Foreword

I am delighted to be asked to write the foreword to this ground-breaking title which explores the fascinating processes involved in the creative activity of making music. The editors should be congratulated for bringing together experts from a variety of cultures and backgrounds to begin to make sense of these fascinating phenomena. At this point I have to declare both a personal as well as academic interest. I was a musician myself for many years before entering into the information profession. I have to say it never occurred to me to bring together music and information behaviour as a research endeavor, nor anyone else for that matter, which makes this new title both cutting-edge and exciting in equal measure. I agree that, musical information is “a product of creative and subjective experience rather than […] an abstract symbolic system” and I would add that musical information, especially notation, is also an important means of communicating musical ideas.

It is great to see research into the assignment of harmony content (musical chords) over a given melody – it will be interesting to see if this can make musicians’ lives easier. I wish that it had been available 30 years ago! Likewise, the chapter which explores automatic music transcription is interesting and timely. Perhaps more importantly, this book explores the vital role music plays in children’s everyday lives and the part that schools have in helping children develop their cognition and self-efficacy through participation in musical activities. Accompanying this is an investigation of which songs children can sing best and how software can help improve their pitch. In the wider context this work shows how scientists and artists can work to produce innovative research with artistic and industrial implications.

This volume also includes a solid bedrock of information research by identifying trends in music information seeking behaviour, particularly popular songs and social change, and furnishes recommendations for music requirements in catalogues and specialized interfaces. I have found the work included in this volume an inspiration, not only has it given me new research ideas to follow-up but also a much greater understanding of how information behaviour as a research lens can be applied to the very special creative process of music making.

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Foreword

Geoff Walton is Lecturer in Information Sciences at Northumbria University. He was previously Senior Researcher in the Institute for Applied Creative Thinking (I-ACT) in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies and Academic Skills Tutor Librarian (Information Services) at Staffordshire University. He was SLA Europe Information Professional 2010. His paper for the Journal of Documentation won an Emerald Literati Highly Commended Award in 2012. In 2009 he completed a PhD which analyzed the development of a blended approach to delivering information literacy to first year undergraduates. He is particularly interested in the cognitive and affective processes involved in becoming information literate. His research interests also include developing the Assignment Survival Kit (ASK) www.staffs.ac.uk/ask, developing a process for online peer assessment, investigating the role of information literacy in lifelong learning and the experience of non-traditional undergraduate students. He is developing research interests in a number of areas such as ‘online self and others’, digital literacy, social enterprise and webometrics. In his previous role as Research-informed Teaching Project Co-ordinator he was involved in identifying synergies between research, teaching, learning, information literacy, e-learning and inquiry-based learning. He is joint managing editor of the new online journal Innovative Practice in Higher Education which is now live at www.staffs.ac.uk/ipih. He is a member of the Research Information & Digital Literacies (RiDLs) coalition.