



# Musical Scores and Recordings

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SCORES AND RECORDINGS have a way of forcing themselves upon the attention of the librarian. They are problem materials, potentially, which can be either the despair or the particular pride of the library which houses them. The question as to whether these materials belong in the library or not need no longer be raised. Scores at least are fully accepted, and recordings are rapidly establishing their place as legitimate library material in the eyes of both the library patron and administrator. Yet the integration of music into the library is not quite complete chiefly for the reason that its materials demand special handling, special equipment, and frequently specialized personnel. The adjustments made by libraries in response to the growth of music and record collections are many and varied. It is difficult to generalize about practices because no two patterns of administration are the same, but the common interests of librarians concerned with music have brought them together in a remarkable way considering the limited scope of the field. The best evidence for this community of interest is the existence of the Music Library Association, one of the most active of the special library groups. Its quarterly journal, *Notes*, has a distinguished reputation with a body of readers extending far beyond the ranks of professional librarianship. The success of the American organization, which dates from 1931, influenced the founding twenty years later of the International Association of Music Libraries. This group now has its own journal, *Fontes Artis Musicae*, and a number of working committees engaged in studying the international aspects of music cataloging, bibliography, exchange services, and the administration of record collections.<sup>1</sup> No librarian concerned with the problems of music in his collection need look far to find kindred minds.

The administration of a self-contained music library is not the same thing as the handling of music in a general library, but the difference is merely one of scale. Although music, more than any other subject

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field, lends itself to special treatment only the larger libraries are in a position to create music divisions with the specialized equipment and personnel to go with them. The music library as a separate unit is the exception rather than the rule. Sometimes an alliance is made between music and the fine arts collections, sometimes with an audio-visual center. More often than not responsibility for the music materials is undelegated, but this does not prevent music from making its impact upon a wide range of library procedures. The discussion to follow is therefore organized in terms of the three traditional divisions of library practice: (1) cataloging and classification, (2) reference and bibliography, (3) processing and storage, all of which pertain to the treatment of material once it has arrived within the library. Space does not permit the consideration of other equally important areas which concern the way scores and recordings get into the library, namely, selection and ordering, nor will there be much opportunity to discuss music literature and its relation to other parts of the music collection. If books on music creep into the discussion it will be the result of their natural resistance to separation from kindred materials. The thing which gives coherence and meaning to the diverse music materials scattered throughout a library is, after all, the art of music, an area of rich humanistic interest which draws related elements together in spite of the librarian's misguided efforts to keep them apart.

Early in the present century American librarians recognized that music required certain extensions and modifications of ordinary cataloging procedure. Cutter's *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog*, 1904,<sup>2</sup> and the American Library Association's *Catalog Rules* of 1908 both contained sections devoted to music.<sup>3</sup> Other sporadic attempts followed, but the real initiative in the preparation of a specialized set of rules was taken by the Music Library Association's Committee on Cataloging and Classification as late as 1941 when preliminary sections of its *Code for Cataloging Music* began to appear. Portions of this code were published in the revised A.L.A. code in 1949,<sup>4</sup> and a great many of its elements were incorporated into the Library of Congress *Rules for Descriptive Cataloging* in the same year. Since then L.C. has been the dominant influence. It expanded its program of card distribution in the music field in 1943, and ten years later the first issues of the special supplement to the *Library of Congress Catalog: Music and Phonorecords* appeared.

A similar sequence of events has marked the development of a special code for the cataloging of recordings. First steps in this direction were also taken by the Music Library Association in 1942 in

the publication of its *Code for Cataloging Phonograph Records*. There followed a long period of discussion in which the views of record specialists throughout the country were expressed, and in 1953 L.C. issued its *Rules for Descriptive Cataloging . . . Phonorecords* in a preliminary edition.<sup>5</sup> This was an event of far-reaching importance because it established beyond question the place of recordings in the library and provided a means whereby libraries could supply adequate cataloging treatment for their record holdings. The Library of Congress is not the only source of printed cards for records. One enterprising record dealer has developed a business in supplying libraries with pre-cataloged recordings using a modified A.L.A. and L.C. technique.<sup>6</sup> There is still a definite need for a practical manual of cataloging procedure to supplement the Code. The University of California Music Library developed a series of such manuals a few years ago for internal use.<sup>7</sup> These were circulated among libraries with similar collections and the interest aroused, indicated by inquiries and requests for additional copies, showed that there was a genuine need for literature of this kind.

The trend in music cataloging, for scores and records alike, has been in the direction of increasing complexity, particularly in the use of detailed notes and in the assignment of filing titles. The use of the filing title, or conventional title, is perhaps the most distinctive feature of music cataloging. It is an essential device for identifying and bringing together in the catalog all editions and arrangements of the same work. The effort to apply conventional titles appropriate to a music collection as large and diversified as that of the Library of Congress has led to some unwieldy entries, of which the following is by no means an extreme example: "Sextet, violins, violas & violoncellos, no. 1, op. 18, B-flat major, arr." Some of the same experts who brought the present codes into existence are now directing their efforts toward the development of rules for simplified or brief cataloging more applicable to collections of moderate size.

In many respects the cataloging of music is still in its infancy in spite of the intensive work of the past decade. The field is a challenging one. Here is an area in which descriptive cataloging, so often a matter of mere routine, can partake of the nature of creative research directed toward the establishment of accurate composer and title entries. A vast body of early music remains virtually untouched in this respect. Reliable lists of composers' works and sources of information about early music printing are scattered and difficult to find. Libraries can best meet this situation if they recognize that successful

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music cataloging cannot be carried on without access to a substantial battery of music reference tools and the application of minds well versed in music literature and bibliography. This principle is set forth most convincingly in a dissertation by Minnie Elmer, "The Cataloging of Music," Columbia, School of Library Service, 1946. Miss Elmer's study contains not only a clear discussion of the problems of music cataloging but an extensive annotated list of reference tools useful to the cataloger.

Subject cataloging for music, another area of unfinished business, has been stimulated by the publication of *Music Subject Headings Used in the Printed Cards of the Library of Congress*, Washington, 1952. This publication, closely allied to the L.C. classification system, provides useful subject headings for a large-scale dictionary catalog of which music is a part. More work needs to be done in determining headings for a self-contained music catalog of the kind found in a music school or conservatory. Furthermore, the L.C. list is not entirely satisfactory for recordings. More careful analysis needs to be made to determine just what interests bring the record listener to the catalog. It may be an interest in the specific work recorded, an interest in the performer or conductor, or a more general interest in the work as representative of a form, historical period or medium. Not all of these requirements can be satisfied by the accepted headings for music books and scores.

The L.C. classification schedule for music is, of course, only one of several approaches to the problem of organizing the contents of a music collection, but it is certainly one of the most satisfactory for a large library. Smaller libraries will find value in the condensed L.C. schedule drafted by a Music Library Association committee and published in the June, 1951, *Supplement to Notes*.<sup>8</sup> The same committee has prepared a modified outline of the Dewey 780 class which helps to overcome some of the difficulties inherent in Dewey as an instrument for the classification of music.<sup>9</sup> If the material is shelved in a closed stack, as most record collections are, there is less need for a detailed classification system. Most libraries have been satisfied to shelve recordings in order of accession with a simple classification according to size or playing speed.

Cataloging and classification are background areas of library practice with an important but indirect bearing upon the library user. In the foreground areas of reference and bibliography where music impinges upon the realm of ideas and makes its most direct contact with the patron, significant developments have also taken place in

recent years. There has been a rapid growth in the higher academic disciplines of the music field at the college and university level. Musicology has come into its own in American academic life, and music librarianship, for better or worse, has allied itself with scholarship. The author feels that the alliance will work to the advantage of both fields, but there are those who have accused the Music Library Association of being more concerned with problems of bibliography and research than with library techniques. No one can deny that this might be called a renaissance in music bibliography which parallels another such period of intensive activity in the early years of the present century. New and more effective reference tools have been developed, and the concepts of music history, particularly for the pre-Bach eras, have expanded and changed. A glance at the coverage of some of the standard guides to reference materials is revealing. The seventh edition of the Mudge-Winchell *Guide to Reference Books*<sup>10</sup> contains more than twice the number of music entries listed in the preceding edition of 1936.<sup>11</sup> Besterman's *World Bibliography of Bibliographies*<sup>12</sup> cites more than 250 items under the heading, "Music," while the somewhat more specialized guide prepared by the Music Library of the University of California in 1952 lists approximately 450.<sup>13</sup> In 1953, two full-scale bibliographies of musicological literature appeared on opposite sides of the world: in Germany, the *Repertorium der Musikwissenschaft*,<sup>14</sup> and in Southern California a compilation edited by Helen W. Azhderian called *Reference Works in Music and Music Literature in Five Libraries of Los Angeles County*.<sup>15</sup> The latter work is more comprehensive than its title suggests; it contains some 4,500 items while the German book offers approximately 2,800. The year 1954 brought a new edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music*,<sup>16</sup> and since 1949 music has had its index of current periodicals in the *Music Index*.<sup>17</sup> These are only a few of the new resources available to the reference librarian in the music field. The culmination of all this activity in music bibliography will be reached when the International Association of Music Libraries in cooperation with the International Musicological Society completes its *Inventory of Musical Sources*, a monumental undertaking now in progress which will bring all manuscript and printed sources before 1800 under bibliographical control. Projects of this kind may seem remote from the work carried on at the ordinary library reference desk, but they indicate the progress in a rapidly expanding field in which librarianship is closely involved.

Reference work with phonograph records is a very recent development; a few years ago it was practically non-existent outside of the

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large city libraries. Already that situation has changed. Reference tools in this area have moved out of the realm of listener's guides, and hints on how to build a home record library, to authoritative works of international coverage such as the *World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*,<sup>18</sup> and the catalogs of the Unesco sponsored *Archive of Recorded Music*.<sup>19-21</sup> A new word, "discography," has been added to the vocabulary of librarianship, and no reputable biography of a composer is now considered complete without a list of his recorded works. Technological changes have had a direct bearing upon the content of record libraries. The advent of the long-playing record has restored a great deal of hitherto inaccessible music to life, not only from the past but from the corpus of contemporary music as well. Librarians are faced with an embarrassment of riches. They know how to analyze the needs and interests of readers but the interests of listeners are still relatively unexplored territory.<sup>22, 23</sup>

The problems raised by music in the library seem most acute in matters which relate to processing and storage. Here the peculiar physical properties of the materials, their size, shape, and fragility are most in evidence. Scores fit awkwardly into the type of shelving designed for a book collection. Their size is not uniform with respect to width of spine or broadside dimensions. Miniature scores are of a size in themselves, but unless they are segregated and shelved separately they are easily lost on a shelf which also contains folios and oblong quartos of varying weight and thickness. Satisfactory music shelving calls for two features not present in ordinary book stacks: (1) generous width of shelf, preferably eleven or twelve inches as a minimum, gaged to accommodate the larger types of scores; (2) fixed but adjustable partitions, not sliding bookrests, set from eight to twelve inches apart to check the leaning and crowding of the scores. Equipment of this kind will not solve completely the problem of multiple sizes of material mixed on the shelf, but the danger of bending or jamming will be reduced. The use of wide, partitioned shelving has the added advantage in being suitable for recordings as well as music, and such adaptability is an important factor in the planning of a flexible stack area. The ordinary record album is fourteen inches in width. It will project some two inches beyond the edge of a twelve-inch shelf, but far from being a disadvantage the projecting spine offers a convenient finger hold for removing the album from the shelf.

There are few libraries in the country which have music stacks designed in terms of the special nature of the materials, but the day of depending upon makeshift equipment for music collections is fast

drawing to a close. As of 1955, on the West Coast alone, there are at least six new music buildings just completed or in process of construction. Most of these have special facilities designed for their music collections. The same trend could doubtless be observed in other parts of the country. Manufacturers of library furniture are now prepared to supply music stacks of the kind described above so that there is no longer any need to endure inadequate shelving in the music section of the library.

The processing of sheet music has always been a problem for libraries. Here is fragile material whose unit cost is fairly low, but binding costs are high. If sheet music forms a part of the circulating collection, the only answer seems to lie in the use of a protective binder of some kind. A prepared type of binder of the kind used on pamphlet materials is one of the most satisfactory. This is certainly a better solution than binding assorted items of sheet music in composite volumes, a practice still used by some of the older libraries. The kind of binding protection required depends, of course, on the use intended for the material. In libraries where sheet music is stored as archival material, horizontal shelving in letter-file boxes, or in paper wrapped parcels, is quite adequate.

The housing and maintenance of the record collection is one of the crucial problems in this realm of librarianship. If the collection is intended primarily for circulation, as in most public libraries, it is necessary to provide carrying cases for the protection of the discs. Reference collections, on the other hand, which are confined to library use, call for listening facilities on the premises, expensive equipment, sound controlled space and other features which cannot be installed without affecting the library's total pattern of service. It is not surprising that there is very little standardization as yet in types of service or equipment. The extent to which practices vary is brought to light very clearly in a report prepared by the Audio-Visual Recordings Sub-Committee of the California Library Association.<sup>24</sup> In 1953 this committee undertook to survey 66 record libraries in California in an effort to find out what type of equipment they were using, what kinds of circulation policies were in effect and what cataloging and processing procedures were used. Not only did the patterns vary from library to library, but there was considerable discrepancy between theory and practice. In spite of the current interest in high-fidelity reproduction, only three custom-built playback units were listed. All recognized the superiority of diamond styli as a protection against record wear, but only two libraries had installed them. It is obvious from this

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survey that libraries are still moving cautiously in the development of the record playing facilities. Their attitude seems to be characterized by improvisation rather than careful planning. The audio dealers are partly responsible for this situation. Extravagant advertising and the glib use of semi-technical terms have cost them the confidence of the layman; librarians, traditionally the most conservative of professional groups, have hesitated to invest heavily in equipment that might be obsolete in a year or two. But even if librarians are uncertain as to the specific types of playback equipment to install, they need no longer be doubtful as to the requirements it should meet. Recordings have had a short history in American libraries, but not too short to give rise to some very definite standards that will be embodied in the new library buildings under construction throughout the country. Briefly, the requirements for listening equipment in the library are four in number: (1) it must be sturdy, particularly as to motors and turntables; (2) it must be simple to operate, with a minimum of controls and speed adjustments; (3) it must have good tone quality, within the practical limitations enforced by its location; and (4) it must be economical in the matter of record wear and ease of maintenance. Equipment to meet these requirements can be found in the audio catalogs of today, and with a little patience and forethought it can be adapted to library use.

There are libraries in all parts of the country which could be cited as examples of practical, successful programs in the handling of record collections. They are not to be found, necessarily, in the large well-established institutions; most of these are too encumbered by space limitations and fixed patterns of routine. But examples of a progressive kind will come readily to the mind of anyone who has done a little investigation in this field. The listening facilities at Converse College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, are custom-designed throughout by the M-P Concert Installations, Inc., Fairfield, Connecticut, one of the first firms manufacturing playback machines for library use. The University of Washington, at Seattle, has developed a system in which all recordings are played by a library attendant and "piped" to students seated at various listening stations; Massachusetts Institute of Technology has emphasized its library facilities for recreational listening, and, as might be expected, has high quality equipment of the latest type. The plans being developed at the University of California, at Berkeley, for a new music library with specially designed tape and disc playback equipment have been described in a recent issue of the *Music Library Association Notes*.<sup>25</sup>

An interesting example of the integration of a record library with an audio-visual department is furnished by the Cincinnati Public Library where a new library unit is under construction.<sup>26</sup> Examples of this kind could be multiplied indefinitely. It is fruitless to look for uniformity in a field so tied up with technological changes and the rapidly fluctuating economy of record production. The administration of record collections will remain one of the frontier areas in librarianship for many years to come, which is one of its chief attractions for those who are concerned with this field of library development.

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