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MUSIC COLLECTIONS IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Linda B. Fairtile and Karen M. Burke*

This article presents a broad survey of music collections in public libraries in the United States. Characteristics common to the majority of American public libraries are discussed, including origin, funding, and mission as an educational institution. Using a 1949 survey compiled by Otto Luening, *Music Materials and the Public Library*, as a basis for comparison, the authors surveyed seven libraries representing one or more of the following communities: small towns, school districts with nationally recognized music education programs, large cities, and locations associated with recognizably "American" musical styles (e.g., New Orleans and jazz). The results of this informal web survey demonstrate that certain features of American public library music collections have remained essentially the same since the time of Luening's survey. Recordings still make up the majority of music collections, particularly in smaller cities, and there is still a lack of money to acquire materials and a shortage of qualified personnel to administer the collections. The decrease in arts education in American public schools has much to do with what public libraries are collecting with regard to music. There have been movements in the United States to increase awareness of the importance of music education, but none of these national groups has made formal connections to public libraries, nor have they addressed the important role that public libraries could play in this effort.

Perhaps more than any other nation, the United States reflects the diversity of its population in its libraries. Whether they are located in urban, suburban, or rural communities, American public libraries strive to embody the dream of the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who declared, "in a public library men could at least share cultural opportunities on a basis of equality."¹

In practice, of course, some public libraries are more equal than others. Dependent largely on taxpayer support, these institutions share the economic fortunes of their surrounding communities, and reductions in funding stemming from local or national crises can have a drastic effect on collections, staffing, and programs. Financial cutbacks often disproportionately affect subject areas that, like music, tend to be viewed as recreational rather than essential. But at the same time, music's universal appeal enables it to serve as a metaphor for

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1. "Carnegie Does Another New York Library," *The New York Times*, 8 January 1903, 1.

a range of human experiences, and many public libraries have seized upon music as an especially effective means of relating to their user populations.

Rather than attempting the Herculean task of classifying thousands of public library music collections, both large and small, we intend instead to discuss a finite number of issues and their representation in a handful of institutions. The results of our inquiry will hardly define the "typical" American public library music collection, since the plurality that marks so many aspects of life in this country is also reflected in its cultural services, even when they receive government sponsorship. But we hope that our efforts will reinforce the importance of music resources to every public library, regardless of size, geographic location, or financial situation.

We will begin by considering a few characteristics common to the majority of American public libraries by virtue of shared historical and economic circumstances, and will relate these to the development of music collections in general before proceeding to a discussion of specific institutions. Because they are so numerous and varied, it is virtually impossible to examine public libraries without employing essentially arbitrary selection mechanisms. We have chosen to focus on seven libraries representing one or more of the following communities: small towns, school districts with nationally recognized music education programs, large cities, and locations associated with uniquely American styles of music. Even so, the composite picture provided by these examples could only hint at the range of collections, programs, and staffing models found in the United States today.

The Evolution of the American Public Library

The American public library traces its origins to the eighteenth century, with the establishment of membership or subscription libraries. These libraries, often called athenaeums, served specific, typically well-educated populations who could afford to pay a membership fee. It was not until the nineteenth century that public libraries began to be truly public and free-of-charge. By this time, librarians tended to assume that their professional objectives were self-evident, and as a result the public library's mission was seldom explicitly stated. However, three "assumed objectives" did guide American librarians in their work. The first of these, the humanitarian view of library service, was to provide a record of knowledge; the second, the democratic view that would gain prominence around the 1850s, was to support the widespread self-education movement; the third, which grew in popularity toward the end of the nineteenth century, was the "provision of recreational reading" or "wholesome recreation."²

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the democratic aims of popular education and wholesome recreation were at the forefront of the public library's mission. Influenced by this democratic view of public libraries as

2. Lowell A. Martin, *Enrichment: A History of the Public Library in the United States in the 20th Century* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 13.

educational agencies, the United States government began to support them with federal funds. In 1897 the American Library Association and the National Education Association initiated a study of the interrelationships between public libraries and educational institutions. This study resulted in the recommendation that schools and public libraries work together. At this time, few schools had libraries of their own, and so for the next forty years the public library assumed an educational supporting role in the community.³

In 1895 the first departmental music collection in the United States was established at the Boston Public Library. Between 1895 and 1927, thirty major departmental music collections were formed in American public libraries. These included the public libraries of Brooklyn and Buffalo (1897), Chicago and Los Angeles (1914), New York (1920), Detroit (1921), and Denver (1926), as well as the Free Library of Philadelphia (1927). In 1919 there were fifty-six public and only thirty-one academic music collections in the United States. It was not until the 1920s, when music was accepted as an academic subject by American colleges and universities, that academic music libraries began to outnumber departmental music collections in public libraries.⁴

In 1920 Amy Meyer wrote a groundbreaking article describing the music collection of the Detroit Public Library.⁵ In it she offered two reasons why a public library, whether located in a big city or small town, should have a music collection: to support teaching of the rudiments of music, which was then an integral part of the public school curriculum, and to capitalize on the emerging popularity of sound recordings, which would encourage music's widespread distribution even in isolated areas. Each of these points supports the democratic view of the library as a place for education and recreation.⁶

Through the final decades of the twentieth century the role of the public library as a place for self-education and recreation continued to be accepted. A 1993 Gallup poll found that 88 percent of its respondents rated as "very important" the library's role as an "educational support center for students of all ages."⁷ The American Library Association, in a five-year revision of a list that first appeared in its journal, *American Libraries*, in 1995, presented twelve reasons why the United States should value its libraries. Two of these seem especially relevant to music and the performing arts: "Libraries nourish creativity; Libraries open kids' minds."⁸

3. Shirley A. Fitzgibbons, "School and Public Library Relationships: Essential Ingredients in Implementing Educational Reforms and Improving Student Learning," *School Library Media Research* 3 (2000): 3. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 7 September 2001: http://www.ala.org/aasl/SLMR/vol13/relationships_main.html.

4. Carol June Bradley, *American Music Librarianship: A Biographical and Historical Survey* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), 5.

5. Amy Meyer, "Development and Use of a Circulating Music Collection," *ALA Bulletin* 14 (1920): 182-83.

6. Meyer, 182.

7. Martin, 175.

8. "12 Ways Libraries are Good for the Country," *American Libraries Online* (8 September 2001). Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 21 September 2001: <http://www.ala.org/online/news/12ways.html>.

Economic Considerations

According to the Federal-State Cooperative System for Public Library Data (FSCS), in the year 2000 there were an estimated 122,461 libraries of all kinds in the United States, 8,967 of which were public libraries.⁹ In 1997 the National Center for Education Statistics determined that local funds accounted for 77.6 percent of public library budgets nationwide, state funds for 12.1 percent, private funds for 9.3 percent, and federal funds for 0.9 percent.¹⁰

Most public libraries, therefore, receive their principal financial support from local governments. Revenue from property taxes is the primary source of these funds, but the popular appeal of municipal amenities must often compete with the political allure of lower taxes, with the result that many public libraries are chronically underfunded. As city budgets tighten, libraries can be forced to seek additional sources of revenue, whether for one-time projects or recurring expenses. State funding for public libraries often addresses specific needs such as long-range planning and resource sharing. This money usually comes in the form of grants administered by the state libraries. The Library Services and Technology Act (1996) provides federal funding, also administered by state library agencies, which is focused on information access through technology.

Since combined funding from all levels of government is typically insufficient to meet a public library's expenses, alternative sources of support have become ever more necessary. As libraries grow increasingly responsive to the needs of diverse user populations, appeals to the private sector to fund a specific project or special service have become more widespread. Corporate underwriting of library programs serves the dual purpose of offering resources to the community and generating positive publicity for the sponsor. Examples of such partnerships in the field of music include Kmart's funding of the Detroit Public Library's Mobile Museum Exhibition, "Wade in the Water: African-American Sacred Music Traditions, 1871–2001," and the Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music/Video Product Award, which provides grants to assist libraries in developing their circulating CD and video collections.

Surveying Music Collections in American Public Libraries

In 1946 the American Library Association proposed that the Social Science Research Council conduct a thorough study of the American public library. This study, later known as the Public Library Inquiry (PLI), was intended as "an appraisal in sociological, cultural and human terms . . ." of how the library

9. American Library Association, ALA Fact Sheet no. 1: "How Many Libraries Are There in the United States?" Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 3 November 2001: <http://www.ala.org/library/fact1.html>. The FSCS defines a public library as "an entity that is established under state enabling laws or regulations to serve a community, district, or region, and that provides at least the following: 1) An organized collection of printed or other library materials, or a combination thereof; 2) Paid staff; 3) An established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public; 4) The facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule; and 5) is supported in whole or in part with public funds." Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 3 November 2001: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/liblocator/>.

10. Tracey L. Bremer, "Library Funding" (March 2001). ERIC Digest, EDO-IR-2001-01.

achieved its objectives, as well as a measure of “its potential and actual contribution to American society.” The PLI, which took just over two years to complete, consisted of a series of surveys. Four of these examined the new communications media of film, sound recording, commercial publication, and government documents. On behalf of the PLI, the composer Otto Luening conducted a survey of music materials and “the actual uses of music records, scores, and books on music in the service of the whole enterprise of music in American society.”¹¹ The goals of Luening’s efforts were twofold: to learn how individual public libraries adapted to new communications media, and to determine whether the libraries were qualified to “perform specific services in the aid of music in the community.”¹²

Public libraries in 1949 faced the same basic problems as libraries of today: lack of money to acquire materials and a shortage of qualified personnel to administer their collections. At that time there were about 7,400 public library systems in the United States. Luening estimated that in “nine-tenths of these libraries, if music collections exist at all, they consist of a few books on music, occasionally a small collection of scores and sheet music, and here and there small record collections, and one or two music magazines.”¹³

Of the sixty libraries that Luening surveyed, twenty-three counted musical scores among their holdings. These ranged from small sheet-music collections to, in a few cases, well-balanced representations of the world’s music. Many of these libraries were located in cities with a population of over 500,000. Twenty of the libraries reported wide circulation of standard instrumental works and popular songs. Among larger collections, piano music and piano-vocal scores circulated more than orchestral and chamber music scores, which, Luening noted, “require a high degree of musical literacy to use.”¹⁴

At the time of Luening’s survey public libraries had only recently begun to build their collections of sound recordings. Again, these varied widely depending upon the size of the library’s user community. It is interesting to note that circulation figures for recordings, even in 1949, were much higher than those for books and scores. To account for this phenomenon Luening made the simple observation that “anyone can listen to music and many people profit from and enjoy it, while it takes various degrees of technical skill to read, play, or sing it.”¹⁵

While Luening’s principal investigative tool, the survey, is as popular a methodology today as it was in 1949, the appearance of the Internet has greatly enhanced researchers’ ability to gather information about libraries in far-flung communities. Like Luening, we devised a series of questions about collections and services, but in typical twenty-first-century fashion we e-mailed them to public librarians whose institutions we had selected by studying their websites.

11. Otto Luening, *Music Materials and the Public Library* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1949), [1].

12. *Ibid.*, [1]–2.

13. *Ibid.*, 43–44.

14. *Ibid.*, 44.

15. *Ibid.*, 53.

Our informal survey was based on a more rigorous project undertaken in 1998 by the New England Music Library Association (NEMLA) Public Libraries Committee, which received a grant from the Music Library Association to assess the state of music collections in Connecticut's public libraries.¹⁶

Depending on the size of the library under review, we asked specific questions about staffing, collections expenditures, types of music resources, public programs, and reference services. In addition to our survey results, the proliferation of online catalogs enabled us to obtain detailed information about many libraries' music collections. Thanks to the World Wide Web, we were even able to download some libraries' budgets and annual reports. The following discussion presents a summary, first in a general fashion and then by citing specific issues and institutions, of our discoveries about the state of public library music collections in the United States.

Public Library Music Collections: General Findings

Today, fifty-two years after Luening issued his report, certain features of American public library music collections remain essentially the same. The popularity of sound recordings over musical scores has not subsided—in one branch of the Plano (Texas) Public Library, about 90 percent of the entire recording collection is checked out at all times!¹⁷—and this disparity is reflected in the collection development efforts of many libraries. The prevalence of scores and arrangements for piano solo is evidence of another circulation statistic that has continued to influence collection development, and Luening's observation that the appeal of orchestral scores is limited by the higher degree of musical literacy that they require still seems to hold true.

Where Luening's survey results begin to lose their relevance to today's public libraries is in the area of books and periodicals on musical subjects. In 1949 many areas of current music research did not yet exist or had attracted the attention of only a few specialists: studies of electronic music, popular music, women's music, and the music of ethnic minorities, for example, were seldom represented in public library collections. In the fifty-odd years that have passed, many libraries have made special efforts to broaden their collections of music books, often in response to user demand. In addition, the wider variety of music periodicals available today often means that more of them are found in public libraries, although subscriptions to humanities-related periodicals can be among the first casualties during lean times. The four community types represented in our study—small towns, school districts with successful music education programs, large urban centers, and "hometowns" of uniquely American music—reveal the diversity of publicly available music resources, even as these general trends hold true.

16. New England Music Library Association, Public Libraries Committee, "Music Collection and Acquisition Practices in Public Libraries in Connecticut," *MLA Newsletter* 120 (March/April 2000): 25.

17. Reported by librarian Erika James in a private e-mail communication sent to the authors on 28 September 2001.

Small-Town Music Collections

With the advent of cooperative networks, few Americans today are restricted to the collections of a single local library. Through interlibrary loans and other similar arrangements, residents of even the smallest towns can usually gain at least partial access to the holdings of nearby institutions. While small-town libraries often do not have the resources to make detailed information about their collections available outside their own communities, a few have websites and online catalogs. It is therefore possible to examine how some of these libraries spend the limited funds that are typically allotted to music materials.

Maricopa, Arizona and Rochester, Massachusetts are two towns located on opposite sides of the United States. Each has a population of fewer than 5,000 citizens, and each has its own public library. Although the 1989 median household income in Maricopa's surrounding county was about half that of Rochester's,¹⁸ and one-third as many adults there held bachelor's degrees,¹⁹ the music collections in the two towns' public libraries are quite similar. Both the Maricopa Community Library and the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library of Rochester, Massachusetts collect music materials almost exclusively for children. And although the 1990 census reports that 16 percent of the residents in Maricopa's surrounding county spoke limited English, neither library's music resources include foreign-language material.

The online catalog of the Maricopa Community Library lists a dozen books and multimedia kits intended to introduce young children to musical activity. Only two music biographies appear—Louis Armstrong and Maria von Trapp are their subjects—as well as the 1980 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Other libraries in the county-wide system have larger music reference collections: for example, the Florence Community Library, located some fifty miles away, also holds three collective biographies by David Ewen. The Maricopa Community Library circulates a limited number of sound recordings, most of which are books-on-tape, and it counts a small collection of movie musicals among its videocassettes.

The Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library also collects videocassettes and books-on-tape, but not music recordings. This library seems to hold music materials for both pre-school and older children; in addition to the same types of books and multimedia kits found at the Maricopa Community Library, the Plumb Library also has juvenile biographies of Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Gershwin, Chopin, Vivaldi, Stravinsky, and Verdi, as well as Harold Schonberg's *Lives of the Great Composers*. A few music books for adult readers also appear in the catalog, on such subjects as country music history, music theory self-instruction, and the history of the piano. Anthologies of easy-to-play flute, clarinet, guitar, and piano music represent the extent of this library's score holdings.

18. According to 1989 U.S. census figures (the latest available at www.census.gov, as of 11 November 2001), the median family income in Pinal County, Arizona was \$21,301, while it was \$40,905 in Plymouth County, Massachusetts.

19. In 1990, 5 percent of the adults in Pinal County, Arizona held bachelor's degrees, while in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 15 percent were similarly educated (U.S. census figures retrieved from www.census.gov on 11 November 2001).

It is unclear whether the emphasis on children's music materials in both of these small-town libraries reflects a consensus about the role of music in the community. The Maricopa Community Library subsists on extremely limited funds—the entire library district's budget for fiscal year 2000 totaled \$521,503²⁰—and it is open to the public only twenty hours per week. Under the circumstances, music may represent one of the more cost-effective ways to provide library services to young children, especially since recent studies link scholastic achievement with early exposure to musical activity.

Public Libraries and Music Education

Tension between the desire for municipal amenities and the appeal of stable tax rates is reflected not only in library budgets, but also in the kind of public education that a community is able to offer. The back-to-basics approach that is catching on in some American school districts can mean the reduction or outright elimination of perceived "luxuries" such as arts education. Over the long term this shift in priorities can result in smaller concert audiences, a decrease in musical literacy, and a corresponding increase in passive musical activity.

When the subject is music, evidence of the public library's historical mission as a partner in the educational enterprise can sometimes be elusive. While there have been notable national efforts to restore music education in the public schools—programs by the Music Teachers National Association²¹, Music Educators National Conference²², and VH-1's "Save the Music" campaign²³ are among the most visible—none of these groups appears to have made a formal connection with any public library association. Further, there is not a single library group among the wide variety of professional organizations joining with the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations to endorse the National Standards for Arts Education.²⁴ Considering the advanced skills that these standards presume, including the ability to analyze music, evaluate performances, and understand music in relation to history and culture, it is hard to imagine how these educational goals could be met without the assistance of the public library, especially given the chronic budget shortages faced by so many school districts.

There are, of course, many places in the United States where students can receive a high-quality music education. Using survey data gathered via

20. Denise Keller, "Director's Column," *Pinal County Library District Newsletter* (September–October 2000). Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 12 November 2001: <http://co.pinal.az.us/Library/newsletter/archive/2000/SeptOct2000.PDF>.

21. See their website at <http://www.mtna.org>.

22. See their website at <http://www.menc.org>.

23. See their website at <http://www.vh1.com/insidevh1/savethemus/>.

24. In addition to education advocates, arts agencies, and music industry representatives, supporters of the National Standards for Arts Education include the Future Business Leaders of America, the National League of Cities, and the Association of Art Museum Directors—but no librarians! (according to <http://www.menc.org/information/advocate/summary.html>, retrieved from the World Wide Web on 14 October 2001).

the Internet, the American Music Conference, the Music Teachers National Association, and the National School Boards Association recently compiled a list of "The 100 Best Communities in America for Music Education." All together, thirty-three states are represented, two-thirds of them by more than one school district.²⁵ The voluntary survey collected information about participation rates, types of musical instruction, performance opportunities, reliance on state and national standards, funding, parental involvement, and other topics.

Although the survey made no explicit mention of libraries, our own communications with public librarians working in nine of the "100 Best communities" reveal a considerable variety in the types of resources available to music students.²⁶ In some of these communities, the successful school program is supported by a public library rich in scores, recordings, and musical activities, while in a few there seems to be little offered beyond a stack of reference books. But the contribution of library music collections to the type of educational achievement measured by the "100 Best" survey is not always obvious: typically, school music programs concentrate on teaching children to play band and orchestral instruments or to sing in choral groups, while many public libraries build their music collections around recordings for recreational listening, books on music history and literature, and scores for piano. If students are not encouraged to seek out a broader musical context, the public library may seem irrelevant to their musical education. On the other hand, for students whose musical interests fall outside the scope of a school program, the public library can represent an essential resource.

With a population of 21,598, Watertown, Wisconsin is among the smaller cities on the list of "100 Best Communities in America for Music Education." The Watertown Public Library (WPL), like over 1,000 other public libraries throughout the United States, was built in the early twentieth century with funds provided by Andrew Carnegie. Again, like many small and mid-sized public libraries, the WPL's music resources are integrated into its general collection, and the librarians who provide music reference are responsible for most other subjects as well.

While state library standards identify the WPL's per capita collections expenditures as between "basic" and "moderate,"²⁷ the portion of its budget that

25. The complete list can be viewed at <http://www.amc-music.com/musicedsurvey/2001/best100.htm>. The authors thank Jim Doughty of Giles Communications and Joe Lamond of the American Music Conference for providing a copy of the questions used in the 2001 survey.

26. The authors thank Keith Allen (Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library, Florida), Robert Banks (Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Kansas), Carla Beasley (Forsyth County Public Library, Georgia), Hans Beierl (Watertown Public Library, Wisconsin), Joyce Brothers (Narragansett Public Library, Rhode Island), Philip Crnkovic (Lancaster Area Library, Pennsylvania), Rebekah Hill (Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), Erika James (Plano Public Library, Texas), and Maggie Tarelli-Falcon (Omaha Public Library, Nebraska), for generously sharing data about their respective institutions.

27. "Appendix B: Quantitative Standards by Library Service Population," *Wisconsin Public Library Standards*, 3rd ed. (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2000), 32. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 10 November 2001: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dlcl/pld/quantser.html>.

is spent on sound recordings—3.5 percent—is greater than in many larger libraries, perhaps reflecting the fixed costs associated with maintaining an adequate circulating CD collection. A wide variety of musical genres, including jazz, country, world, opera, and hip-hop, is represented in the WPL's collection of recordings, although the selection within genres sometimes seems arbitrary. CDs are acquired through multiple vendors, while books about music are selected by a staff member with musical knowledge.

Although the Watertown Public Library no longer purchases musical scores, its holdings include a few dozen anthologies of piano music—mostly Christmas carols—and a handful of arrangements for solo instrument with piano accompaniment. Luening's findings of more than fifty years ago still resonate here, first in the popularity of piano music over orchestral scores, and then in the overwhelming numerical supremacy of recordings over any type of printed music.

Hillsborough County, Florida is another locality cited as one of the "100 Best Communities in America for Music Education." The Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System (THPL) consists of a main library, five regional libraries, and sixteen community branches that, taken together, serve over 630,000 registered borrowers.²⁸ During the last fiscal year, THPL spent about 2.2 percent of its \$4,100,000 collections budget on music sound recordings and 0.15 percent on music video recordings. A closer examination of these expenditures reveals some interesting details: while THPL collects recorded music in a variety of genres, it only began to purchase country and contemporary rock CDs last year. And although this library subscribes to periodicals such as *RapPages*, *Source*, and *Vibe*, it does not collect hip-hop recordings.

Last year, THPL spent 0.05 percent of its collections budget—about \$2,000—on music scores, purchased largely through standing orders with the publishers Mel Bay and Hal Leonard. The library's catalog also includes a small, eclectic collection of scores acquired in previous years, including guitar anthologies, fake books, chamber music scores, and fiddle tunes. Once again, however, Luening's 1949 observation holds true: the vast majority of THPL's score holdings consist of simplified piano solos, popular song anthologies with piano accompaniment, and piano arrangements of motion picture and television themes.

The Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library has a rather large collection of books about music; while there is an emphasis on Western traditions, the subject range is quite broad, including general and specific histories, music trade and business, philosophy and aesthetics of music, instrumental instruction (Suzuki method, piano, and concertina), lives of composers and performers, music and society, religious music, composition, acoustics and physics, music appreciation, music and psychology, and popular music of vari-

28. Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System, *Annual Report, October 1999–September 2000*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 4 November 2001: http://scfn.thpl.lib.fl.us/thpl/admin/annual_report2000.pdf.

ous genres. Also noteworthy is its collection of music periodicals, which features such titles as *American Organist*, *Bluegrass Unlimited*, *Downbeat*, *Guitar Player*, *Musical Quarterly*, *Opera News*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Sing Out!*.

Public programs are a popular resource at the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System: last year nearly 125,000 people attended 4,106 events held at the library's twenty-two locations. Examples of recent music programming include Hispanic-themed storytelling with musical accompaniment; "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum: The History of Work and Labor in Story and Song"; and "Discover Broadway @ Your Library: *South Pacific*."²⁹

Large Urban Music Collections

Music librarians in large American cities often feel a responsibility beyond their local populations, as they attempt to document musical activity for a national, and even global user community. Facing the same budget concerns as other libraries—albeit on a larger scale—urban music librarians must balance the sometimes conflicting objectives of breadth and depth in their collection development efforts. Perhaps nowhere is this more successfully managed than at The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, which strives to meet the information needs of performers, scholars, students, and laypersons from all over the world.

Its name notwithstanding, the four research centers of The New York Public Library (NYPL) comprise a private foundation that derives a relatively small portion of its funds from municipal sources, and admits, free of charge, anyone wishing to use its resources (the NYPL's eighty-five branch libraries, which are publicly funded, serve the neighborhoods of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island). Last year, about 23 percent of the nearly two million people who visited the NYPL's research centers came from outside New York City.³⁰

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the second oldest of these research centers, has been a constituent member of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts since 1965. Owing to the size and complexity of their holdings, the NYPL's Music Division and its Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound comprise separate administrative units, each with its own staff and budget. While both of these departments strive to acquire materials from all over the world, they also have their own unique mandates. The Music Division places special emphasis on collecting the output of contemporary composers (for example, printed and manuscript scores, personal papers, and the recently acquired collection of the American Music Center), and on documenting American musical life through sheet music, clippings, programs,

29. Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative, "News and Events, September–October 2001." Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 4 November 2001: <http://www.hcplc.org/hcplc/happenings/Calendar/sepoct.pdf>.

30. The New York Public Library, *Annual Report 2000* (New York: The New York Public Library, 2001), 64. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 28 October 2001: <http://www.nypl.org/admin/pro/ar/ar2000.pdf>.

and visual materials. The Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound amasses examples of recorded sound in every format (including wax cylinders, acetate discs, magnetic wire recordings, and digital audio tape), and is in the forefront of developing technology that allows the transfer of sound to more accessible modern formats.

As the world's largest library of its type, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts utilizes staffing models different from those found in smaller institutions. The Music Division alone employs nine full-time professional librarians who, together with four other staff members, provide reference service only for the non-circulating music collection. This library's circulating collections include music books and scores, sound and video recordings, and orchestral parts; the latter are available to performing groups who pay an annual membership fee. Each of these extremely active departments also has its own staff of librarians and paraprofessionals.

In addition to its collections, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts presents a continuous series of public concerts, lectures, and other programs. Recent events, which often relate directly to the Music Division's holdings, include appearances by pianist Grant Johannesen, composer Thea Musgrave, and the percussionists of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. The library also offers exhibits in its two galleries; recently, "Transformations: A Celebration of the Creative Spirit in the Performing Arts" was mounted to celebrate the library's return to its renovated Lincoln Center facility.

Public Libraries in the "Hometowns" of American Music

Another way to gain a perspective on public library music collections is to select communities associated with uniquely American types of music, such as Detroit, Michigan (rhythm & blues) and New Orleans, Louisiana (jazz). While the 2000 census reports that Detroit has nearly twice as many residents as New Orleans, both of these cities are home to thriving public library systems that include at least a dozen neighborhood branches.

The Detroit Public Library (DPL) and the New Orleans Public Library (NOPL) each have extensive score collections that include orchestral, choral, and solo works; opera; popular song anthologies; and folk music of both Western and non-Western traditions. Sound recordings and books about music are equally broad in their subject matter, with the former available in CD, cassette, and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm record formats. At the DPL, music reference services are provided by the Music and Performing Arts Department, which also encompasses cinema, theater, radio, television broadcasting, and dance. The NOPL, too, combines music with other subject areas, forming the Periodicals, Arts and Recreation Division. Where these two libraries distinguish themselves is in the ways that they showcase the culture and traditions of their respective cities.

Detroit is especially noted for the musical achievements of its African-American community; in addition to a thriving gospel music tradition, it is the birthplace of "the Motown sound." Since 1943, when the Detroit Musicians

Association donated the core of a special black music collection to be named after a local music educator and performer, the DPL's E. Azalia Hackley Collection of Negro Music, Dance and Drama has grown to include books, scores, historic sheet music, archival collections, photographs, prints, recordings, and other materials that continue to document the contributions of African-Americans to the performing arts.

To complement its collections the DPL offers exhibits and programs that highlight local musical activity, past and present. Besides such in-house exhibits as "Lest We Forget . . . The Legends of Detroit Gospel," an interactive display of photographs and listening stations, it has offered "mobile museum exhibitions" on the order of "Wade in the Water: African-American Sacred Music Traditions, 1871-2001." The DPL also features local performers in noon-time concerts devoted to a wide variety of music.

New Orleans is also home to a library that shines a proud spotlight on local achievements. The NOPL's music collection originated with the LaHache Music Library, established in 1950 by Theodore V. Martinez to honor his grandfather, the composer Theodore von LaHache. The LaHache collection, which consisted of classical recordings and sheet music, merged with the Souchon Folk and Jazz Collection to form the nucleus of the Art and Music Department (now the Periodicals, Arts, and Recreation Division).

The NOPL's Louisiana Division, home to the New Orleans City Archives, also houses two special collections of music material. The Early New Orleans Sheet Music Collection contains nearly seven hundred loose pieces of sheet music as well as bound volumes containing works by Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Theodore von La Hache, the DeDroit Brothers, and other local musicians.³¹ The Louisiana Division is also home to a collection of over three hundred early vinyl jazz recordings; because the NOPL no longer maintains the equipment to play these recordings, they are used primarily for exhibit purposes.³²

Like the DPL, the NOPL features the local community in its public programming: online exhibits with a musical theme have included "African-Americans in New Orleans: The Music" and "Que la fête commence! The French Influence on the Good Life in New Orleans." The NOPL has also hosted traveling exhibitions such as the Smithsonian Institution's "The Jazz Age in Paris."

Conclusion

The foregoing thumbnail descriptions of seven American public library music collections demonstrate the endurance of the democratic interpretation of the library's role: regardless of a library's size or geographical location, it typically

31. New Orleans Public Library, "Early Sheet Music Collection." Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 14 November 2001: <http://nutrias.org/~nopl/spec/sheet.htm>.

32. New Orleans Public Library, "Early Recording Collection." Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 14 November 2001: <http://nutrias.org/~nopl/spec/jazzrec.htm>.

offers its users music resources for both educational and recreational pursuits. In part, this is a reflection of music's dual role as a subject of serious study and a leisure-time activity. At the same time, because each community has a hand in shaping its library's collections, surveying the resources in a given subject area can reveal how that subject is valued in a community, and even an entire country. It would appear, therefore, that much of the American public appreciates music enough to make it available, free of charge, to all of its citizens, and to encourage its enjoyment among young people.

Résumé

Cet article dresse un panorama général des collections musicales dans les bibliothèques publiques aux États-Unis. Il développe les caractéristiques propres à la majorité des bibliothèques publiques américaines, y compris leur origine, leur financement et leur mission éducative. S'appuyant à titre comparatif sur une étude réalisée en 1949 par Otto Luening, *Music Materials and the Public Library*, les auteurs ont enquêté auprès de huit bibliothèques représentatives d'une ou plusieurs des communautés suivantes : petites villes, secteurs scolaires dotés de programmes d'éducation musicale reconnus à l'échelon national, grandes villes et lieux représentatifs de styles musicaux typiquement « américains » (La Nouvelle Orléans et le jazz, par exemple). Les résultats de l'enquête informelle effectuée sur le Web prouvent que certaines caractéristiques des collections musicales des bibliothèques publiques américaines sont demeurées virtuellement inchangées depuis l'enquête de Luening. Les documents sonores constituent toujours la majeure partie des collections, en particulier dans les petites villes, et il manque toujours de l'argent pour acquérir des documents et du personnel qualifié pour les gérer. Le déclin de l'éducation artistique dans les écoles publiques américaines n'est pas sans conséquence sur la nature des collections musicales rassemblées aujourd'hui par les bibliothèques publiques. Il y a eu, aux États-Unis, des mouvements de sensibilisation à l'importance de l'éducation musicale, mais aucun de ces groupes nationaux n'a fait officiellement référence aux bibliothèques publiques, ni même évoqué le rôle important qu'elles pourraient jouer dans cette action.

Dominique Hausfater

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel bietet einen breiten Überblick von Musiksammlungen in öffentlichen Bibliotheken der Vereinigten Staaten. Gemeinsame Merkmale der Mehrheit amerikanischer öffentlicher Bibliotheken werden diskutiert, einschließlich Gründung, Geldmittel und Auftrag als Bildungsinstitution. Ausgehend eines von Otto Luening 1949 zusammengestellten Überblicks, *Music Materials and the Public Library*, als Basis des Vergleichs, begutachten die Autorinnen acht mehr oder weniger repräsentative Bibliotheken der folgenden Kommunen: Kleinstädte, Schulbezirke mit national anerkannten Mu-

sikerziehungsprogrammen, Großstädte und Örtlichkeiten mit erkennbarem „amerikanischem“ Musikstil (z.B. New Orleans und Jazz). Die Ergebnisse dieses inoffiziellen Webüberblicks zeigen, dass bestimmte Merkmale amerikanischer öffentlicher Musikbibliothekssammlungen seit der Zeit von Luenings Überblick im selben Sinne unentbehrlich geblieben sind. Tonträger machen die Mehrheit in Musiksammlungen aus, speziell in Kleinstädten, und es existiert immer ein Geldmangel, um Materialien zu erwerben, und ein Defizit an qualifiziertem Personal, um die Sammlungen zu verwalten. Der Rückgang der Erziehung in Kunstfächern in amerikanischen öffentlichen Schulen hängt in starkem Maße damit zusammen, was öffentliche Bibliotheken mit Blick auf Musik sammeln. Es gibt Bewegungen in den Vereinigten Staaten, das Bewusstsein für Musikerziehung zu stärken, aber keine dieser nationalen Gruppierungen hat offiziell Verbindungen zu öffentlichen Bibliotheken aufgenommen, noch haben sie die wichtige Rolle, die öffentliche Bibliotheken in dieser Bemühung spielen könnten, angesprochen.

Wolfgang Krueger