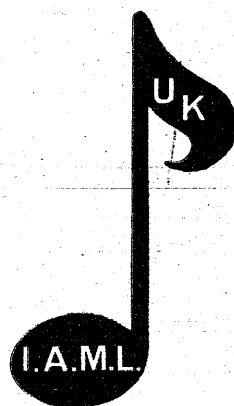


# BRIO

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AUTUMN 1964 Volume 1 Number 2



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC LIBRARIES

United Kingdom Branch

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BRIO is distributed to members of the United Kingdom Branch, in addition to FONTES ARTIS MUSICAE, the journal of the International Association of Music Libraries. The annual subscription is:

Libraries, institutions and associate members .. ..	£3 3 0
Personal members (librarians) .. .. .	1 10 0

The price of BRIO (two issues a year) is:

Non-members—10s. 6d. (\$1.75)  
Members of IAML (other than U.K.)—7s. 6d. (\$1.25)

Extra copies of BRIO, beside those available from subscription or membership, cost 10s. 6d. (two issues) per annum.

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BRIO

Vol. 1 No. 2

AUTUMN 1964

JOURNAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH  
OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUSIC LIBRARIES

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One of the established favourites in the orchestral repertoire is Paul Dukas' *L'Apprenti Sorcier*. It is not hard to see why it is so popular. It is one of the few works where the principal bassoonist gets a decent innings. Everybody knows the story of the boy who makes his master's broom fetch water from the river and when he forgets the magic word the wizard's house is flooded with water. It doesn't help when he chops the broom in half. The deluge doubles.

Sometimes when I am sitting at my desk, surrounded by masses of letters about BRIO, replies from contributors and proofs from printers, I can guess just how the sorcerer's apprentice must have felt. I am more or less a newcomer to the library profession and certainly a newcomer to editing. Having to calculate the number of printed pages which a future article is going to occupy doesn't correspond to the childhood illusions I used to have about editors.

When I was about eight years old I occasionally saw "also featured" Hollywood films in which tough American editors, easily identified by their rolled-up shirt sleeves and green eyeshades, appeared for approximately three minutes. It was never more than three minutes because these editors had a vocabulary of only three words: "Yeah!" and "You're fired!" You might not think that lines like those would provide much opportunity for even the best character actor. But these guys knew how to make the most of their three minutes. When they lurched across their desks, grabbed one of their phones and barked into it, everybody knew that the reporter at the other end need not bother to turn up for work the following morning.

The woman editor, apparently, has a public image too. (When I was eight years old people did not know they had public images.) Instead of a green eyeshade the woman editor wears green eyeshadow. In the cold glare of fluorescent lighting she scribbles notes with an air of grim efficiency. She opens her letters with an antique stiletto blade which looks as though it probably had a more active career in Renaissance Italy. The woman editor and her male counterpart both work in an atmosphere of perpetual crisis. Having edited two issues of BRIO I now know how much is caricature and how much is real. BRIO has its hair-raising moments too. And there are two things I can tell you about our pre-publication crises. The first is that I always forget about them afterwards. And if I do remember, I never tell a soul.

BRIO, since it is a technical journal designed to meet the needs of a specialised group of people, is inevitably a law unto itself. Everything is in miniature so there has to be a kind of precision in the writing and editing before it can succeed. The articles for BRIO, commissioned or volunteered, are written for, and usually by, music librarians. They do not claim to be professional writers any more than I would claim to be a professional editor. Perhaps the most fascinating part of my job is watching the articles take shape, developing from double-spaced typescripts to the printed page.

Before editing the first issue I imagined that all the contributions would require approximately the same treatment: a few commas in, a few commas out, an occasional cut followed by yards and yards of galley proofs. How wrong I was! Although in an obvious sense the same "rules" may apply to any material written in English I soon discovered that

the articles are as individual as the people who write them and a different kind of editing is required for each one. I begin by reading the typescript over and over again and since the technique of editing is new to me I still tend to think of articles in musical terms. One contributor may score everything very lightly, another may write sentences which have the slow-moving dignity of brass instruments. The writer of a straightforward factual article may require very little assistance but a complicated documentary may involve many readjustments resulting in a formidable pile of correspondence.

There is a Czech saying, "What is in the heart is in the tongue", but I find that in practice it is sometimes all too easy to mean one thing and write another. Like a musical accompanist, an editor should learn to be aware not only of the printed notes but the implications behind them. Listening for the overtones is the biggest challenge of all. If I suspect that a writer has understated something which he feels strongly about and is anxious to communicate to his readers I do not hesitate to ask: "Would you like to add a couple of sentences here?"...

If a slight emendation is necessary the contributor has every right to ask why. Then I try to hit upon the essential difference between similar words or phrases. If explanations have to be given they need not be taken too seriously. I remember once illustrating a point by concocting the following sentence: "I am reluctant to admit, Emily, that we have a jewel thief on the premises, but how else can you account for the disappearance of Lady Agatha's tiara during the military two-step and its subsequent discovery in the chocolate soufflé?" The point I was demonstrating is hardly relevant now!—but it does show that any editor worth his green eyeshade or her green eyeshadow will try to create an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding towards contributors, with a fundamental respect for readers. Then the journal becomes rather like chamber music in which everybody has a valued part to play. This seems an appropriate moment for me to thank everyone who has helped in the production of BRIO. Without the generosity and patience of all the contributors, and many colleagues and friends whose kindness and expert advice have made it a privilege for me to work with them, there would never have been a BRIO 1. So may I welcome you now to BRIO 2.

# The Music Antiquarian of Today

## HERMANN BARON

In 1958 Albi Rosenthal read a paper to the United Kingdom Branch of the International Association of Music Libraries<sup>1</sup> in which he outlined the history of the music antiquarian from the remotest times to the earlier part of the twentieth century. The object of this article is to examine his position in the modern world, the tasks before him and the problems which enter into his daily life.

The study of music has undergone a revolutionary change during the last two decades. "Music scholarship can stand beside scholarship in any other branch of humane learning as a proper subject for advanced study," wrote Thurston Dart recently<sup>2</sup>. The prolific increase of musicological and bibliographical research, together with new processes of printing, photographic and phonographic reproduction (with electronic computers only awaiting their cue), has caused an unprecedented demand for source material and has raised the study of music to the highly organized level of our technical age.

The music antiquarian plays an important part in this ever growing world of learning. Many scholars and students believe him well enough informed and endowed with rare items to address their enquiries to him if consultation at the nearest library has proved inconclusive. I shall never forget the caller who wanted to look at the first edition of the solo part of Mozart's clarinet concerto: "The British Museum has not got it; you are my last hope". (I too had to disappoint him.) Or the enterprising Canadian who decided to construct a "Tromba Marina" and enquired if I knew of an instruction book with specifications. (I managed to suggest two or three references.) And as for all the specialists who work on the lesser known, often obscure composers and need elusive editions of their works or biographical data. their enquiries are not always easy to satisfy.

Here the antiquarian is, or should be, in his element. His taste should be as broad as his customers' "specialities" are long. From the lock of a composer's hair (recently catalogued and sold) to his household orders for wine and spirits, from self-portrait to medallion and music painted on china, from incunables to twelve-tone music—the antiquarian should be open-minded and cast his net as wide as possible. His customers will find what they want and they want much. New discoveries or rediscoveries made by antiquarians have furnished subsidiary material in musical research and even opened up new lines of enquiry.

There is a collector hidden in many a music dealer. (We have actually two or three former collectors in our midst.) The unique position of the music antiquarian offers opportunities for building up special collections of one composer's works and of musical literature covering limited periods or single subjects. Those of us who have concentrated on doing this and persevered over a number of years have managed to reach a remarkable degree of completeness and enabled many a library or private collector to enrich their holdings. It is a costly business involving much capital lay-out, time, study, travelling and storage space. But the satisfaction and material reward derived from this special activity can be very great indeed.

The handful of music dealers in existence in the 1930's were mainly general booksellers turned specialist. The great demand of the post-war years brought into being a new type of music antiquarian: the musicologist or practical musician turned bookseller. In fact a third category sprang to life, without roots in either profession but perhaps with better abilities as organisers or with a more highly developed sense of business. The widely differing personalities of antiquarians are reflected in an astonishing and no doubt entertaining variety of catalogues. There are purely commercial compilations in which amateurish or even

quaint descriptions may betray real individuality, idiosyncrasy or merely acquired taste. At the other end of the scale there are encyclopaedic, scholarly and richly-illustrated catalogues. All these publications have one thing in common: competition in the world-wide market.

The question arises: Is the demand as universal as the material which the antiquarian offers? Here I would make certain reservations. Europe is still the best market for first editions of the classics and romantics of the last two centuries. The rest of the world's libraries are still in the process of building up their collections of basic materials. First editions of Haydn's, Beethoven's, Schubert's or Mendelssohn's works are as yet regarded as luxuries to all but a few libraries outside Europe. Meanwhile prices are continuing to rise. Stronger competition among dealers, the creation of new public music collections, the disappearance (for ever, as far as the antiquarian is concerned) of rare items into the world's great music libraries, the diminution of the number of wealthy private collectors and the dispersal of some of their remaining collections: these are all contributory factors.

The discovery of rare material, e.g., a long lost or an unknown autograph, an early unrecorded edition of printed music or a treatise which yields some new facts, historical, biographical or bibliographical—these are the highlights in the life of the antiquarian. Small wonder that he is sometimes carried away by enthusiasm. It is unavoidable, almost an occupational hazard, that here and there he may over-rate his "find" or overstate his case. It must strike the reader of catalogues as strange to see Mendel's *Conversationslexicon* described as an indispensable reference work nowadays. It is equally absurd to call D'Alembert's *Elémens de Musique théorique et pratique* "extremely rare" because it crops up time and again in catalogues all over the world. It just isn't rare yet! (The first edition is somewhat rarer than the second.) Joaquim de Vasconcellos in his dictionary *Os Musicos Portuguezes* took an antiquarian to task over Manoel de Peixao Ribeiro's *Nove arte de viola* (1789). He wrote: "The compiler, in order to justify his absurd price of thirty francs added to the transcription of the title: traité important et fort rare." Vasconcellos, in 1870, begged to differ. On the other hand, who could resist the temptation to ask a very high price for an important seventeenth century treatise if he finds it described in a mid-eighteenth century catalogue as "presque introuvable"? Again, in the case of a Portuguese work of the seventeenth century which saw three subsequent editions in the early eighteenth century, a remark by Féti's (1864): "Les exemplaires de cet ouvrage se trouvent difficilement, même en Portugal" could hardly be conducive to selling a "bargain".

These references must exercise their influence on the assessment of early items no less than recent discoveries of first editions hitherto not rated as such or, strangest case of all, the revaluation of a composer, with a resultant demand for (and consequent shortage of) his works.

Lastly, consultation of newly published bibliographies and library catalogues helps the antiquarian to assess the rarity of individual items. Here is the place to acknowledge a long-standing debt. The music antiquarian's life might well be more difficult, even precarious, were it not for the scholarship and exactitude of that group of men and women, too numerous and too well known to record here by name: the bibliographers. They do not always receive the appreciation they deserve. It is due to their thorough and critical investigations that the tangled facts of first editions and dates of publication have to a great extent been sorted out in our time. The location of thousands of items, even the contents of works which the non-specialist is unable to read or comprehend may nowadays be traced with comparative ease. The antiquarian is thus provided with precision tools of great variety in ever increasing numbers.

The evaluation of a rare item should not, however, be confined to typographical and bibliographical examination, as is so often found in antiquarians' catalogues. At least in the case of little known works some assessment of the contents is called for. Here perhaps the



true ability of the antiquarian reveals itself. The purely technical job of looking up one's Eitner, Schnapper, Sonneck, etc., should not be the last stage in a catalogue description of an interesting item. A historical reference not only sheds more light on it but it may save the user of the catalogue the same amount of time and trouble that the antiquarian has already spent in his own research. What reason is there for not passing on the results of his enquiries? If a quotation is given, due reference to the author or source should be made. Investigations carried out for the sake of identifying an obscure edition or adding a scholarly note to a rare catalogue item can involve the antiquarian in considerable expenditure of time which often bears no relation to the value of the item concerned. For this labour he may consider himself amply compensated if he discovers his catalogues on the shelves of some music libraries, where they have gained a place as sources of secondary information.

Sometimes I cannot help wondering if Professor X chuckles at the inadequate or misinformed description of antiquarian Y, who got his information out of Professor Z's outmoded history or bibliography recently disproved, or augmented by new facts. Here we have arrived at one of the main problems besetting the music antiquarian. The prolific increase in musical research and the publication of its findings has not only expanded his field of buying and selling but saddled him with the task of keeping abreast with fast-moving events. There are the daily chores of absorbing new catalogue material, of reading advance notices about new publications, about reprints and subscriptions, of examining new works of reference, thematic, library or sale catalogues for possible acquisition. All this is rather like the life of a music librarian. The comparison cannot end here. The antiquarian also has his duty to the public, a fact which may not be generally recognised. The possession of unique copies should be made known and bibliographical data supplied to the compilers of the International Inventory of Musical Sources (R.I.S.M.), as I ventured to suggest at the congress of the International Association of Music Libraries in Washington in 1961. Scholars known to work on special projects or on certain composers should be informed of autograph or rare printed material in antiquarians' hands, if it is thought that their studies may thus be furthered. The preservation of damaged music and books by careful (often expensive) repair work is surely to be regarded as an essential part of the antiquarian's duties towards posterity. The same applies to the completion of defective items by photostats wherever possible. Who knows if one of a few extant copies may not through accidental circumstances be the only one in the distant future?

It is an established practice to give the full collation and other necessary descriptive details of music and books published before 1800. But both catalogues of music collections and antiquarians rarely concern themselves with these data in dealing with publications of the nineteenth century. The time has come for their inclusion and I have made it a rule to do this in the case of all the more important works. It will one day be of assistance to those who will inevitably describe some works of the nineteenth century as "extremely rare," which are already now referred to as "scarce."

The treasures which still pass through the hands of the music antiquarian in the second half of this century are incomparably fewer when compared with the holdings of his great predecessors. If the phenomenal rise in prices in the world of rare books has at last extended to the field of music this article may have provided some of the reasons for it. I hope I have also brought to light a few of the problems of a profession which is generally only associated with the world of commerce.

<sup>1</sup> *Fontes Artis Musicae*, 1958/2 pp. 80-90.

<sup>2</sup> *The Musical Times*, March 1964, p. 191.

## Some American Record Libraries

MIRIAM MILLER

In October, 1963, The Association of Assistant Librarians organised a study-tour of United States Libraries for 140 of its members. This article is an account of the visit and an attempt towards a constructive comparison of gramophone record librarianship on both sides of the Atlantic. To a British music librarian with a special interest in gramophone records the prospect of a visit to the United States can be described as nothing less than exciting. The amount of space devoted to gramophone records in American professional journals<sup>1</sup>, two codes of cataloguing<sup>2,3</sup>, and accounts of research projects such as that undertaken by Picket and Lemcoe<sup>4</sup> make it abundantly clear that the Americans have developed this field much more effectively than have their British colleagues. It was impossible to travel as widely as one would have wished in only two weeks, but, thanks to the legendary American talent for organisation, I was able to visit almost every library of importance along the United States Eastern seaboard. For purposes of comparison it will be necessary to divide them into public and non-public libraries, with a special paragraph on the Library of Congress.

Of university libraries it was possible to visit only three; Harvard, Maryland and Simmons College. Of these, Harvard's achievement in the use of sound recordings is unique, since the Harvard Poetry Room is enriched by a collection of recordings of poets reading their own works. There was not time to listen to any of them, but a glance at the catalogue showed how extensive the stock has become, and the value of this collection, both as an international archive and as a research tool, cannot be over-estimated. I know of no British university which houses any similar collection, although British poets are included in the Harvard project. This is one example of what American librarians mean when they refer to "oral history," and a very apt description it is. The University of Maryland campus lies just outside Washington, D.C. The stock of sound recordings here is designed to encourage all students to borrow, or to listen in a specially designed room which has been equipped with earphones and volume controls so that several students may listen to different records at the same time. Although the bulk of the gramophone record stock had obviously been chosen for use by students reading for a music degree, there was also some "fringe material," and it was unusual to find an extensive record stock freely available to all students. In this country, university gramophone record collections, where they exist at all, are generally restricted to the music faculty, and in some cases are under the direct control of the Professor rather than the Librarian. This state of affairs does not necessarily reflect unfavourably on British universities, for many of them have a flourishing musical life of their own in which all students are encouraged to take part, and a student's opportunities to hear music may be increased by a resident orchestra, visiting recitalists or by a good record collection in the local public library. In addition, some British universities are making excellent use of the sound recording in other ways, the dialect collection of Edinburgh University's School of Scottish Studies being a case in point. Simmons College, Boston, also has a large record stock in its new Beatley Library. This building, completed in 1961, has so many novel features that to attempt to describe it one would need a separate article. The following quotation from a descriptive booklet will serve to bring home the importance attached to "audio-visual" materials by so forward-looking an educational institution. "The first floor is devoted to audio-visual facilities which fills a long-felt need for the consolidation of these services . . . There is an auditorium seating 120, two audio-visual

seminar rooms, a room for demonstration, storage and pre-viewing of audio-visual material, and an office for the audio-visual department. There is also a phonograph-listening lounge with adjacent listening rooms for the student who wishes to hear good music, dramatic recordings, spoken poetry and other recorded material . . ." It is worth noting that the third and fourth floors of this building are taken up by a School of Library Science.

The public libraries visited during this trip included those of Boston, Baltimore, New York, Simmons County and Montgomery County. All of these library services provided sound recordings in one form or another. Boston Public Library, like Simmons College, has chosen to house recordings with films and slides to form an audio-visual department, but whether this will continue after the completion of the new Boston Public Library Annex is uncertain. The two county library systems detailed above have fair-sized collections of discs at each branch. Open access systems with a card catalogue are used and prove completely satisfactory. In both counties catalogue entries for recordings were kept separate from other entries although housed in the same cabinet. Montgomery County publish several catalogues for the convenience of their readers, and one of these includes gramophone records<sup>5</sup>. "Records are indexed by composer or author, title, kind of music and performing artist or group. If a record or set of records contains a number of short selections, a full contents listing is available in the card file of the owning library." After each entry in the printed catalogue a row of symbols indicates at which of the seven branches of Montgomery County the disc may be found. To compile such a catalogue in addition to a similar volume for printed material is no small feat and one must congratulate the staff of Montgomery County Libraries on their achievement. The Enoch Pratt Public Library in Baltimore was founded in 1886, and has a reputation as imposing as its facade. In this building a policy which seems to pervade all American library service finds its most definite expression, namely that to a librarian, knowledge is the important thing, and that its form of expression is secondary. To this end, musical records are housed in a room adjacent to the music library, whilst non-musical records are housed in other parts of the building together with other material on appropriate subjects. This is an admirable arrangement which works equally well for public and staff alike, and one which could be adopted with advantage. It says much for the planners and architects that so original a form of librarianship can be practised in a building completed in 1886. In the midst of this, however, there was one disturbing element. While discussing the range of the record stock, I was told that the library did not now include jazz records, because of losses through theft. A collection of jazz records added some years ago had disappeared so rapidly that the Library Board of Trustees decided against their future inclusion. In America, the home of jazz, this is unfortunate, but one must respect the Board's decision, under the circumstances. The activities of the Music Division of the New York Public Library are too many and too well known to be detailed in this article, so that I shall mention only the Donnell Record Library on West 53rd Street, although similar record collections are available in three other New York Library "centers". The Donnell Library has an excellent record stock which may be borrowed or listened to on the premises. The demand for the listening facilities is so great that prospective listeners must make appointments and are restricted to one such appointment per week, and only one hour's listening time can be allowed. This will give some indication of Donnell Record Library's popularity, but, to my mind, its most significant achievement is the children's record collection in the Nathan Straus Children's Library. Here, any child who is a registered library borrower, and who has signed permission from a parent or guardian, may borrow gramophone records. Most record libraries in Great Britain stock records for children which are in fact borrowed by parents, but I know of no British library which will lend records to a child.

No account of American collections of sound recordings would be complete without mention of the Library of Congress, where sound recordings are housed in the Music

Division and listening facilities are available for those engaged in research work. Two interesting features of this Division are the Archive of Folk Song and the Recording Laboratory. The Archive has its own listening facilities and will duplicate any of its 80,000 specimens for any legitimate enquirer. The Recording Laboratory makes original recordings for preservation within the library archives and also provides a technical reference service. In accordance with Library of Congress practice, catalogue cards are published for music and sound recordings deposited in the Music Division and are sold to other libraries throughout the United States. The administrative problems of such a division, which undertakes so many divergent activities, must be enormous, but, to this observer, they were being coped with admirably.

A study-tour such as this must inevitably make one see library services in this country in a new light and begin to compare policies and methods of administration. There is no doubt that American librarians regard the sound recording as an important part of library resources, indeed there is an acceptance and an awareness of the possibilities of all non-book materials that is both refreshing and challenging. As far as sound recordings are concerned the American librarian has the advantage of a co-operative record-producing industry, co-operative not only with libraries, but with other educational bodies as well. One firm, at least, produces a special catalogue of educational material and several American dealers sell records and tapes to libraries at remarkably high rates of discount, apparently without incurring the wrath of the producers. This makes the attitude of British record firms all the more incomprehensible, for why the same firm should be so co-operative on one side of the Atlantic and so downright obstructive on the other<sup>6</sup> is one of the minor lunacies of what I learned to call briefly, if sibilantly, "discbizz". (The spelling is purely phonetic.) All the libraries visited used open-access systems for their gramophone records. This is in direct contrast with British practice, since gramophone records in this country are almost entirely confined in closed-access arrangements, only two (Leeds and Coventry), agreeing with the Americans. The reason behind such whole-hearted support for the closed-access system is the idea, remarkably prevalent in British library circles, that discs are much more likely to be stolen or damaged than are books. American librarians definitely state that this is not so, except in the case of Baltimore, where the thefts had been limited to records of a particular class of music. There are, of course, other reasons why British librarians do not adopt the open-access system, lack of space, or lack of appropriate fittings, for example. Providing a modern library service within an antiquated building is something none of us enjoys. Despite the existence of the two cataloguing codes and the availability of printed cards from the Library of Congress, American librarians appear to be as individual in their methods of cataloguing gramophone records as we are ourselves. All are agreed, however, that dictionary cataloguing serves their purpose better than any other, whether entries for discs are interfiled with those for books, or kept in a separate sequence. Not all American libraries use Congress cards, in fact Pearson<sup>7</sup> is of the opinion that the wait for the cards to be supplied seriously hampers the currency of the record stock, and circumstances can arise where a library acquires a record not deposited at Congress and therefore not catalogued by them. Nevertheless, many an overworked British cataloguer would welcome such a system in this country, particularly for recital records.

It is obvious, then, that British librarians can learn much from current American practice, but this must be taken to mean all British librarians and not simply those who are music specialists. A glance at the brief history of gramophone records in Great Britain shows that their library administration has always been thrust into the hands of our music librarians, whether the said music librarians were willing or not. It was the United Kingdom Branch of the I.A.M.L. that sponsored the first comprehensive textbook on the subject<sup>8</sup> and from the Gramophone Record Libraries Sub-Committee of this branch has sprung the new Recorded

Sound Group of the Library Association. One must, in all fairness, admit that the reason for this was that the bulk of sound recordings commercially available in this country were and are recorded music, but the number of non-musical recordings, both commercial and private, is steadily increasing, to such an extent that *The Gramophone* has seen fit to publish a separate catalogue of this material<sup>9</sup>. Clearly, the time has come for our non-musical colleagues to realise that their resources, too, can be extended by use of this new medium. Cooper and Williams<sup>6</sup> advocate the training of specialists in gramophone record work, rightly stressing the fact that the preservation of record knowledge poses quite different problems from that which is printed, but surely it is not impossible for us to train and educate librarians who can cope with knowledge whatever its form of expression? If and when we do persuade our colleagues that poetry, language tuition, sound effects, space flights, etc., even on disc, are no part of music librarianship, we shall then, if we are honest, say, "When thou hast done, thou hast not done, For I have more". Hard on the heels of the disc, come the tape, the film and the video-tape, each with its special problems, and, although none of these has become common library stock yet, we must own that the time is coming when they will. Certainly, we could train librarians to specialise in only one of the above forms, but "Classify by subject: form is secondary" is a canon of librarianship which may be applied to ourselves as well as our stock.

<sup>1</sup> *Library Journal* 88: 1963. Pp. 1809-1840 and 3783-3803.

<sup>2</sup> LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. *Rules for descriptive cataloguing . . . phonorecords*. Washington D.C. Library of Congress, 1954 (repr.).

<sup>3</sup> MUSIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. *Code for cataloguing music and phonorecords*. Chicago, American Library Association, 1958.

<sup>4</sup> PICKETT, A. G. and LEMCOE, M. M. *Preservation and storage of sound recordings*. Washington, D.C., Library of Congress, 1959.

<sup>5</sup> MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, *Department of Public Libraries. Foreign language and phonograph record catalogue; supplement, January-May, 1963*.

<sup>6</sup> COOPER, E. and WILLIAMS, D. 'Gramophone record libraries . . .' *The Gramophone XLII*: 1964. Pp. 83-85.

<sup>7</sup> PEARSON, Mary D. *Recordings in the public library*. Chicago, American Library Association, 1963.

<sup>8</sup> CURRALL, Henry F. J., ed. *Gramophone record libraries; their organisation and practice*. London, Crosby Lockwood & Son Ltd., 1963.

<sup>9</sup> ANON. *The Spoken word and miscellaneous catalogue 1. The Gramophone*; London, 1964.

(The author wishes to thank all those American librarians whose libraries and homes she had the pleasure of visiting. Without their generous hospitality this article could never have been written.)

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Compiled by CHRISTEL WALLBAUM

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# Handel in the Papers of the Edinburgh Musical Society (1728-1798)

## PHYLLIS HAMILTON

As an illuminating source of information about the eighteenth century musical scene in Scotland the records of the Edinburgh Musical Society have already been well investigated, notably by W. Forbes Gray<sup>1</sup>, D. F. Harris<sup>2</sup> and R. A. Marr<sup>3</sup>. Although my purpose is to deal principally with the papers relating to Handel, a brief description of the Society may serve to introduce the material in its proper context.

In 1721 Allan Ramsay wrote some verses *To the Music Club*:

... "And with Corelli's soft Italian song  
Mix Cowdenknowes and Winter nights are long"

He was referring to the original weekly club of gentlemen performers who met in the Cross Keys Tavern and from which developed, in March 1728, a formally constituted society of seventy members. By 1755 the membership had increased to a hundred and fifty. In 1763 when there were a hundred and eighty members, the Society had built its own hall, St Cecilia's, in the Niddry Wynd. The Society continued to exist actively until about 1798, although the records cease with the last minute in the *Sederunt Book* dated 30th December 1795.

Professional musicians were employed, two of the earliest being well known for their published collections: William McGibbon, first violin, and Adam Craig, second violin, who dedicated his *Collection of Scots Tunes*, 1730, "To the Honourable Lords and Gentlemen of the Musical Society of Mary's Chappell". In 1732 the first of the many foreign musicians who appear in the records was engaged. He was Signor Benedetti, employed at an annual salary of £105. From 1735 to 1743 Francesco Barsanti was employed, earning £50 a year. The singers secured far higher rewards than the instrumentalists. They were a temperamental crew and quarrelled frequently; the correspondence about their disputes in the *Sederunt Books* makes lively reading!

During the 1750's the performers included Giuseppe Passerini and his wife, Girolamo Polani, Piscatore, Philip Rochetti and Nicolo Pasquali. From a letter of January 1758 we learn: "We have got a very great performer on the violin, Signor Martino Olivieri, he far excells Passerini and Pasquali. We have now a very fine concert."

Of all the singers Tenducci received the highest acclaim. He was engaged from 1768 to 1769 and made occasional appearances in Edinburgh until 1785. Tenducci caused "quite a sensation among the musicals" wrote George Thomson, the publisher, who was inspired by his singing, not only of classical but also Scottish songs.

Thomson, himself a member of the Society, said of Handel's oratorios:

"I had so much delight in singing these matchless choruses and practising the violin quartets of Pleyel and Haydn."

For Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh* he wrote a chapter on St Cecilia's Hall:

"At that time the instrumental music consisted chiefly of the concertos of Corelli and Handel, the overtures of Bach, Abel, Stamitz, Vanhall and latterly of Haydn and Pleyel . . .

"When the overtures and quartettes of Haydn first found their way into this country, I well remember with what coldness the former were received by most of the grave Handelians, while at the theatres they gave delight. At one concert led by Cramer an old amateur next to whom I was seated asked me:

“ Whose music is that now? ”

“ Haydn’s, sir, ’ said I.

“ Poor new-fangled stuff, ’ he replied, ‘ I hope I shall never hear it again. ’ ”

One of the best descriptions of the Society is found in Hugo Arnott’s *History of Edinburgh*, 1779:

“ Before that time (1728) several gentlemen, performers on the harpsichord and violin, had formed a weekly club at the Cross Keys Tavern, where the common entertainment consisted of playing the concertos and sonatas of Correlli, then just published; and the overtures of Handel. That meeting becoming numerous, they instituted, in March 1728, a society of seventy members, for the purpose of holding a weekly concert . . .

“ The band consists of a Maestro di Capella, an organist, two violins, two tenors, six or eight ripienos, a double, or contra-bass, and harpsichord; and occasionally two French horns, besides kettledrums, flutes and clarinets. There is always one good singer, and there are sometimes two, upon the establishment. A few years ago, the celebrated Tenducci was at the head of this company. The principal foreign masters at present in the service of the musical society are, first violin, Signor Puppo; second, Signor Corri; violoncello, Signor Schetky; singers, Signor and Signora Corri . . .

“ Besides an extraordinary concert, in honour of St Cecilia, the patroness of music, there are usually performed, in the course of the year, two or three of Handel’s oratorios. That great master gave the society the privilege of having full copies made for them, of all his manuscript oratorios. An occasional concert is sometimes given upon the death of a governor or director. This is conducted in the manner of *concerto spirituale*. The pieces are of sacred music; the symphonies accompanied with the full organ, French horns, clarinets and kettledrums. Upon these occasions the audience is in deep mourning. ”<sup>4</sup>

For the earlier period no programmes exist; such advertisements as appear merely intimate the time and place. Benefit concerts are the first source. For her benefit on 14th August 1751, Madame Passerini announced: “ A Duetto of the famous Handel . . . besides several English and Scots tunes . . . Also Mr Passerini will exhibit a new instrument, called the Viole d’Amour ”.

These sources, supplementing the references and letters to Handel in the Minute Books, while by no means providing a complete record of performances of his works in Edinburgh, merit further documentation.

From the Accounts of 11th April 1750, we find: “ Handell’s Overtures at Mr Clark’s sale—10s. ” A more substantial reference occurs in December 1753, when the Governor and Directors of the Society sent the following letter to Handel:

“ Sir, The Gentlemen of our Musical Society who have been Greatly indebted to your excellent Compositions, for their Success in Pleasing the Publick these many years past, have lately attempted two of your Entertainments; Acis and Galatea, and Alexanders feast. The first in July last, and the other on St. Cecilia’s Day.

“ The Great Satisfaction expressed by the Audience on both these Occasions as it did Justice to the inimitable Genius and Expression of the Composer, has Encouraged these Gentlemen to Exhibite in this place a further Specimen of these admirable Works, that have so long been the delight and Wonder of those who have been so happy as to hear them performed under your management and Direction. This design however is impossible for our Society to carry into Execution without being obliged to you for a copy of the Recitatives and Choruses to some of your oratorios, which indeed they would not ask, were they not informed that you have allowed such copys to other Societys that have applied for them. The Performers of our Society have hitherto been confined to the Compositions of Corelli, Geminiani and Mr Handel. We are already possest of most of

your Oratorios and other works that are published, and we have particularly all the Recitatives and songs of the Messiah excepting one namely (How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospell of peace, and Bring Glad tidings of good things) and therefore could we obtain your order to Mr Smith, for writing out for us that Song and the Choruses to that Sacred Oratorio, and the Recitative and Choruses of any other of your works. We would ever retain the most Grateful Sense of the favour, and with pleasure reward Mr Smith to his Satisfaction: at the same time we can give you the strongest assurance that whatever you are pleased to favour us with in that way shall never be Communicated to others or Suffered to go any further, and we flatter our selves that you will not have any Difficulty of obliging in this matter a numerous Society of Persons of the first Distinction in North Britain, and particularly, Sir, yours,

Signed by the Governor and Directors

P.S.—Please send any return you give to this to the Earl of Morton’s House in Upper Brook Street.”

*Mr Handel’s Return to the above Letter*

“ Mr Christopher Smith at the Blue Periwig in Dean Street Soho, has Mr Handels orders to let the Gentlemen of the Musical Society at Edinburgh have any of his Compositions that they want, if they write to Mr Smith he will obey their Commands. ”

. . . to Mr Christopher Smith . . .

“ Sir, Mr Handel has been so good as to allow the Musical Society of Edinr. the Favour of a Copy of such of his Compositions which are not published, as they shall call for, and has Directed them to apply to you for the Same: You will therefore make out for them in Score, the Recitatives, Chorus & Such other parts of his Oratorio of Deborah as are not printed. Let them be wrote upon paper of the Same Size with the printed Score, in such a manner as to be put in the proper place of the Score, so that a Compleat Copy thereof may be bound up altogether. We Should be Glad to have this as soon as your Conveniency can allow, and you will afterwards get the trouble of making out some others of Mr Handells works which he has allowed us. And in the mean time I have ordered Messrs. Innes and Clerk Mercht. in Lime Street Square, to stisfie you for this Copy, which you’ll please deliver them to be sent here. You will please also give Messrs Innes and Clerk a printed Copy of the Words of th. Oratorio of Deborah to be sent along with the Musick.

I am Sir, yr most humb Sert.

Willm Douglas, Treasurer.

Edinr. 27 April 1754.”

“ Sir, I am again to make a Demand in consequence of Mr. Handell’s permission, in favour of the Musicall Society. That is to beg you’ll cause write out for us in the Same manner as we had the former, the Recitatives and Choruses in the oratorio of Sampson, so soon as it is done please apply to Messrs Innes & Clerk for the money and the sooner you favour us with it the more you’ll oblige,

Sir your etc.

Willm Douglas, Treasurer

Edinr. 22nd Jan. 1754

N.B. Please to remember to lett this be wrote on paper of the Size of the printed Score in Such a manner as it may be put in the proper place in the Score.”

(This correspondence has not, apparently, been printed complete elsewhere.)

For writing *Deborah* Christopher Smith was paid £7 17s., and for *Judas Maccabaens* £5 7s. In 1757 fifty copies of *Solomon* for the performers cost 12s. 6d. and in 1758 300 copies of *Acis and Galatea* were bought.

The *Plan Books* and *Sederunt Books* of the Society show that seven Handel oratorios appeared in its programmes, as follows:

*Acis and Galatea*: 8 July 1753; 8 August 1755; 5 August 1757; 10 August 1759; 11 August 1769; 24 July 1772; 12 March 1773; 28 February 1777; 22 December 1780; 20 December 1782; 19 February 1790.

*Alexander's Feast*: 22 November 1753; 8 March 1755; 5 August 1756; 16 December 1757; 19 February 1768; 6 December 1776; 13 February 1784.

*Deborah*: 3 (?) December 1754; 5 March 1756; 23 March 1759.

*Judas Maccabaeus*: 5 December 1755; 3 December 1756; - (?) December 1768; - (?) December 1775.

*Messiah*: 7 March 1760; 4 December 1772; 22 December 1772; - (?) March 1782.

*Samson*: 10 March 1758; 21 December 1770; 23 December 1774; 29 July 1785.

*Solomon*: 11 March 1757; 11 August 1758; 26 February 1761.

Two points of interest may be mentioned. The advertisement of *Deborah* in the *Caledonian Mercury* for 3 December 1754 concludes:

"The Company to the St Cecilia's Concert, to be held Tomorrow in the Assembly Hall, is expected to be so numerous that we are assured the Ladies will appear without hoops."

Regarding the performance of *Alexander's Feast* on 19 February 1768, the *Plan Books* have this note:

"Company in the room, 440 Ladys, 80 members, 50 stranger gentlemen, 70 performers . . . 640."

It is hardly surprising, in view of the works performed, to find that there was a demand for versatile musicians to play, sing and teach music in Edinburgh. A hitherto unknown letter dated 22 February 1759, which the Society wrote to James Oswald, the well-known London music publisher, is worth quoting this in connection:

"22 February 1759 to Mr. Jas. Oswald, London.

"Sir, The Musical Society at Edinr. has for some time been performing Handell's Oratorios, and find they want a right Bread Chorister, a man that has a good voice and can sing a song readily at sight and can Teach Church Musick for which there is at present great encouragement in this place. He might have a Sallery of ten pounds certain and if he has the Qualifications above he can with great ease make from 100 to 150 pounds a year by Teaching. If he plays on any Instrument so much the Better. If you'l be so good as enquire for such a man and advertise in your papers you'l very much oblige us."

As early as December 1728, William Douglas, the treasurer, was instructed to prepare a complete catalogue of the music belonging to the Society. Subsequent resolutions indicate that this had not been done by 1739 and all that now exists are the two manuscript indexes. The *Sederunt Books* (1728-95) and the *Index of Music* for 1782 are now kept in the Music Room of Edinburgh Public Library. The *Plan Books* (1768-71, 1778-86) and the *Index of Music* for 1765 are in the possession of Edinburgh University Library. These records show that in the course of the eighteenth century the Edinburgh Musical Society performed, besides the above mentioned oratorios of Handel, a remarkable quantity and variety of his other music. Edinburgh was a notable centre of Handelian tradition which continued even after the Society ended its existence in 1798.

<sup>1</sup> *The Musical Society of Edinburgh and St Cecilia's Hall. Book of the Old Edinburgh Club.* vol. 19. Dec. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, 1899.*

<sup>3</sup> *Music for the People, Edinburgh, 1889.*

<sup>4</sup> On 27 June 1755 the Society performed selections from *Samson, Deborah, Messiah, and Judas Maccabaeus*, to mark the death of their Governor, Lord Drummore.

## REVIEWS

MUSIC TO SHAKESPEARE. A practical catalogue of current incidental music, song settings and other related music. By Alan Boustead. pp. v. 24. (Oxford University Press. 1964. 10s. 6d.).

The total corpus of Shakespearean music is now enormous, having been gradually accumulating over the last four centuries. There has been a gathering acceleration of it, too, over recent years, with incidental music for radio, film and television productions added to the stage and concert music of earlier days. Only those who have really investigated the question of Shakespearean music have any true idea of the vast scope of the subject, which is indeed immense and never-ending. This Quatercentenary Year alone must have added enormously to the Shakespearean musical repertory and we can be sure that the flood of such music will not ebb so very noticeably even when the present celebrations are all over. I had hoped that this special year might see the production of many new lists and catalogues of Shakespearean music, but on the whole it has been sadly deficient. One or two music publishers have issued leaflets giving details of their Shakespearean publications, but apart from these, few actual lists or catalogues have appeared although some have been promised. All the more welcome, then, are those which have been published, and outstanding among them, in usefulness as reference library material, is Mr Alan Boustead's slim but invaluable handlist of *Music to Shakespeare*. Very sensibly, Mr Boustead does not even pretend to be exhaustive but states in his preface "Notes and Acknowledgments" that he designed his catalogue to "include music which is either in print or reasonably easily accessible". In this more modest, but still extremely onerous task, he has really succeeded very well. His small but tightly-packed volume is straightforward and workmanlike and is divided into three main sections: 1. Plays. 2. Sonnets and other poems. 3. Music of general interest. The entries in section 1 are further sub-divided into 1. Incidental music. 2. Songs. 3. Other music (operas, symphonic poems, etc.).

The whole catalogue is very clearly laid out and legibly printed. Misprints are commendably few; I noticed "Boyle" for what I feel sure must be "Boyce" (as the composer of "Get you hence" from *The Winter's Tale* on page 27) and "A. Burnard" for "A. Bernard" on page 11—it is spelt correctly at the top of the same page. There are what seem to me some omissions, but here let me hasten to admit that what I think of as omissions may to Mr Boustead's certain knowledge be items which are no longer "reasonably easily accessible," so, to quote The Bard himself, "we'll let that pass". There are also one or two wrong attributions, but these cannot really be laid at Mr Boustead's door, since they stem primarily from the mistakes and misdeeds of past editors and publishers—for example, the charming settings of the eighteenth-century Bath organist Thomas Chilcot have been misattributed to his better-known contemporary Dr Arne on more than one occasion in the past, and still remain so, in various anthologies. In the long run, the compiler of such a handlist as this is very much at the mercy of the information supplied to him by the various publishers upon whose own catalogues he must to a large extent depend.

In conclusion, let me say that Mr Boustead's *Handlist* is highly informative, extremely interesting, and even stimulating, if only to show us what enormous gaps we have in our own Shakespearean holdings. I for one am most grateful to him for compiling his list, as well as to Mr Brian Priestman for originally suggesting it and to the O.U.P. for undertaking its publication.

CHARLES CUDWORTH

DETROIT STUDIES IN MUSIC BIBLIOGRAPHY. 1. Reference Materials in Ethnomusicology. By Bruno Nettl. pp. 46. \$1.50. 1961. 2. Sir Arthur Sullivan: an Index to the texts of his vocal works, compiled by Sirvart Poladian. pp. xviii. 91. \$2.75. 1961. 3. An Index to Beethoven's Conversation Books. By Donald W. MacArdle. pp. xiii. 46. \$2. 1962. 4. General Bibliography for Music Research. By Keith E. Mixer. pp. xi. 38. \$2. 1962. 5. A Handbook of American Operatic Premieres 1731-1962. By Julius Mattfeld. pp. 142. \$3. 1963. (All published by Information Service, Inc., Detroit.)

MLA INDEX SERIES: Number one, An alphabetical index to Claudio Monteverdi, *Tutte le opere nuovamente date in luce da G. Francesco Malipiero, Asolo, 1926-1942.* pp. 17. Number two, An alphabetical index to Hector Berlioz, *Werke. Herausgegeben von Charles Malherbe und Felix Weingartner, Leipzig und Wien, Breitkopf und Hartel, 1900-1907.* pp. 6. Edited by the Bibliography Committee of the New York chapter of MLA. (Free to MLA members: one dollar per issue to non-members.)

This is a very useful series somewhat on the lines of the R.M.A. Research Chronicle. It consists of material which was, one imagines, originally compiled by librarians and research workers for their own use and this means is now brought before a wider public. The dissemination of this kind of information though modest in its aim, is thoroughly worth while and Detroit is to be congratulated.



In the words of the General Editor, Bruno Nettl, it is "A series devoted to the publication of bibliographical contributions—monographs, essays, and special indexes, lists, and directories—prepared on all aspects of music and its performance by recognised scholars." (There is no indication from where the recognition is to come, perhaps we would use the words 'serious' or 'accredited'). "Its scope is broad and limited only by bibliographical interests."

The General Editor himself contributes as Number 1 of the series a first rate little essay on the bibliographical materials of Primitive, Oriental and Folk Music, with the emphasis on the first two of these since European and American Folk Music are well covered elsewhere. This essay is of great help to music librarians as the sources are scattered and to be found in books on such widely differing and unfamiliar topics as linguistics and psychology as well as on music and anthropology.

In addition to books and articles devoted entirely to ethnomusicology it lists important reference materials from works dealing primarily with other subjects and the relevant portions of musical reference books such as, for example, the *Historical Anthology of Music*.

The author emphasises that this is not an annotated list but a bibliographical essay; in other words you have to sit down and read it rather than use it as a quick reference book. But having read it through it is easy to refer to, as titles of works are printed in large clear capitals which leap out of the page. There is a good index and the critical evaluation of sources is most helpful.

Number 4 is also an essay, not an index, less useful perhaps to the average English music librarian than Number 1. It is aimed at the American graduate student and lists, by countries, much general bibliographical material which is not readily available to some of us in the United Kingdom. Here the titles are not in capitals but merely underlined and consequently less easy to pick out of the text and more tiring to read.

The other three numbers are straightforward indexes. Number 2 should prove invaluable to public libraries as it enables one to locate all titles, first lines and "repeated catchy refrains" (e.g., "My object all sublime") in the operettas and other large vocal works. One questions the value of the second part which lists similarly Sullivan's other vocal works—songs, hymns, and anthems. But perhaps Sullivan still retains his popularity as a song and hymn writer in the United States.

Number 3 is important not only for Beethoven scholars but also for other students of the period. The references are to G. Schönemann, *Ludwig van Beethoven's Konversationsbefehle*, Berlin, Max Hesses Verlag 1941-1943 3 vols., and J. G. Prod'homme, *Les Cahiers de conversation de Beethoven* 1819-1827, Paris, Editions Correa (1946) and this index of course has to be used in conjunction with these editions of the source material.

I rather like the bias of an author who can devote three and a half lines to a eulogy of Goethe while dismissing Haydn and Mozart with a mere "composer", Luther as "religious reformer" and Caesar, (Gaius Julius) as "Roman General". Actually I suspect that nearly all users of this excellent index will already know that Goethe was a "poet, novelist, dramatist, scientist, political administrator, etc., etc.," but I am all for the personal touch, whether in the preparation of an index or of anything else.

Number 5 includes operas, light operas, musical comedies and stage pieces with incidental music. It is an abridgment of a projected dictionary of Opera in the United States. There is a title index, a composer index (but no author index) and the work is full of interesting information.

The value of the two publications issued by the Music Library Association of America speaks for itself. As Monteverdi grows more popular, it will be most helpful to be able to trace the text of any piece in his large output of sacred and secular music. But it is perhaps a pity that the index could not have covered at least he separate clearly defined numbers in the operas. Similarly, I wonder why *Benevenuto Cellini* and the vocal numbers in *Romeo et Juliette* were not indexed for the Berlioz.

These publications are exactly the sort of thing music librarians should be encouraged to produce and we must congratulate our American colleagues on pointing us the paths we should be treading.

JILL VLASTO



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