

## ULF SCHARLAU (1943 - 2021)

*“IASA has broadened my personal and occupational horizon. Moreover, friendships have developed, friendships that last far beyond the point of retirement of some former IASA colleagues. I am very grateful for this”*

— Ulf Scharlau, from “A personal review of thirty years of IASA (1969-1999)”, *IASA Journal* 18, 2001

Former President of IASA, Ulf Scharlau, has died. We send our condolences to his family and loved ones and extend our gratitude for his many years of service to IASA.

Ulf joined IASA in 1974 and served on the Executive Board as Treasurer from 1978-1984, as President from 1984-1987 and as Vice President from 1987-1990. Under his presidency, IASA began its cooperation with other international associations and became an active member of the UNESCO Round Table on Audiovisual Records, which also included the International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA), International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and International Council on Archives (ICA). This body organised the 1987 Joint Technical Symposium in West Berlin, in which the IASA Technical Committee played an essential role.

During Scharlau’s terms of office with the Board, important reorganisations were also initiated within IASA. It was proposed to delegate various tasks to other members of the Board in order to relieve the Secretary General. As a result of this reform, Scharlau was deputy to the President (Helen Harrison) and responsible for contacts with international organisations during his term as Vice President (1987-1990). In addition, he was to provide the Editor of the Bulletin with information from the Board.

Scharlau’s professional profile can be gauged from the papers he presented at the annual conferences and published in the *Phonographic Bulletin* and subsequently in the *IASA Journal*.

He became concerned with digitisation in radio archives at an early stage. At the 1982 annual conference, as Chairman of the IAML/IASA Committee on Music and Sound Archives, he chaired a session on “Data Processing in Radio Sound Archives”. The results were extended by contributions from various European broadcasting organisations and published in *Phonographic Bulletin* 35 in 1983.

Since 1988, IASA members have debated whether the Association should extend its activities to moving images. In 1993, at the annual conference in Helsinki, Scharlau expressed great reservations about the project, saying that IASA should concentrate on the tasks set out in its constitution and pointing to the coming challenges posed by the digitisation of audio archives (Scharlau, “Should IASA expand to include moving images?” *IASA Journal* 3, 1994).

The fact that Scharlau, in the face of advancing digitisation, came to the recognition that radio sound archives should also orient themselves towards multimedia is expressed in his paper for the 1996 annual conference in Perugia on “Digitisation and its consequences for radio sound archives”. The six theses on how to deal with digitisation that he put forward in this paper go far beyond the particular problems of radio archives and are still valid today (*IASA Journal* 08, 1996, p. 12-15). In 1999, Scharlau once again described the challenges for a radio archive that has become multimedia (Scharlau,

“Perspective of the present and future situation of sound and audiovisual broadcasting archives in Germany: a personal view”, *IASA Journal* 14, 1999).

On the occasion of the IASA’s thirtieth anniversary, Ulf Scharlau wrote “A personal review of thirty years of IASA (1969-1999)”. He described the development of the Association as a success story: “A professional organisation with world-wide activities, even if it is relatively small, can succeed in pursuing and reaching its targets through persistent work” (*IASA Journal* 18, 2001). As far as I can see, this was Ulf Scharlau’s last contribution to the *IASA Journal*.

Scharlau’s merits in founding a regional branch for Germany and German-speaking Switzerland must also be mentioned. While serving as IASA Treasurer in 1979, Scharlau promised at a meeting of the Executive Board that he would try to convince the radio archives of Germany to become members and to get an overview of the many small sound archives in Germany (*Phonographic Bulletin* 24, 1979). It was not until 1990 that the German/Swiss German Branch was founded in Wiesbaden. Scharlau was never a member of its board, but the branch owes much to his efforts behind the scenes. It became one of the most active branches in IASA and organises an annual autumn conference, where not only professional archives but also private sound recording collections are discussed.

With his exceptional professional and human qualities, Ulf Scharlau was an important protagonist in IASA’s history for many years. We will not forget him.

**Kurt Deggeller**

*IASA President (2002-2005)*