



**Press release**  
27<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## Europeana Sounds: a gateway to Europe's sound and music heritage

The Europeana Sounds project was launched on 1 February 2014. This three-year project, co-funded by the European Commission, will give online access to a critical mass of audio-visual digital-objects by January 2017. Over 540,000 high quality sound recordings will be available via Europeana, from classical and folk music, to environmental sounds from the natural world as well as oral memories.

The project, coordinated by The British Library, is a partnership among 24 national libraries, sound institutions, research centres, and universities from 12 European countries.

The sounds selected for this project embrace the breadth of Europe's cultural heritage: classical music and contemporary performances with timeless and universal appeal; traditional and folk music and storytelling; sound effects, environmental sounds and noises from the natural world; languages, accents and dialects and oral recollections, all with a particular resonance in different regions. Together these collections reflect the diverse cultures, histories, languages and creativity of the peoples of Europe over the past 130 years.

Europeana Sounds is a truly groundbreaking initiative. For the first time world-leading heritage institutions with outstanding audio collections are getting together to enhance access to early materials and share expertise and skills. Through TV, radio, online channels and cinema, audio visual materials today make up the soundtrack to our daily lives, and have done for decades - but are some of the most overlooked when it comes to preserving our cultural heritage.

Europeana Sounds will widen access to a wealth of Europe's richest materials and show how sound recordings have woven their way into the social, cultural and scientific fabric of their time across the spectrum. From long forgotten dialects, through the sounds of disappearing natural environments, to contemporary music, Europeana Sounds will bring us all closer to a recent past much like to our own, united by a common aural heritage. Much of this heritage was born within the age of copyright, and preserving it for future generations will carry forward the work on opening access to copyrighted materials. These sounds are the newest layer in our shared cultural experience, and the challenge will be to preserve access to it for a wide audience in an increasingly digital age.

For Bruno Racine, President of the BnF and Chairman of the Europeana Foundation, "*Europeana Sounds' true value is to focus on a key medium which surprisingly enough is either overlooked or on the contrary considered as too complex to handle.*"

Roly Keating, Chief Executive of the British Library, said: "*We're looking forward to working with other European archives and libraries over the next 3 years to bring together a much-needed 'virtual jukebox' of sounds from across the continent for anyone to access online. The British Library alone has 5 million sound recordings in its collections, covering the entire range of recorded sound from music, drama and literature, to oral history and natural sounds.*"

### **Europeana Sounds partners**

The British Library – UK  
Stichting Nederlands Instituut Voor Beeld en Geluid - NL  
Stichting Nederland Kennisland - NL  
Stichting Europeana - NL  
National Technical University of Athens - EL  
Bibliothèque nationale de France - FR  
AIT Austrian Institute of Technology GmbH – AT  
Net7 Srl - IT  
We Are What We Do Community Interest Company - UK  
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique - FR  
UAB DIZI - LT  
Deutsche Nationalbibliothek – DE  
Music Library of Greece - EL  
Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle Biblioteche - IT  
Irish Traditional Music Archive – IE  
Max Planck Gesellschaft Zur Foerderung der Wissenschaften E.V. – NL  
National Library of Latvia - LV  
Technisches Museum Wien mit Osterreichischer – AT  
Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg - DE  
Sabhal Mor Ostaig – UK  
Statsbiblioteket – DK  
Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek – AT  
Faculdade de Ciencias Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa – PT  
Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann – IE

**Europeana Sounds** is co-funded by the European Commission under the CIP ICT-Policy Support Programme. Follow [@EU\\_Sounds](#) & [www.facebook.com/SoundsEuropeana](http://www.facebook.com/SoundsEuropeana)

**Europeana** is a multi-lingual online collection of millions of digitized items from European museums, libraries, archives and audiovisual collections. Currently Europeana gives integrated access to 30 million books, films, paintings, museum objects and archival documents from some 2200 content providers from across Europe. The content is drawn from every European member state and the interface of the portal is in 29 European languages. Europeana receives its main funding from the European Commission.

[www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu)

**The British Library** is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. The Library's collection has developed over 250 years and exceeds 150 million separate items representing every age of written civilisation and includes books, journals, manuscripts, maps, stamps, music, patents, photographs, newspapers and sound recordings in all written and spoken languages. Up to 10 million people visit the British Library website - [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) - every year where they can view up to 4 million digitised collection items and over 40 million pages.

**The Bibliothèque nationale de France** mission is to collect, catalogue, preserve, and enrich French cultural heritage in all fields of knowledge, while making it accessible to the greatest number. Its collection consists of over 35 million documents: books and other printed matter, manuscripts, newspaper archives, posters, photographs, engravings, audiovisual documents. Thanks to its digital library, Gallica, the BnF provides free online access 2,9 million of documents, a showcase of the extraordinary wealth of its collection. It gives life to its collections through exhibitions organized for the general public, either on its premises or online, and provides its users with tools designed to respond to the needs of the 21st century.

---

#### **Press contact BnF**

**Claudine Hermabessière**, head of Press office - 01 53 79 41 18 - [claudine.hermabessiere@bnf.fr](mailto:claudine.hermabessiere@bnf.fr)  
**Lisa Pénişon**, Press officer - 01 53 79 41 14 - [lisa.penisson@bnf.fr](mailto:lisa.penisson@bnf.fr)

#### **Press contact British Library**

**Sophie McIvor**, Lead Media Officer  
[sophie.mcivor@bl.uk](mailto:sophie.mcivor@bl.uk) - +44 (0) 207 412 7790