

Overview of the largest audiovisual collections in Latvia

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

5 collections:

- Archives of Latvian Folklore (LFK)
- Latvian Radio
- Latvian Television Archives
- Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents
- Audiovisual collection of National Library of Latvia

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

This presentation does not include audiovisual collections that are in possession of private persons, although some of them are quite large and significant.

Characteristics:

- Description
- Materials and size of the collection
- Access
- Digitization projects

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

University of Latvia Archives of Latvian Folklore (LFK)

- Established in 1924 as text document archive
- 1926 – sound recordings, 1960 – films, 1986 – VHS
- Valuable and historic materials related to Latvia's folklore



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Archives of Latvian Folklore were established in 1924 as a text and document oriented archives. The range of information is limited to that of folklore material and its background information.

Still it has never been a strictly manuscript archive. Even the very first material included drawings, with photographs gradually entering later. In 1926 sound recordings were started in order to facilitate melody collection. In 1951 the audiovisual part of the archives was enlarged by magnetic tape recordings, in 1960's cinematic film was added, in 1986 the first VHS video.

Speaking about the Archives of Latvian Folklore (LFK), one tends to think of old and valuable manuscripts, especially the famous Dainu skapis or 'Cabinet of Folksongs' designed by Krisjanis Barons. Of course, the number of manuscripts is the greatest, they constitute the majority of LFK's holdings. LFK holds a number of sound recordings and a significant number of pictorial representations in the form of both drawings and photographs. The number may seem not too great when compared to some of the world's (or even Latvia's) largest specialised archives, still it is important because of its particular purpose, namely collecting all the available material related to folklore.

LFK, cont...

- 190 phonograph cylinders
- 300 reels magnetic tape (different length and thickness)
- A lot of audiocassettes
- DAT, minidisks, HDD
- Over 150 VHS, 58 DV cassettes
- Drawings, photo negatives and prints

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012



Two archive shelves are occupied by rigid cardboard boxes containing cylinders (some 190 altogether). These are the first technical information carriers in the archives.

Beginning with the year 1951 LFK has sound recordings on magnetic tape (there are no recordings using the technologies used in the period between these two). Recordings onto tape, made between 1951 and 1979, were numbered, thus facilitating their identification for digitising purposes.

There is also a significant collection of VHS video, which is completely digitised, but creates rather significant difficulties from the perspective of storage space and handling.

Originally the only images were drawings, then the first submitted photos reached LFK, still later, with the staff members of LFK taking pictures, both negatives and prints can be found in the archive.

LFK – access

- No catalogues originally
- “Virtual reading room” – via the LFK website (http://www.lfk.lv/lfk_eng.html)
- Full database available on the premises of Archives
- Samples of images and sound recordings on the web



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Originally the different types of material had no detailed catalogues, all of the material was only accessible locally, and finding a particular item took significant amount of time and effort.

With the digitisation efforts this has changed substantially. The so called Virtual reading room is available via the LFK website, with the current version of the archive database accessible in a slightly simplified form.

The full database is available for visitors locally at the Archives. Phonograph cylinder and tape recordings, still images and VHS video are completely catalogued in a data base. All of the oldest sound recordings have been digitised and made available without necessity to use the original playback hardware, all of the prints and drawings registered in the card catalogues have been digitised and can be accessed from any computer at the Archives.

Most of the images and a significant part of the sound recordings are available as samples on the web (images at 72 dpi 640x640 *.jpg, sound as 56 kbps *.mp3).

LFK – digitisation

- 2002 – project “Latvian Folklore on the Internet“ submitted to UNESCO
- Later support of the State Culture Capital Foundation
- Result – digitisation of magnetic tapes, scanning of the prints and drawings, start of scanning of negatives
- Selective digitisation following recession in 2008

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012



In 2002 LFK submitted to UNESCO a project proposal entitled "Latvian Folklore on the Internet". The proposal was accepted and LFK received a grant for this digitising project. Later the project was continued with the support of the State Culture Capital Foundation, so all of the existing catalogue of tapes was digitised, all of the prints and drawings included in the archive material scanned, and scanning of negatives started. Unfortunately the recession caused severe cuts in this position of national budget, so the work is only continued selectively, scanning particular manuscripts and digitising specifically chosen tapes.

Sound Recording Library of Latvian Radio

- Established in 1947
- Main objective – to receive, process and store audio recordings
- 75% of material – music recordings, the rest – literature, drama and socio-political content



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Sound Library was established at the Latvian Radio in 1947, although some content was stockpiled since the end of World War Two in 1945. Since its inception, the Sound Library's objective has been to receive, to process and to store audio recordings. Recording, acquisition or commissioning of audio content was always the responsibility of the editors of corresponding profiles. The music editors were responsible for music recordings of diverse genres, literary editors took care of radio plays and audio versions of literary works, editors of social and political programs were in charge of transmissions and reports from relevant venues.

Music of various genres comprise three quarters or 75 per cent of total Sound Library stock, while the remaining 25 per cent can be split into literature, drama and social-political segments.

Latvian Radio, cont...

- Magnetic tapes recorded at various speeds (30 ips, 15 ips and 7,5 ips) – 87'000
- Vinyl records – 2700
- Audio cassettes – 0
- CD – 31'420
- Sound files – 1824



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Up to 1995 the Sound Library's audio materials consisted only of magnetic tapes recorded at various speeds (30 ips (inches per second), 15 ips and 7,5 ips), vinyl records and audio cassettes. In 1992 the first audio CDs arrived at the Sound Library, however, since there were very few CDs at the beginning, they were entered into log books just like magnetic tapes.

Now the number of CDs and sound files is constantly changing, it grows by hours not days.

Latvian Radio - access

- Search in card catalogue and electronic database
- Searching by different parameters:
 - genre or type of broadcast;
 - person;
 - language;
 - place;
 - carrier type, etc.
- Users – staff, but productions of Latvian Radio also sold



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

The electronic catalogue of Radio Sound Library is available and can be used only within the LR. Not all of the data is in the electronic catalogue, there is also a card catalogue, however many editors of the younger generation don't know how to use the card catalogue and are just using the electronic one.

Data is searchable in many different ways, using specific search parameters. The more parameters you use, the more precise information gets selected.

The database can be searched by the genre or type of broadcast, by person, by language of performance, place of recording, or carrier type.

Materials of the Sound library are used mainly by the staff of Latvian Radio. But recordings and broadcast material produced by Latvian Radio are also sold. Among purchasers are individuals as well as various organisations.

Latvian Radio - digitisation

- 2003 – beginning of tape digitisation project
- 2 main objectives:
 - ensure the preservation of the content;
 - online access of the audio materials for production and broadcasting
- Estimated outcome: 15'000 hours of digitised content
- December 2008 – project suspended due to funding cuts



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

In 2003, the Latvian Radio's IT staff developed a project that targeted digitization of the sound library, with a view of creating on-line access of the audio recordings internally. The project had two major objectives. On the one hand, it was to take care of preservation of the content of magnetic tapes, and, on the other, it was to support instant use of the tape recordings for program production and broadcasting. Workstations were set up for audio as well as data input, and studios were equipped for copying and editing. Expert sound engineers were hired for tape digitization. The ambitious project went ahead in March 2004. Simultaneously with the start of the digitization process, extensive cataloguing was resumed, since a processed audio file is available only provided it is linked to a metadata.

The total workload was 87 000 units of analogue tape with total duration of the content close to 15 thousand hours. At the outset, the process was estimated to take 3.5 years. However, in December 2008 the funding was cut and digitization stopped. It had actually taken 4.5 years, and the full amount of tapes was still not covered. During those 4.5 years 95% of the literary and drama programs and social-political content was processed.

Since December 2008, the process of tape digitization is suspended; however, CD and virtual sound processing goes on and is refined further. In the near future, provided the necessary funding is found, the Radio Sound Recording library hopes to finally accomplish the tape digitization project.

Latvian Television Archives

- Consists of 2 parts:
 - Film archive;
 - Video archive.
- Film archive – 1959 TV news footage, unique copy
- Video archive – est. in 1993:
 - plays in Latvia's theatres;
 - materials about renewal of independence in Latvia and Baltic states
 - programs about important persons in Latvia
 - documentation of important events in country's life



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Latvian Television archives consists of two parts:

- 1) film archive,
- 2) video archive.

Film archive's footage on 16 mm tapes can already be seen as unique from today's perspective – these are materials from the TV news footage in 1959, which shows what the life was like in those times. There are no copies of this news footage anywhere, the only copy is stored at the LTV. They have irreplaceable value for making new programs and new films. At present, the public interest has increased in these materials.

The Video archive was formed in 1993. The oldest material in the archive is from 1973 – a TV production "Hugo Diegs", which is a sort of musical theatrical program. A special part of the archive is formed by plays performed in Latvian theatres, filmed at different years. Such material is to be found nowhere else. Particular significance have also those video materials that were filmed during the renewal of Latvia's independence - Baltic Way, January events of 1991, August coup, the plenary session of May 4, 1990, etc. There are also visual portraits of important persons for Latvia's political and cultural life, the only ones of its kind, recordings of Latvian Song and Dance festivals, and other unique material.

LTV Archives, cont...

- Film archive:
 - 1578 boxes of 16mm tapes
 - 7848 boxes of 35mm tapes
- Video archive:
 - 17'344 units Betacam tapes;
 - 1094 DVCAM
 - 4955 2-inch tapes



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Film archive consists of materials on 16 mm and 35 mm tapes.

Unlike the film archive where there are no more new acquisitions, and where the main task is preservation of the existing material, the video archive is seen as a mobile unit, and new materials are constantly added to this archive.

Extra copies have been made for programs with a particular cultural and historical significance.

LTV Archives, cont...

- Usage – mostly internal, but materials also sold in DVD format
- Since 2011 – broadcasting in digital format
- Further digitisation subject to EU project funding



LATVIJAS TELEVĪZIJA

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Similarly to Latvian Radio, materials of the Latvian TV archives are used mainly by the staff of Latvian TV. However, broadcast material produced by Latvian TV is offered for sale on DVDs . Among purchasers are individuals as well as various organisations.

As of June 2011 LTV has started broadcasting in digital format, it is possible to store part of the programs already digitally. If the funding from the EU funds is received, it will enable to perform digitisation of the materials much faster.

Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents

- Film and video, photo and audio materials
- One of the largest collections of film and video documents in Latvia
- Historic and unique documentary and feature films and newsreels
- Private collections of persons and institutions
- Latvia State Presidents, Latvian Parliament and State Chancellery video document collections



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

The Latvia State archive of AV documents has collections of film, video, photo and audio materials. It holds more than 88 thousand items of film and video documents, which is the largest collection of these materials in Latvia. This collection consists of Latvian feature and documentary films, popular science films, newsreels, animation films and other. There are also many materials with unique historical and documentary value, such as the first film footage created in Latvia which shows the visit of Russian Emperor Nicholas II to Riga in 1910; newsreels and films created between the I and II World Wars; newsreels of German and Soviet armies occupation of Latvia.

Valuable part of the collection is formed by the private donations of AV materials by persons and institutions.

In accordance with a special agreement a video document collection was formed which holds materials about the presidency of recent Latvia's State Presidents.

Also, forming a successful partnership with state institutions, the Latvian Parliament and the Latvian State Chancellery video document collections have been established.

Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents, cont...

- Film and video materials – 89'000 (8mm, 16mm, 35mm tapes, VHS, Super VHS, Betacam, Betacam Digital, Betacam SP, DVD, mini DV, DVCAM, HI 8)
- Photographic documents – 1'500'000 (negatives, glass positives, diapositives, CD, HDD)
- Sound documents – 50'000 (matrixes, LPs, magnetic tapes, audiocassettes, DAT cassettes, CD, HDD)
- Electronic documents – 5607 (DVD, CD, DVCAM, DAT, HDD)
- Film posters – 2326



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents - access

- Card and electronic catalogues
- Researcher's permit required
- Different services, depending on the material
- Some digitised newsreels available online:

<http://www.arhivi.lv/index.php?&1927>



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

The archive offers free and paid services. Many items are in the electronic catalogue but many are only in the card catalogue. Electronic catalogue is available only within the archive.

To use the documents of the archive, a person has to receive a researcher's permit, but it is not difficult to obtain.

The film department also lends out films for demonstration in, for example, film festivals.

There is an interesting collection of digitised historic newsreels available online, with the time span from 1910-1992, and subjects include 1st and 2nd World Wars, Soviet propaganda materials, floods around Riga in 1924, diaspora Latvians, and many others.

Latvia State Archive of Audiovisual Documents - digitisation

- Planned digitisation of sound documents since 1998:
 - shellac recordings
 - LPs with Latvian music
 - recordings of Latvian literature classics, and others
- Planned digitisation of video and film documents since 2006:
 - old and unique film materials
 - 35mm films (vinegar syndrome)
- Planned digitisation of photo documents since 2003

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012



Planned digitisation of sound documents has been carried out in the archive since 1998. Shellac recordings, made before 1940, are a priority, as well as vinyl recordings that contain Latvian music or performers, including the production of Riga's "Melodiya" factory. Also very important are spoken recordings of Latvian literature classics that have been recorded by famous Latvian actors during the 60 and 70 of the 20th century.

With regard to the film and video documents the priority is given to the unique and older film materials, and to preserve the content of the 35 mm films attacked by the vinegar syndrome, the archive has worked out a special technology in cooperation with Riga Motion Pictures Studio.

Planned digitisation of photo documents gives priority to especially valuable materials on such subjects as, for example, photos of Latvia from 1918-1940, old photo albums, Song and Dance festivals of Latvia and other photos of national importance.



AV collection of the National Library of Latvia

- Established in 1975
- Collection of AV materials published in Latvia
- Legal Deposit library of Latvia's AV publications (since 2006)
- Collecting materials pertaining to Latvia or Latvians published elsewhere, including diaspora
- Collection for lifelong education, research, studies

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

First sound recordings were purchased by the library in 1961, but the Sound Recording Library was established in 1975. It has seen many structural changes over the years, being at various times united with the Music Department, then separated, then united again, and now, since the June of this year, it is a separate structure again – the Audiovisual Reading Room, being 1 part of Arts and Music Centre, which incorporates also a Music Library and Arts Reading Room.

A significant part of the collection consists of AV materials published or produced in Latvia, in different times and on different carriers.

The National Library is the receiver of the Legal Deposit of all kinds of materials published in Latvia, and AV materials are included in the Legal Deposit law since 2006. One of the main responsibilities is to preserve the Latvian publications for ever (as far as this is possible).

It is also important to collect and preserve sound and video recordings published abroad that have a connection to Latvia or Latvians, as well as materials published by Latvians that have emigrated to different parts of the world.

Another emphasis is on creating a collection that promotes education, studies, research, reference and other purposes of the library's readers.

AV collection of the NLL, cont...

- Sound recordings – 65'000 (LPs, CD, audiocassettes, some shellacs)
- Video recordings – 800 (DVD, VHS)
- Multimedia materials – 100
- Language teaching materials with AV component
- Downloaded sound recordings – growing part of the collection

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

The biggest part of the collection is sound recordings, of which the LPs form the largest number. Of course, CDs are the fastest growing part of the collection. Also the number of DVDs received or purchased each year is growing.

Our collection has also been charged with keeping the mostly language teaching materials that include some kind of AV component.

And, of course, there are more and more artists that publish their albums just on the internet, but collecting those is problematic, not least because of the staff shortages.

AV collection of the NLL - access

- Electronic and card catalogues
- Most documents available only within the AV Reading Room
- Home lending of LPs

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

All of the CDs and DVDs are searchable in the electronic catalogue of the National Library, but a large amount of stereo and mono LPs are available only in the card catalogue. However, recataloguing is going on mostly thanks to experienced voluntary workers.

All of the materials can be listened or viewed for free in the reading room, and, for the time being, we are still continuing the home lending service of LPs for a minimal charge, which has been a tradition of many years. Of course, the interest is not so big nowadays as not many people own an LP player.

AV collection of the NLL - digitisation

- Pilot project – digitisation of Latvian LPs
- Results not satisfactory
- Big budget cuts in 2008
- Everything will happen in the “Castle of Light”?



Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012

A few years ago I gave a presentation at the BAAC conference about a pilot project of digitising Latvian LPs, using fancy equipment such as Laser player. However, the quality of the sound files is mostly not satisfactory, and it is not clear yet why it is so – is it the human factor, inappropriate equipment for the type of carrier, or something else. The project finished in 2011, and nothing has been happening after that.

Because of the financial crisis in Latvia, the National Library experienced budget cuts of 60% of its total budget, placing everything in survival mode. Most of its staff still don't work full time. Of course, the economy is improving, but unfortunately it takes long time to reach culture institutions.

At the end of 2013 the new building of the National Library of Latvia, the so called Castle of light is expected to open, and everything is geared towards it. Let's hope that it will bring new possibilities of safeguarding and digitising the AV materials of the library.

Thanks to:

Aldis Pūtelis – Archives of Latvian Folklore

Guna Žūriņa – Latvian Radio

Gunita Baškere – Latvian TV archives

Linda Plēša - Latvia State Archive of
Audiovisual Documents

Zane Grosa, BAAC 2012