
- Nature sounds, noises

The largest part of sound recordings contain classical music (Western, Latvian, Russian). We hold a large number of records by "Melodia" (Мелодия) with many notable recordings by well-known Soviet artists of the time. There are also selections of recordings by foreign labels.

Although the majority of sound recordings are music, there are also audiobooks, recordings of plays, nature sounds, noises.

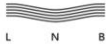The content of video collection is very diverse – there are feature films, documentaries, animated films from Latvia and many other countries, recordings of opera, ballet and concert performances, as well as musicals and musical films. In the last few years, the collection has been expanded with cinema classics, such as the best examples of the silent film genre, French New Wave, and the works of world-renowned directors.
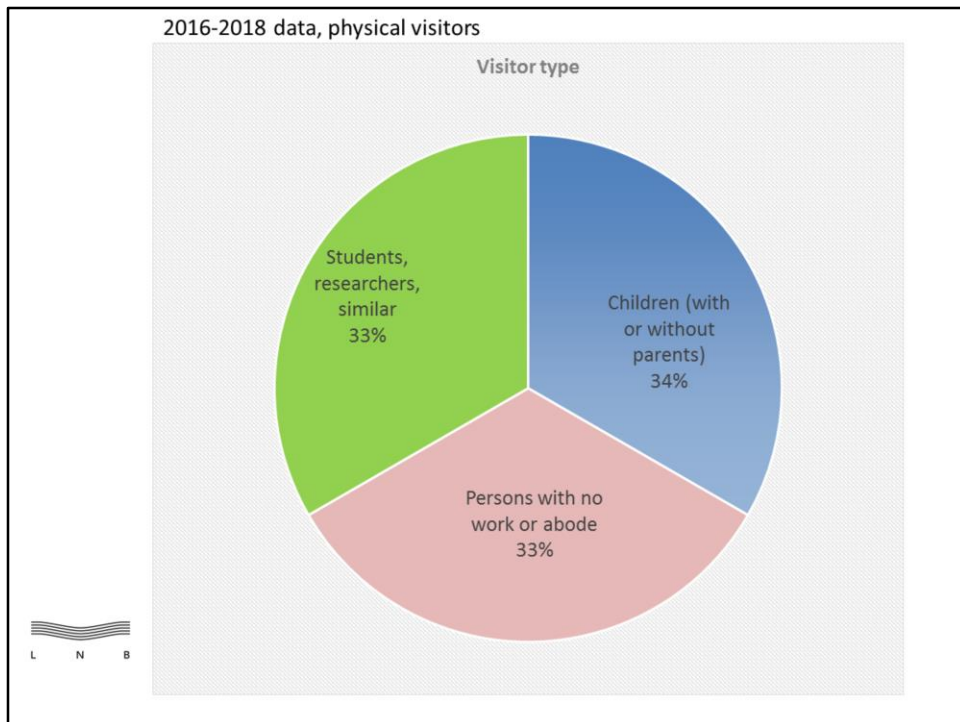
Our audience

- Our expectations:
  - students,
  - pupils of art and music schools,
  - researchers of music and cinema fields, or people with interest in music and cinema
- In reality:
  - students
  - seniors
  - people from lower social levels, including from shelters
  - families with young children

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Initially, we thought that our audience would be mostly students, researching materials for their studies, and people with either professional or personal interest in music and cinema, broadly speaking.

However, we learned in practice that our audience is much more diverse that we imagined, - there are students but also seniors and people with special needs, families with children, and even people without work and fixed residence.

Such diverse audience also requires different methods of promoting and discovery of content.

2016-2018 data, physical visitors

Visitor type

Students, researchers, similar 33%

Children (with or without parents) 34%

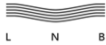Persons with no work or abode 33%

So, to put it in a chart, our audience consists of 3 types of visitors, in roughly about the same number – children, with or without parents, persons with no work or no permanent address (in other words, living in shelters), and the group we would like to see grow most of all – that is, students, researchers, and those with special interest in sound or moving image.

Public perception of the NLL…

- …as a place to just read books and other printed material
- …almost no knowledge of AV collection being available for listening and viewing
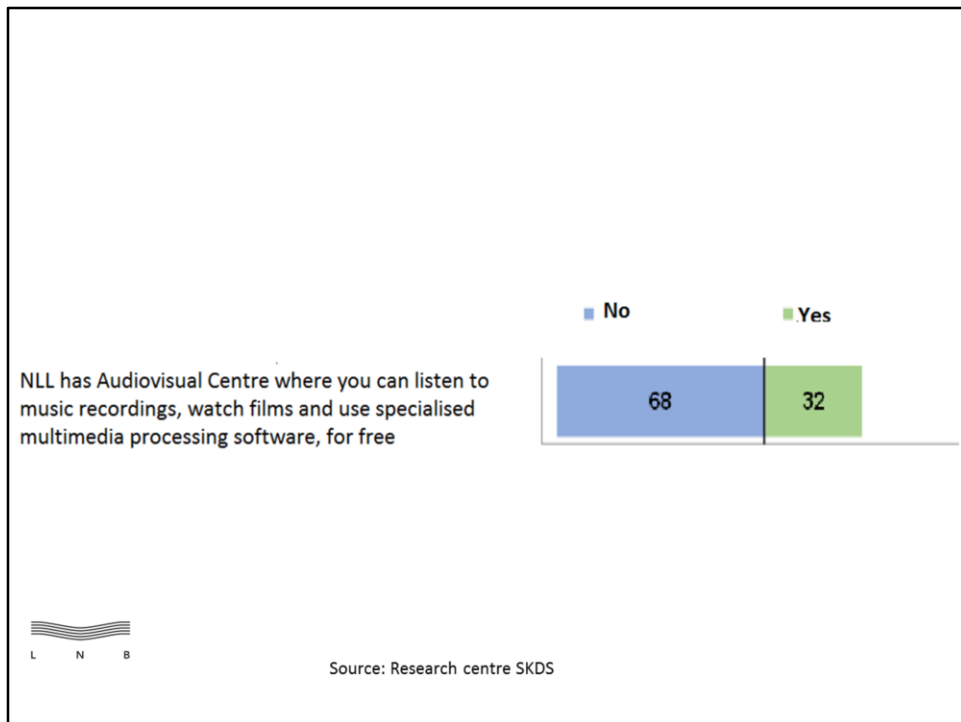
Survey – the question:

«Did you know there is an Audiovisual centre where you can listen to music recordings, watch films and use specialised multimedia processing software, for free?»

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In a survey done by the Research centre SKDS in 2017 about the 'image' of the National Library of Latvia among the residents of Latvia, one of the questions was:
Did you know there is an Audiovisual centre where you can listen to music recordings, watch films and use specialised multimedia processing software, for free?
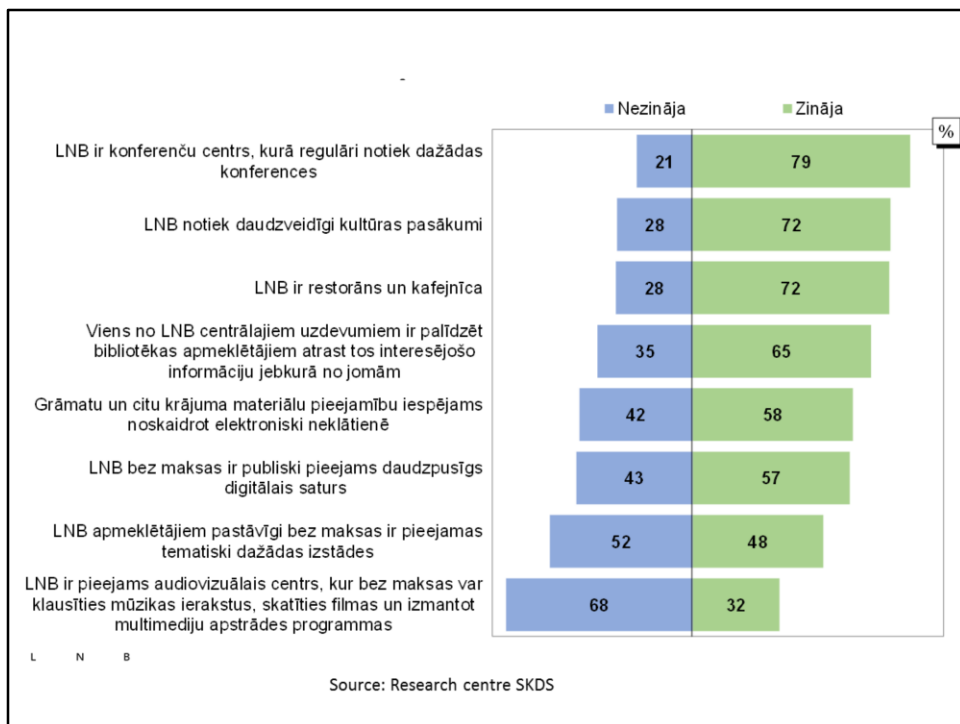
As you can see, almost 2/3 of the respondents didn't know about the existance of Audiovisual Centre at the library, and hence, no knowledge of our collection.

Source: Research centre SKDS

Whereas most of the people knew that there is a conference centre at the library, and were aware of the various cultural events happening there, and that there is a cafe and a restaurant at the National Library, and even that you can use the online electronic catalogue to find out about availability of the books at the library.

So, what have we done so far to promote the existence of our reading room and collection?

The first information about the Audiovisual Reading Room is often given by the guide during an overall library tour.
We are also organising specialised in-depth tours for students and pupils from the culture, music and arts schools, colleges and universities, often in cooperation with Music and Arts reading rooms.

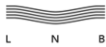## Promotion of AV Reading room and collection (2)

- Events and exhibitions

Together with library's Department of Communication we try to promote our reading room with organised events and exhibitions. However, we have learned from our experience that 'your event' often gets lost in the general stream of information because library is literally swamped with events, there are 3 or 4 happening every day! This is in part because the library's new building is seen as a very 'cool' place to hold events in, it has good facilities. Also, library has about 20 reading rooms that each organise events and in a way, competes with each other. So in the last 2 years we have focused on organising 2 events per year, but we change the exhibits in our display cases in the reading room every few months.

We also place information about our events and exhibitions in the library's social networks, such as the Facebook account, but again, the amount of information is simply too great.

Promotion of AV Reading room and collection (3)

- Video promotion, in connection with movie events at the library
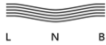
Video clip about AV Reading Room

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The Dept. of Communication arranged a cooperation project with the Academy of Culture, where one of their students in the faculty of film production wrote scripts and directed several promotional videos about the AV reading room. These videos were made like little movies, involving well-know personalities in Latvia. The videos were then shown before movie nights in the big hall of the library, and at other movie-themed events, at some of those we also prepared a short presentation for the audience, telling of the collection and facilities of the AV reading room.

One of the videos involves a well known DJ in Latvia Toms Grēviņš, and composer Pēteris Vasks, who might be well known more broadly.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGR5qjpCwzM&feature

Promotion of AV Reading room and collection (4)

- Film lists
  - Latvian films
  - foreign feature films
  - documentaries
  - films about music and musicians
  - films about art and artists, etc.

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4. It is a well-known fact that people generally don't like to use the library's catalogue for searching, and to be fair, it is not very user-friendly. So how to make the content of our video collection better accessible, so that it doesn't get lost in the 'black holes' of the catalogue? Unexpectedly, a very popular form of promoting our film collection have been the 'film lists' – that is, various lists made by librarian with films grouped according to their subject, genre, or origin. At the moment there are about 15 different lists, of which the most popular are:

      - Latvian films, foreign feature films, documentaries, films about music and musicians, films about art and artists, videos of operas, etc.

These lists are available in printed format, in our reading room, but also on the library's website, as PDFs (click on the 'Film lists').

Each list is created slightly different, we try to predict what is the most relevant information in each individual case, for example, in the list of documentaries we try to summarise what the film is about, in the list of opera performances we name the conductor and the singers. It is also important to show the film language and subtitles.

Oriģinālnosaukums	Alternatīvs nosaukums vai tulkojums	Režisors	Filmas iznākšanas g.	Piezīmes	Šifrs
Pierrot le fou		Godard, Jean-Luc	1965	Franču jaunais vilnis	Fdvd/1066
Pink Floyd the wall	The wall	Parker, Alan	1982	Muzikāla filma. Pielik.: The other side of the wall : documentary u.c.	Fdvd/542
Platinum blonde	Платиновая блондинка	Capra, Frank	1931	Romantiska komēdija	Fdvd/831 Fdvd/2384
Play it again, Sam		Allen, Woody	1972		Fdvd/2474
Pleasantville	Jaukpilsēta; Плезантвиль	Ross, Gary	1998	Fantāzija	Fdvd/1018
Pokolenie	A generation	Wajda, Andrzej	1955	No Andžeja Vajdas kara triloģijas	Fdvd/1543
Pollock		Harris, Ed	2000	Par amerikāņu mākslinieku Džeksonu Polloku	Fdvd/1708
Popiól i diament	Ashes and diamonds	Wajda, Andrzej	1958	No Andžeja Vajdas kara triloģijas	Fdvd/1545
Poulet au vinaigre	Cop au vin	Chabrol, Claude	1985	No sērijas Classic from the master of suspense	Fdvd/1409
Pride & prejudice	Гордость и предубеждение	Wright, Joe	2005	Džeinas Ostinas romāna ekraniz.; Pielik.: A Bennet family portrait ; Jane Austen, ahead of her time	Fdvd/955
Prisoners	Gūsteknes; Пленницы	Villeneuve, Denis	2013	Krimināifilma	Fdvd/2696
Psycho		Hitchcock, Alfred	1960	Trilleris. Pielik.: dok.filma par A.Hičkoku; American film institute salute to Alfred Hitchcock u.c.	Fdvd/1091

FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Kannu kinofestivālā godalgotās filmas
LNB Audiovizuālās lasītavas krājumā

1983 **CARMEN**
Carlos SAURA
Grand Prix of the C.S.T. ; Prix de la meilleure contribution artistique au Festival
International du Film

1983 **НОСТАЛЬГИЯ** ≈ NOSTALGHIA
Тарковский, Андрей
International Critic's Prize by the F.I.P.R.E.S.C.I. ; Grand Prix du cinéma de création Ex-aequo

1983 **MONTY PYTHON** - THE MEANING OF LIFE
Terry JONES
Jury's Special Grand Prix

1984 **PARIS TEXAS**
Wim WENDERS
Palme d'Or ; International Critic's Prize by the F.I.P.R.E.S.C.I. Ex-aequo

1985 **OTAC NA SLUZBENOM PUTU** ≈
When father was away on business
Emir KUSTURICA
Palme d'Or Unanimité ; International Critic's Prize by the F.I.P.R.E.S.C.I. Ex-aequo

1986 **THE MISSION**
Roland JOFFE
Palme d'Or ; C.S.T. Prize

1987 **SOUS LE SOLEIL DE SATAN** ≈ Under the Sun of Satan
Maurice PIALAT
Palme d'Or Unanimité

1987 **DER HIMMEL UBER BERLIN** ≈ Wings of Desire
Wim WENDERS
Award for Best Director

1988 **PELLE EROBREREN** ≈ Pelle el conquistador
Bille AUGUST
Palme d'Or

1988 **BIRD**
Clint EASTWOOD
Award for Best Actor (Forest WHITAKER) ; Grand Prix de la Commission
Supérieure Technique
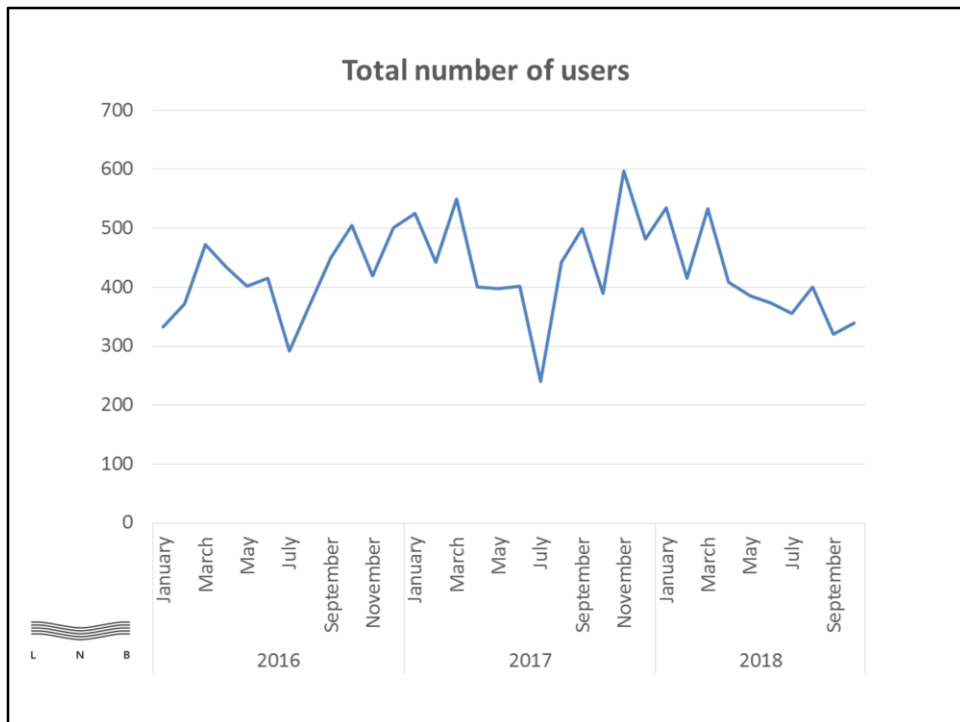
1988 **SALAAM BOMBAY !**
Mira NAIR
Caméra d'or

1989 **SEX, LIES & VIDEOTAPE**
Steven SODERBERGH
Palme d'Or ; Award for Best Actor (James SPADER) ; International Critic's Prize
by the F.I.P.R.E.S.C.I.

1989 **NUOVO CINEMA PARADISO**
Giuseppe TORNATORE
Jury's Special Grand Prix Ex-aequo
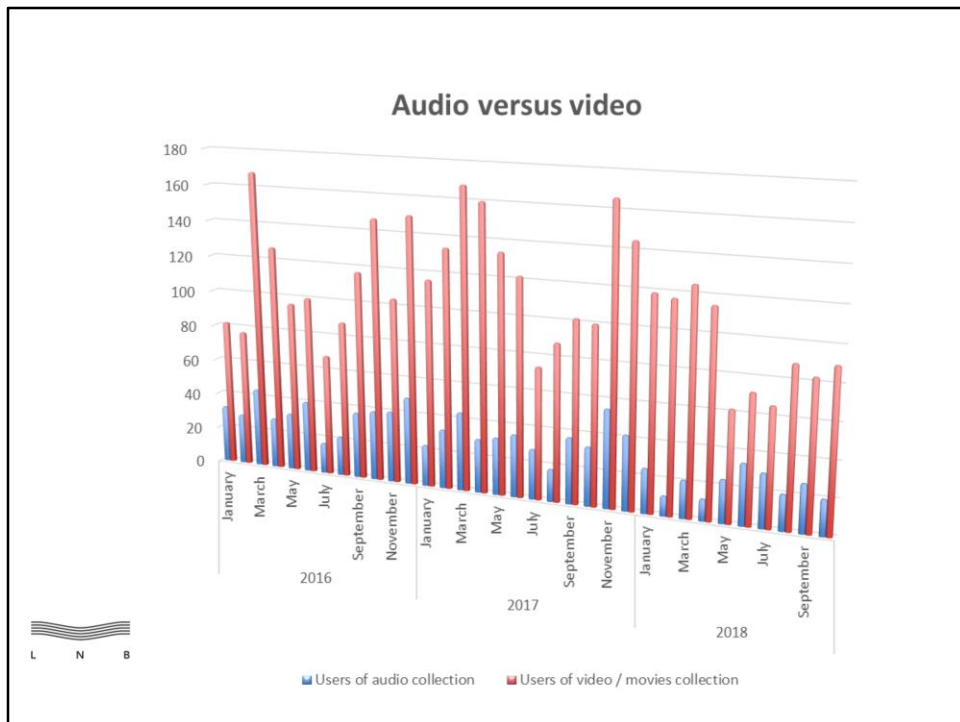
1990 **WILD AT HEART**
David LYNCH
Palme d'Or

1991 **BARTON FINK**
Ethan COEN, Joel COEN
Palme d'Or Unanimité ; Award for Best Director (Joel COEN) ; Award for Best
Actor (John TURTURRO)

1991 **LA BELLE NOISEUSE**
Jacques RIVETTE
Grand Prix

Total number of users

During the last 3 years, the total number of users of the Audiovisual Reading room seems to be slowly on the rise. As you can see, the lowest usage is generally during the summer, and then it goes up again in the colder months.
We have introduced stronger measures, asking our users to leave the premises if they are unhygienic. Also, we have monitored some of our users who were inclined to fall asleep in our cabins, and have denied them the usage of our reading room, in accordance with the Library usage rules.
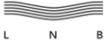
In this chart we can see that our video collection gets much more usage over our audio (data about our physical collection). The reasons for this might be several:

- video is an easier format to use, it appeals to wider public on all levels of society;
- film lists play a huge role in making it easy to find a film to watch – no such lists exist for our audio material. Some of our audience do not wish to search the catalogue, even if the staff helped them to do it.

Conclusions

- Video wins over audio
- Need to target audiophiles, bring out the audio 'gems' in our collection
- Need to establish research partnerships within academic world
- Work on clearly defining our target audiences and what could attract them

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Photo credits:

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Thank you!

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