

HARVARD LIBRARY



Pforzheimer Fellowships in the Harvard Library Project Proposal Form

Name of library/archives: Information and Technical Services, Loeb Music Library, Harvard Film Archive

School/Unit: Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Location/address: 625 Massachusetts Avenue; 3 Oxford Street

Project sponsor/library or unit director: Sandi-Jo Malmon (Music Library)

Project supervisor(s): Peter Laurence (Music Library), Christine Fernsebner Eslao (Information and Technical Services)

Contact information for further information or questions:

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Brief background/description of library/archives:

The Harvard Library Information and Technical Services Department is responsible for acquiring, licensing, and providing intellectual access to tangible and online collections in all formats including visual materials, maps, motion pictures, musical scores, sound recordings, microforms and digitized materials. The Loeb Music Library is Harvard's home for musical materials, embracing performance and research in and about the world's musics.

Anticipated outcomes/final product:

The Pforzheimer Fellow will generate and edit Wikidata entities for bands, musicians and venues in the Arthur Freedman Collection at Harvard Library. The Fellow will also reconcile agents to existing URIs. Wikidata is "a free and open knowledge base that can be read and edited by both humans and machines. Wikidata acts as central storage for the structured data of its Wikimedia sister projects including Wikipedia, Wikivoyage, Wiktionary, Wikisource, and others." (Source: [Wikidata.org](https://www.wikidata.org), accessed October 30th, 2020.) Wikidata has become a key piece of community-owned linked open data infrastructure for GLAM institutions: "a high-demand identifier hub, with considerable community buy-in and recognition as an identity reconciliation service." (Source: [PCC Wikidata Pilot](#), accessed November 4, 2020.)

The semester's work will culminate in an online public Wikidata edit-a-thon jointly hosted by Harvard Library and the Boston Public Library, to engage librarians, the Boston music community, and subject matter experts in and outside of our libraries. In this guided

exploration of Wikidata, participants will use workflow documentation and customized tools supplied by project staff to generate new Wikidata entities and enhance existing ones. The linked open data produced by this event and this project will be freely available and editable, supporting queries, visualizations, and use by external applications, and creating a foundation for future discovery-enhancing metadata projects, ongoing community data curation, and a fuller representation of the Boston music scene (and our collections) on the web.

The Fellow will also have the opportunity to participate in a joint presentation to the Harvard community on Wikidata and its potential to synthesize and leverage data.

ARL White Paper on Wikidata can be found [here](#).

Project description: *(Please submit a separate form for each project proposed)*

The subject of this project is the Arthur Freedman Collection, an audiovisual archive capturing over four decades of Boston rock music performances. Beginning in the late 1970s, Arthur Freedman (born in Newton, Massachusetts in 1957) attended and recorded countless shows, maintaining an enormous archive in his home. In 2012, Arthur Freedman donated his collection to Harvard Library, with audio material directed to the Loeb Music Library and audiovisual material to the Harvard Film Archive. Finding aids exist for both the Loeb Music and Film Archive collections, and the two repositories are jointly working on permissions so that many of these recordings can be publicly streamed online.

Harvard Library has enhanced access and description for this collection by welcoming band members to provide setlists, personnel listings and posters that can be used to develop the finding aids. We now seek to develop a Wikidata presence for the collection that can be used to synthesize its data into a resource of equal interest to scholars and fans. With this initiative, we are testing ways in which Wikidata and other structured data repositories can be used to cultivate and capture community knowledge.

This work is being conducted by three Harvard Library staff members who approach the Arthur Freedman Collection from three distinct perspectives, reaching across our normal boundaries to collaborate on a project that will benefit librarianship and Boston rock history. Peter Laurence (Librarian for Recorded Sound and Media, Loeb Music Library) received the collection, oversaw the creation of metadata, and has reached out to band members for permission to stream their recordings. Christina Linklater (Keeper of the Isham Memorial Library, Loeb Music Library) is co-curating an exhibition with Peter Laurence, scheduled for 2024 (the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Boston's legendary Rathskeller rock club) and tentatively titled Boston Rock City. Christine Fernsebner Eslao (Metadata Technologies Program Manager, Information and Technical Services, Harvard Library) initially began to explore the Freedman collection as material for [LD4P \(Linked Data for Production\)](#), a Mellon-funded project extending far beyond Harvard's walls, which seeks to enhance library metadata and discovery platforms with linked data, develop new workflows for entity disambiguation, and to expose library collections on the open web. We are interested in bringing this project to fruition as part of Harvard Library's participation in the current PCC (Program for Cooperative Cataloging) [Wikidata Pilot](#).

