



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-30-15-0437-15
Project Category: Collections Stewardship
Funding Level: \$25,001-\$150,000

National Music Museum University of South Dakota

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$149,964
Amount of cost share:	\$319,539

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing narratives for FY2016 applications differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2014 and FY2015 applications. Most obviously, the names of the three narrative sections and the order in which they appear have changed. Be sure to use the narrative instructions in the FY2016 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Core Collections Digital Access Enhancement Initiative

The National Music Museum (NMM) at the University of South Dakota (USD) requests IMLS Museums for America support in the Collections Stewardship category for a two-year project to increase greatly in quantity and quality digital accessibility to major sections of the NMM's collections of musical instruments. The Digital Access Enhancement Initiative, directed towards a total of 3670 objects, will reverify data and create approximately 6250 new high-quality digital images. The data and images will be incorporated into the NMM's collections database (TMS: The Museum System), and will be freely accessible through the NMM's website.

The musical instrument collections of the NMM, now comprising some 15,000 examples, are among the finest and most comprehensive in the world. Direct public access to the NMM collections is severely limited not only by the small number of instruments, approximately 8% of the total, that can be accommodated for display in the NMM's public areas but also by the Museum's location far from major population centers. Although the NMM has maintained a strong internet presence since 1996, its website now includes information about only 2700 instruments, with only 1100 images. Thus, the proposed initiative will more than double the number of digitally accessible objects and will more than quintuple the number of images.

In accordance with both the IMLS's goal of "promot[ing] the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage" and the NMM's strategic plan for 2014-2017, in which high priority has been assigned to improving the "NMM website, the 'face' of the institution, as a portal for virtual visitors," two major areas most needing to be addressed have been identified: the nucleus of 3357 instruments from the collection of Arne B. Larson (ABL) around which the NMM was originally founded and the NMM's current holdings of 352 European instruments made before 1800. (There is an overlap of 39 instruments in these categories.) The ABL collection is unsurpassed in its representation of 19th- and early-20th-century American instruments and also includes many significant European and non-Western examples. The cataloguing of the ABL instruments, received *en masse* in 1979, was inevitably cursory and only 13% have been photographed, mostly with long outdated black-and-white silver-negative technology. The presence of this core collection on the NMM website is minimal. Much better represented, with 84% listed or featured on the website, are the NMM's pre-1800 instruments, which include numerous superb examples by such renowned masters as Antonio Stradivari, three generations of the Amati family, Andreas Ruckers, and many others. However, about half of the instruments included in this much visited area of the website lack images.

The IMLS grant would principally fund a two-year position for an associate curator who, in collaboration with the permanent NMM staff, will review the basic cataloguing of the ABL instruments, take high-resolution documentary photographs of each instrument, and enter the data and images into the TMS database. This database will interface with Evoq Content, a content-management system purchased by USD in 2014. The NMM staff photographer will create publication-quality images of all pre-1800 instruments for which there are no up-to-date digital images and will enter these into the database. Other staff members will participate in the retrieval, moving, preparation, and return to display or storage of instruments to be examined and photographed. The Collections Manager/TMS Administrator will oversee the integration of the TMS database and the USD's content management system.

The progress and success of the project will be periodically gauged by the number of instruments reexamined, photographed, and entered into the TMS database, and by statistics of website visits.

The NMM collections to be made more accessible through the proposed initiative represent an invaluable cultural, educational, artistic, and scholarly resource to be found nowhere else. The information and images to be added to the NMM's database will greatly benefit not only the NMM staff in their curatorial, research, and teaching endeavors but, more importantly, the general public and specialists throughout the United States and the world.

Core Collections Digital Access Enhancement Initiative

1. Project Justification

- **What the NMM proposes to do**

The National Music Museum (NMM) at the University of South Dakota (USD) requests \$149,964 in funding from the IMLS Museums for America program in the Collections Stewardship category for a two-year project to significantly increase digital accessibility to the NMM's collections of musical instruments. The Digital Access Enhancement Initiative is directed towards the 3670 instruments in two core areas of the NMM's collections: the nucleus of 3357 instruments from the collection of Arne B. Larson (ABL) around which the NMM was originally founded and the NMM's current holdings of 352 European instruments (including 39 in the ABL collection) made before 1800. These instruments comprise nearly 25% of those in the NMM's permanent collection. It is intended to document these objects with updated catalogue data and state-of-the-art digital photography, to enter the information and images into the existing collection-management database (TMS: The Museum System), and to make these data and images publicly accessible through the NMM's website.

During the duration of the project:

- An associate curator, employed with IMLS funding for the for the period of two years, will, in collaboration with the permanent NMM curatorial staff: review the basic cataloguing of the ABL instruments; take high-resolution documentary photographs of each instrument (an overall view of each object and, as appropriate, additional details); and enter the data and images (approximately 5500) into the TMS database.
- The staff photographer will: take publication-quality photographs (overall views and details as appropriate for each type of instrument) of all the pre-1800 instruments for which there are no up-to-date digital images, approximately 50% of the total of 352; take, as judged appropriate by the curatorial staff, additional photographs of the remaining 50% of the pre-1800 instruments; and enter the images (approximately 750) into the TMS database.
- Other staff members will participate in the retrieval, moving, preparation, and return to display or storage of the instruments to be examined and photographed.
- The Collections Manager/TMS Administrator will oversee the integration of the TMS database and the USD's content management system through which the data and images will be accessible to users of the NMM website.

- **Significance of the collections**

The musical instrument collections of the NMM, now including some 15,000 examples, are among the finest and most comprehensive in the world. The original nucleus of the NMM, the ABL collection, unlike most other privately formed collections which typically specialize in one area (either geographical or typological, such as violins, trumpets, flutes, or pianos), includes instruments of all types and from all continents except Antarctica. Unsurpassed in its representation of 19th- and early-20th-century American instruments (with, for example, 117 trombones, 128 cornets, and 166 clarinets) and strong in European winds (49 trombones, 81 cornets, and 223 clarinets, among many other types), the ABL collection also includes significant numbers of European stringed and folk instruments, 19th- and early-20th-century African, Asian, and other non-Western (ethnographic) instruments, 19th- and early-20th-century American keyboard, folk, percussion, and automatic instruments, early phonographs, and exceptionally rare early electric instruments.

The NMM's holdings of pre-1800 instruments include numerous superb examples by such renowned masters as Antonio Stradivari (five instruments and a violin bow), three generations of the 16th/17th-century Amati family (8 violins, a viola, and a cello which is the earliest existing instrument of this type), Andreas Ruckers (harpsichords made in 1607 and 1643), the 17th-century Austrian master Jacob Stainer (a viola and one of only two of his violins surviving unaltered in its original Baroque state), and F.J. Spath, a maker highly praised by Mozart (a unique extant piano of 1767). The collections include 12 harpsichords of Italian, French, English, Flemish, and Iberian origin, spanning the centuries from the early 16th century to the end of the 18th. The NMM's holdings, among others, of Cremonese stringed instruments in original condition, of brass, woodwind, and stringed instruments by 17th- and 18th-century Nuremberg artisans, of 17th- and 18th-century Dutch woodwind instruments, and of 18th-century Portuguese keyboard instruments are unique outside their countries of origin.

Together, the ABL and pre-1800 sections of the NMM collections comprise a unique cultural, educational, artistic, and scholarly resource to be found nowhere else in the world.

- **Identified needs to be addressed by the project**

Direct public access to the NMM collections is severely limited not only by the small proportion of instruments, approximately 8% of the total, that can be accommodated for display in the Museum's public areas but also by its location in rural South Dakota, far from major population centers. Although Arne B. Larson himself quipped that "It's no farther from New York to Vermillion than it is from Vermillion to New York," the reality is that only the most intrepid enthusiasts or well-funded researchers make the cross-continental journey specifically to visit the NMM. In the year from July 2013 to June 2014 the NMM welcomed 11,587 visitors through its doors, but, while this number included citizens of all fifty states and 247 international guests, fully 78% of the visitors resided locally or in the surrounding four-state region (South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota). An additional 181,868 people viewed NMM instruments on loan to exhibitions as far afield internationally as Brussels and Berlin and nationally in Seattle, Indianapolis, Washington (D.C.), Carlsbad (California), Sioux Falls and Keystone (South Dakota), and Brevard (North Carolina), but these encounters involved only 53 instruments. In addition, 180 instruments on long-term loan to Music Man Square in Mason City, Iowa, were viewed there by 9447 visitors.

The crucial importance of virtual access to the NMM through the internet has long been recognized by the Museum's stakeholders, including its administration, trustees, development personnel, staff, students, and members. Since 1996 the NMM has maintained a website (<http://orgs.usd.edu/nmm/>) with virtual tours, checklists of segments of the collections, notices about recent acquisitions, and other features. This website now attracts more than 200,000 user sessions per year, far outnumbering the number of visitors to the limestone-and-mortar NMM. During the most recent statistical month (October 21st to November 20th, 2014) the website attracted 18,892 users (with 63,867 page views), of whom 67%, ranging from Seattle and San Francisco to Houston and New York, were from the United States, 15% from Europe, 4% Canada, 3% Asia, and 2% Australia. One should note that the 1% from Quezon City, for example – or the 1% each from Paris, Sydney, or Los Angeles – represents nearly 200 visits to the website. Since 2013, the NMM has also maintained a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NationalMusicMuseumUSA>) featuring a different instrument daily, now with more than 15,000 friends; and in September 2014 a virtual gallery with 72 NMM instruments was launched on the Google Cultural Institute website (<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/collection/national-music-museum-university-of-south-dakota?projectId=art-project>).

Despite the NMM's broad internet footprint, the presentation of its collections on the web is far from thorough. At present only about 2700 instruments are listed or featured on the NMM

website and only 1100 photographs shown. Analytics of the website indicate that one of the most heavily used pages is the checklist of 16th- and 17th-century instruments, comprising all 109 objects in this highly significant category of the NMM's collections. However, photographs of 25 of these instruments are lacking. Of the NMM's 53 violin- and viola-da-gamba family instruments and bows made before 1800, 35 have no images on the website; likewise 22 of the NMM's 40 pre-1800 keyboard instruments lack photographs.

The web presence of the ABL collection is far less extensive. Because of the sheer size of this collection, received *en masse* in 1979, and the small number of the NMM's professional staff at that time, its initial documentation was necessarily quite cursory. Much of the original cataloguing was done by relatively inexperienced assistants using the limited reference materials then available. No systematic photographic documentation was done, that is, the standard collections-management practice of photographing each object upon accession and registration was not observed. Dealing with the dramatic growth of the NMM's collections in succeeding decades left few resources to extend and refine the documentation of the ABL instruments. With no full-time staff photographer until January 2013, only 13% of the ABL collection has been photographed at all. Very few of these images, most of which exist only in the NMM's archives as technologically outdated black-and-white negatives and prints, are available on the web.

The NMM curatorial and collections-management staff, with the strong support of the NMM administration, has worked together to identify the particular needs to be addressed by the proposed project. Lack of systematic photography of the NMM collections, particularly the frequently consulted holdings of pre-1800 European instruments and the minimally documented ABL collection, has perennially hampered the curatorial and educational activities of the NMM staff. (Several NMM curators hold USD professorships and teach the University's unique program, centered at the NMM, for the Master of Music degree with specialization in the history of musical instruments.) The lack of ready access to digital images causes considerable difficulties in many internal activities at the NMM, such as selecting instruments for loan or special exhibitions, answering research inquiries, faculty preparation of classroom lectures, student research for papers and theses, and illustrating scholarly publications, the NMM Facebook page, and membership Newsletter.

- **Intended results and benefits of the project**

The results and benefits of the proposed project are entirely in accordance with the goal in the IMLS strategic plan for 2012-2016 of fostering "exemplary stewardship of museum ... collections and promot[ing] the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage." The project addresses three specific points in the IMLS Collections Stewardship category:

- Cataloguing, inventorying, documenting, and registration
- Developing and enhancing collections databases
- Digitization activities designed to improve collections management.

The project will result in reverified data and the creation of approximately 6250 new high-quality digital images of 3670 musical instruments in key areas of the NMM collections. It will increase at least tenfold the number of ABL instruments adequately documented photographically and will double the number of pre-1800 instruments for which up-to-date digital photographs are available. The project will more than double the number of objects digitally accessible on the NMM website and will more than quintuple the number of images.

The vastly increased digital accessibility to large sections of the NMM collections resulting from the new data and images created by the project will provide significant benefits to all categories of stakeholders from those involved in the NMM's varied internal activities to the general public. The integration of this new content into the TMS database will address the need, mentioned above, for the NMM staff, faculty, and students to have ready access to images and

reliable data for curatorial and collections-management purposes, teaching, and public outreach. Made accessible worldwide through the NMM website, the new content will open up large areas of the NMM's holdings as a cultural, educational, artistic, and scholarly resource of significant benefit to a wide audience including specialist researchers, students at all educational levels from grade school to graduate programs, and the interested public worldwide.

- **Importance of the project to the NMM's strategic plan**

The proposed project is fully consistent with the NMM's stated mission to serve "as an international center for musical instruments and related materials" and "to collect, conserve, research, exhibit, and interpret objects from around the world, bringing people together to study, enjoy, and understand humanity's diverse musical heritage." Enhancing access to the NMM's permanent collections is a primary goal of the NMM's Strategic Plan 2014-2017, by which this desideratum is to be achieved by two complementary means:

- By raising funds to expand and renovate the NMM's facilities, by which the space for public exhibition of the collections will be doubled (an effort aided by a \$500,000 Challenge Grant award from the NEH)
- By "Broaden[ing] the NMM's reach to increase its value, visibility, and viability" in part by "Launch[ing] new NMM website, the 'face' of the institution, as a portal for virtual visitors and a means for attracting physical visitors."

One of the important functions of the new website, now under development, will be to allow the TMS database to be accessible through it. The project will also further the Strategic Plan goals of "Expand[ing] the social media presence" and "Enhanc[ing] printed publications" by greatly increasing the number of high-quality images available for producing attractive daily Facebook postings, books, and other printed matter.

The project will also address the NMM Strategic Plan goal to "Ensure that the collection will be maintained, serviced, protected, and moved according to professional museum standards." (Needless to say, professional museum standards include proper documentation of collections by knowledgeable cataloguing and up-to-date photography and by upgrading and maintaining databases to ensure preservation of and accessibility to the information and images.) The specific goal of the NMM Strategic Plan to "Make measureable Collections Management progress" will be significantly advanced by the proposed project.

Consistent with the Strategic Plan, the NMM is currently participating in the IMLS-funded Museum Assessment Program in Collection Stewardship. The program, offered through the American Alliance of Museums, is a self-study resulting in a visit from a peer reviewer. The objectives to be realized through this program are to guide the NMM in preparing for reaccreditation, to increase NMM staff knowledge about collections standards and best practices, and to revise collections policies and procedures. The peer-review visit will occur by April 15, 2015, and the final report will be available shortly thereafter, months before the beginning of the proposed project.

2. Project Work Plan

- **Specific activities to be carried out**

Each instrument in the ABL collection will be brought to a work area to be examined and digitally photographed according to international best practices formulated for musical instruments. With the instrument on hand, existing information in the TMS database (derived from the original paper cataloguing records from 1979, some later revised) will be verified for accuracy and will be revised or supplemented as necessary. Specific data fields in the TMS database to be made available to the public through the NMM website will include:

- Instrument type
- Organological classification

- Maker
- Maker’s Location
- Date
- Model
- Serial number
- Inscription(s)
- Description (dimensions, materials, structural features, distinguishing characteristics, etc.)
- Provenance
- Credit Line (donor)

These data fields will be consistent with current international standards issued by the MIMO (Musical Instrument Museums Online) project, sponsored by the European Commission for creating an online database of musical instruments in the leading European public collections: “Specifications of the Common Data Model for the Description of Musical Instruments” and “Metadata Mapping and Open Archives Initiative-Protocol for Metadata Harvesting Implementation Guidelines,” issued in 2010. Organological classification, a field not in the original cataloguing records of the ABL collection, will follow MIMO’s “Revision of the Hornbostel-Sachs Classification of Musical Instruments,” issued in 2011.

It is anticipated that much significant revisions will be made in the Maker, Maker’s Location, Date, and Model fields in the light of newer reference materials such as William Waterhouse, *The new Langwill index: a dictionary of musical wind-instrument makers and inventors* (London, 1993). The extensive archival materials at the NMM will also be consulted. These include the Musical Instrument Manufacturer’s Archives (MIMA), now consisting of 80 file drawers with 29,000 items including catalogues, price lists, advertisements, and other documents from musical instrument manufacturers and dealers from the mid-19th century to the present day. The NMM also holds 90 files drawers of materials, including lists of dated serial numbers, from the Conn, Holton, and Leblanc companies which manufactured hundreds of instruments in the ABL collection.

Each instrument will be photographed in the “mandatory” view prescribed in the MIMO “Definition of Scanning Properties and Recommendations for Photographing Musical Instruments” (http://www.mimo-international.com/documents/results/MIMO_Deliverable_1.8.pdf). One or more of the additional “Recommended” views or other views deemed desirable by the NMM curatorial staff will be photographed on a case-by-case basis. Photographic file formats and other standards will be consistent with MIMO recommendations, with any appropriate technical upgrades to these standards issued in 2011. The images will be processed and uploaded to the TMS database. Although these will primarily be documentary images, their quality and resolution will be sufficient for most publication purposes.

The curatorial staff, after reviewing the available photographs of the pre-1800 instruments, will select which of these instruments (estimated to be at least 50% of the total 352) will be moved to the staff photographer’s studio to be photographed in the course of the project. The photography of these instruments will follow MIMO recommendations for the “mandatory” and selected “recommended” views, and others specified by the curators on a case-by-case basis. Standards for these images, intended to be of publication quality, will be consistent with but will exceed MIMO specifications for web output.

All images will be processed in Adobe Photoshop CS5 and entered into the TMS database. Instruments will be returned to display or storage.

- **Project management and staff**

The Project Director will be the NMM Associate Director, Senior Curator, and Website Manager (Dr. Margaret Banks), who will: manage the project as a whole; chair the curatorial committee that will coordinate the specific methodologies and standards to be applied in the course of the project; oversee specific personnel task assignments; supervise the addition of content to the

NMM website; and provide curatorial expertise in areas in which she specializes, particularly American brass instruments. The several curators will participate and provide expert guidance in their areas of specialty: Dr. Deborah Reeves (woodwind and Javanese instruments), Dr. Sabine Klaus (brass and European stringed-keyboard instruments), Ms. Arian Sheets (stringed and electric instruments), and Prof. John Koster (European and American keyboard instruments). The Conservator (Prof. Koster) will help with questions of identifications of materials and will address any conservation-related concerns that may become apparent in the course of the project.

The staff photographer (as of December 2014 a vacant position with a search in its final stages for hiring early in 2015) will: oversee the technical aspects of all photographic activities in the project such that state-of-the-art standards of digital image creation and processing are maintained; will be responsible for creating publication-quality digital images of the pre-1800 instruments; will enter these images into the TMS database. The Associate Curator, to be hired specifically to work full-time on the project, will, in collaboration with the permanent curatorial and collections-management staff and the photographer, will: examine each of the instruments in the ABL collection to update the basic cataloguing according to current specialized knowledge and museological practice; will take high-quality documentary photographs of all these instruments and will enter the data and images into the TMS database.

The Collections Manager, Rodger Kelly, will organize and supervise the logistics of retrieving and returning instruments to/from storage or display and tracking them. He will also oversee all activities related to the TMS database and its interface with Evoq Content and the NMM website. Curatorial Assistant Micky Rasmussen will participate in the moving and handling of instruments.

- **Project timeline**

After positive word is received from the IMLS, a national search will be immediately initiated for the project-dedicated Associate Curator. The two-year project will commence as soon as he or she is hired, with a target date of 1 November 2015. The project as a whole consists largely of 3670 individual mini-projects, one for each object to be examined and photographed. Each week, on average, two or three of the pre-1800 instruments will be moved to the staff photographer's studio, will be photographed there, and then returned to display or storage; the images will be processed and entered into the TMS database. In parallel, each week, on average, 35 of the ABL instruments will be moved to the work area of the project Associate Curator, who will verify, revise, and supplement cataloguing information, will photograph each instrument, and enter the data and images into the TMS database. The experience of producing dozens of high-quality digital images in assembly-line manner to illustrate Dr. Klaus's books about trumpets in the Utley Collection at the NMM demonstrates the practicability of photographing a dozen or more instruments daily.

As a separate NMM endeavor, not directly part of the project for which funding is sought from the IMLS, is the development of the digital infrastructure that will accommodate results of the project. The development of the new NMM website and TMS database system, including its coordination with USD's Evoq Content system are now well under way. The TMS system will be fully operational before the anticipated start of the project in November 2015. The coordination of TMS with Evoq and with the NMM website will be operational during the second year of the project, such that the content generated by the project will be accessible through the NMM website by the planned end of the project in October 2016.

- **Necessary resources**

Resources to be contributed by USD/NMM include staff time and salaries plus benefits (as indicated in the cost-sharing part of the budget), digital infrastructure (TMS fees, website development), and incidentals such as photographic studio equipment and supplies.

IMLS funding is necessary for employing the project-dedicated Associate Curator and for indirect costs (as indicated in the budget).

- **Project evaluation**

The progress of the project will be gauged by the number of instruments examined, photographed, and entered into the TMS database. With allowance for an initial start-up period of several weeks for the new Associate Curator to become familiar with NMM colleagues, facilities, and resources, work on approximately 140 ABL instruments and ten pre-1800 instruments (one 24th of the total) should be completed each month. A progress review will be conducted monthly during the first half year and quarterly thereafter. If progress falls short of planned benchmarks, appropriate adjustments will be made to staff priorities and procedures.

During the second year of the project, as results are made accessible through the NMM website, progress will be gauged by analytic statistics of website usage.

- **Sharing project results**

The results of the project, verified data and approximately 6250 new high-quality digital images of 3670 musical instruments in two major areas of the NMM collections, will be made accessible to the public at large through the NMM website. Selected images and information will also be shared through other NMM media outlets, including features on the NMM Facebook page; through printed newsletters, reports, and books; and through research publications by the NMM curatorial staff, faculty, students, and others; and through NMM staff presentations at professional conferences and events open to the public.

3. Additional impact of the project

The project will result in several longer-term benefits in addition to the immediate insitutional, national, and global benefit of greatly enhanced digital accessibility, both in-house and on the web, to the 25% of the NMM's collections. Consistency of the images to be created with international MIMO standards will facilitate their eventual incorporation into an expansion of the present exclusively European MIMO system to include collections in the United States. The NMM intends to be a leader in this effort.

As the NMM plans for consolidating storage of its collections in the planned renovated and expanded facilities in the years after 2016, the project's documentation of the ABL instruments will be of great utility for the collections-management aspects of planning the logistics of moving and storage and for curatorial selection of instruments for display. The model provided by the project can later be applied to other large segments of the NMM collections for which the photographic documentation is not yet complete, such as the 1111 instruments received from the Arne B. Larson estate after his death in 1988, the 2500 harmonicas in the Alan G. Bates collection received in 2000, and the 2367 instruments in the Paul and Jean Christian Collection received in 2006.

More generally, the collective experience of implementing systematic procedures developed for the IMLS-funded project will inform future collections-management activities at the NMM. This experience, in turn, will be passed on to interns and other temporary workers, and especially to students in the program, centered at the NMM, for the Master of Music degree with specialization in the history of musical instruments centered at the NMM and taught by the curatorial staff. Doubtless, many of these students will follow their predecessors, many of whom have gone on to careers working at major museums in the United States and abroad.

