

2020 Network Performing Arts Production Workshop moves to online interactive version

Playing piano over a distance of 8000+ km during COVID-19 times? Yes, it is possible. In April 2020, the Network Performing Arts Production Workshops (NPAPWs) brought together the international community of students, academics, practitioners in the field of music, dance, theatre to help them teach, run courses, collaborate, rehearse, and perform remotely during these unprecedented times of crisis.

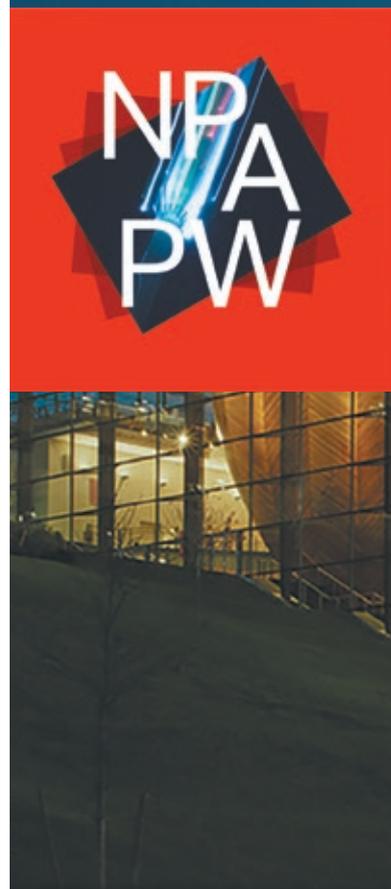
Words: Interview by Silvia Fiore, GÉANT

The workshop

Held in Europe and the United States annually since 2009, NPAPWs are a collaborative project of GÉANT, Internet2, New World Symphony, GARR and other European national research and education networks (NRENs) and various cultural institutions around the world.

The workshops have three main objectives:

- Outreach to new user communities in the arts & humanities by demonstrating the use of R&E networks in supporting real-time musical, dance, and artistic performances.
- Collaboration between R&E networks and cultural institutions worldwide.
- Expert knowledge exchange on the use of specific tools to support teaching, auditions, and remote performances.



The 2020 workshop was planned to take place at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, USA at their Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC). Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the event was postponed to 2021, leaving more than just a gap in the list of activities planned for the arts & humanities communities in Europe.



We interviewed Dr. Domenico Vicinanza, Senior Research Engagement Officer at GÉANT, music composer and orchestrator for cinema and television. He is coordinating the arts & humanities activities since 2011 and has seen five NPAPW successful editions come to life. Domenico tells us more about the challenges and opportunities of remote music performances.



The Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center

Domenico, how did the idea of organising an interactive webinar come up and how was it received by the arts & humanities community?

It was the NPAPW Programme Committee who had the idea of moving the workshop to an online interactive version. The organisers thought that gathering in one virtual space long-time worldwide experts and collaborators who would share online teaching practices with students in the performing arts would be a valuable opportunity in the current circumstances.

What is the biggest challenge for making and performing music virtually?

The biggest difficulties of live streaming are timing constraints and latency issues, which make synchronous and asynchronous collaboration almost impossible. During the COVID-19 crisis, these challenges were even more frequent than usual. That is why the 2020 edition of the NPAPW aimed at

helping solve them, sharing tips and best practices with the attendees and giving them the know-how to unlock a new level of creativity and improve the online experience.

Can you tell us how else the community is supporting musicians and teachers during the COVID-19 crisis?

This crisis has allowed us to see more clearly the impact of new technologies extending outside of traditional theatres and established recording studios. In fact, several organisations and associations, such as the British Flute Society and the Association of European Conservatories, have put together a collaborative list of useful tools and technologies to help musicians and teachers during the COVID-19 crisis. The list compiles mental health support resources, educational advice, livestream concerts and useful apps.

What part did GÉANT play in organising the webinar and how are we supporting online music performances in the future?

GÉANT was co-host, co-organiser, and presenter of the webinar. The GÉANT community, in fact, plays a crucial role in Europe promoting, advocating, connecting, and enabling remote arts tuition, performances, and knowledge exchange as it is made up of many artists and technologists with specialist expertise in networking for the arts. Therefore, NRENs and RRENs have the unique responsibility of making distributed art performances possible by providing exactly that high-quality connectivity and extended reach they need to overcome timing and latency issues.

To watch the full webinar and stay tuned for future editions, visit: <https://npapws.org/>

Access the full list of support material here: <https://bfs.org.uk/coronavirus-resources>