The University of the Philippines
Music Library

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The Music Library of the University of the Philippines Conservatory of Music, as reorganized and reconstituted to serve musical scholarship and advance research, started in earnest only in 1955. Obviously, it is young, but its orientation makes it unique as the only library of its kind in the country.

An appreciation of its progress, present condition and problems calls for a brief statement of historical background. The University of the Philippines was founded in 1908 and its Conservatory of Music as a unit was added in 1916. At the end of World War II, when the country was liberated from enemy hands, the University saw its plant and facilities reduced to rubble.

This is true of the Conservatory, too, and, like the rest of the units, it had to start from scratch in 1945, making do with a few books salvaged from its faculty, and such few other facilities as could be made available from elsewhere.

The rehabilitation of the University got under way, the unit libraries attached to the various colleges including Education, Engineering, Law, Business, and Agriculture, were reorganized, and, before long, their shelves began to fill with books, pamphlets, and periodicals, a goodly portion of which came as contributions and donations from abroad, mostly from the United States. Expanding requirements of the institution as the country's only public university compelled it to move in 1949 from Manila to a one thousand-acre campus site ten miles outside the city where the U. S. Army had previously made camp.

The Conservatory of Music was originally assigned a temporary army-built structure formerly occupied by the commanding general.

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of the Armed Forces of the West Pacific, until the following year, when it moved to the newly constructed administration building, where it was given two floors of one wing. Incidentally, before the war, the Conservatory of Music, along with the School of Fine Arts, had a magnificent building of its own. At the time of the transfer there was no music library to speak of, but in the main University Library elsewhere on the campus there were a few books on music, a small collection of miniature scores, and another of 78 rpm phonorecords.

It was not until October 1955, ten years after the University started to emerge from the debris of war, that the Music Library was reorganized in its present location and under its new orientation with respect to functions and objectives. What brought about this long-delayed undertaking was the return of its present librarian (then newly appointed) from graduate studies abroad, and the allocation of P15,000 ($7,500) for the purpose.

Administratively, the Music Library is a unit or department of the Conservatory of Music. It receives its support, equipment, and staff from the school. At the same time, the Music Library is under the control and supervision of the University Library, as are other library units on the campus, except those of law and medicine. Its policies are guided by the rules and regulations of the University Library.

The Music Library follows a program that includes the following points:

1. To develop its reference and bibliographical collection for music research work. This includes the Gesamtausgaben, Musik-Sammelwerke, Denkmäler, and other important sets.

2. To build an adequate record collection for listening and study purposes.

3. To encourage Filipino composers to make their works available through publication or other means so that Philippine music and musical thought will be more widely known.

4. To build a satisfactory collection of Asiatic music, and books on Asiatic music, for purposes of study, research, and understanding.

5. To de-emphasize its performance collection fund-wise, although contributions or donations of this kind are always welcome.

6. To cooperate with the study or work programs of the various departments of the University.

7. To carry on an exchange program with music libraries in the country and abroad.
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According to the terms of her appointment, the present music librarian is primarily a member of the faculty of music and only secondarily a librarian. For her library work she receives no extra compensation. Under the existing relationship of unit libraries to the University Library, the music librarian is immediately responsible both to the director of the Conservatory of Music and to the university librarian.

She is assisted by one full-time and one part-time nonprofessional, both of whom have music backgrounds. The service work is divided between the two assistants. This includes, besides the charging and discharging of music materials, the reshelving of books and other materials, repair work, messenger work, the care of shelves and record cabinets, and attending to the classroom needs of the faculty. Since the Music Library is a closed-shelf library, the assistants are kept busy with service work.

The music librarian handles three or four music courses a semester; attends to all music library correspondence, projects, and meetings; reads book and record reviews; prepares the annual order list of books, scores, phonorecords, and other materials; prepares the annual report of the Music Library, and catalogs scores and phonorecords. With regard to the last-named responsibility, the cataloging of scores and phonorecords, this normally would be undertaken, as with all library materials, in the technical processes division of the University Library. But until such time as the University Library acquires another trained music cataloger, it has been deemed expedient to assign the cataloging work to the music librarian. Incidentally, it is the U. S. Library of Congress scheme of classification, its rules for descriptive cataloging, and its music subject headings that are used for all music library materials.

The first problem the Music Library faced upon its reorganization in 1955 was that of location. At that time, it was the wish of the university librarian that all materials on music, art, and architecture be grouped together in the main library building and designated as the Special Collection. As the main library building is a good ten-minute walk from the Conservatory of Music, the music librarian had visions of music students and faculty shuttling under the hot sun or in the rain between library and school. Fortunately, it took little argument to point out and establish the fact that the arrangements as first conceived were not practical.

Before long, the small collection of books, scores, and phonorecords
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was transferred to a room on the second floor of the left wing of the administration building. (The Conservatory of Music occupies the second and third floors of the opposite wing, the two wings being joined together by means of a breeze-way.) This location provided quick access to the music library and at the same time minimized the various “noises” from the nearby music studios.

Within two years the problem of expansion loomed. The room, though ideal in proximity and accessibility, served for the reading, listening, office, service and stack areas, all rolled in one! The problem seemed hopeless. However, the election by the Board of Regents of a new university president brought about a change. The new university head decided that the president’s office with all its adjuncts should be situated in the administration building, an edifice which had been erected for that purpose originally. (His predecessor had preferred to hold office in the liberal arts building.)

The Music Library was then transferred to the roof garden of the building (the fourth floor) whose open sides were enclosed with jalousies and the space further divided to accommodate a small recital hall and a classroom. This is where the library of the Conservatory of Music is today. There is one room for the reading, listening, and service areas, and another for the librarian’s office and stacks. There is space for growth for another five years at most, by which time it is hoped that a new Conservatory of Music building will have been built.

The main and ever-pressing problem of the library is the procurement of complete editions of the works of various composers and out-of-print books of music reference and bibliography. It was unfortunate that during the years from 1945 to 1955, no one thought of obtaining these valuable sets. Today only the Bachgesellschaft set is complete in the library, but slowly other scholarly volumes, such as the Mozart and Haydn sets, Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, etc., are being acquired through subscription.

In 1955, the library had an opportunity to secure reprint editions of the works of Beethoven and Brahms from the Edwards firm in Ann Arbor. However, the deal was snagged by conflicting policies of the parties concerned. Our institution, being a state university, has a policy that all purchases be paid for only upon receipt of the merchandise. On the other hand, the publisher desired to receive his payment first before shipping the expensive sets. No amount of explanation and assurance of payment on this side could budge the pub-
lishing firm. Finally it was decided that a U. S. book dealer could handle the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned. Unfortunately, by this time the sets had been broken up and sold to various libraries. Only about five or six volumes of each set were available.

Being seven thousand or more miles away from music publishers and dealers poses a problem that probably no library in the West has ever experienced. Distance is the main reason for the delay this library suffers in matters of communication and purchases. Publishing houses and music dealers are wont to send their announcements or catalogs by surface mail. By the time this library receives a notice and rushes off its orders by air mail, the desired items in the dealers' catalogs may have been sold, or the deadline nearly passed for subscriptions to new definitive sets. We have always managed to meet deadlines for orders but have never been able to solve the problem of the "sold" items.

To a newly organized music library this situation presents a frustrating picture, indeed. As music librarians know, many basic reference and bibliographical tools have long gone out of print and the only way to secure them is to depend on antiquarian music dealers, or to hope and pray that some musical scholar in the United States or Europe will sell his or the family's prized music collection. Could there be another Stellfeld collection, or even one approximating it? As R. M. Murphy states, "The basic scholarly publications . . . represent the hard core of knowledge which is the most treasured heritage of the library, and every effort should be made to find copies of as many of them as possible. After all, there are no substitutes—and no translations . . . Monuments such as these in the grand tradition of musical scholarship are fundamental for any music library, and every student should have a chance to become familiar with them."

The Music Library not only plays an active and important role in the research and study program of the Conservatory of Music; it also cooperates in the study programs of other departments in the University, such as the department of humanities, the speech and drama department, the University radio station, and others. This cooperation is achieved through a policy of short-term loans, a week at most, since with its very limited resources the library can hardly afford a more liberal arrangement. And by special arrangement, its resources are made available on the premises to music students of private music schools.

The budget of the Music Library is determined in a large measure by the library fees of the music students enrolled. However, only
a little over a fifth of this income is allotted to the library. It is this allotment that goes for the purchase of library materials. Equipment, office supplies, and salaries are paid from the general budget of the Conservatory. Before the war, all the library fees collected were used to procure books and other materials for the University and unit libraries. After the war, a state of emergency was proclaimed and it was decided that part of the fees should be used for other purposes. Now after fifteen years, it is expected that the improved economic conditions of the country will soon see the termination of this policy, and revert the funds to library use.

In its acquisition program, the Music Library is governed not only by its budget, but also by a tradition that has been western for the past three hundred and fifty years. Whatever Asian materials the Music Library has is due to the interest and effort of a music faculty member whose special field is ethnomusicology with emphasis on Philippine and other Asian regions. In the acquisition of less costly but none the less important materials for the library, the faculty plays a big hand in shaping its content. It is usually the area of instruction that shows the greatest activity and interest in the library that inevitably receives the greatest attention. In the Conservatory, the theory and violoncello departments have been the most aggressive groups. Surprisingly enough, it is the biggest, the piano department, that lags behind.

All departments within the Conservatory are notified when “ordering” time comes. This falls shortly after the beginning of the new fiscal year which starts in July, a few weeks after the first semester of school. When a department shows little or no interest in the order notice, the music librarian assumes responsibility for ordering materials for that department so that some measure of equity is insured for all. The long waits between purchases, and the need for immediate action with regard to dealers’ offers of out-of-print books, compel the librarian to prepare her orders in one big sweep rather than in sporadic purchases of little amounts. Sporadic orders tend to shrink the budget.

Because of the delay resulting from the great distance between the Philippines and the West, materials ordered cannot be made available to music library users until the following academic year. At the very earliest, they may reach the library by the latter part of the second semester. Since almost all its purchases are made abroad, with the exception of Philippine music, this matter of distance creates a
very real problem. The Jet Age is still much too young to envisage the flying of library materials across the Pacific. We must continue to rely on cargo liners and freighters for obvious reasons.

There are plans for a new Conservatory of Music building. When constructed, it will have the classrooms separated from the studios by an inner garden, and forming the base of this U-shaped structure will be the administrative office and music library. The new library, which is being designed according to the latest trends in music library planning, will have a separate air-conditioned room for its record and tape collection. Equipped with six or more turn-tables, the room will offer more satisfactory listening facilities.

The open-shelf system is a little too risky to adopt where a librarian is held accountable for every piece of government property, and in this case, all library materials are government-owned; hence, the idea of open shelves, though the most attractive and effective way of inducing more people to use the library, is not very popular with librarians in the Philippines, unless, as it sometimes happens, they have the backing of their superior, the college dean or director, who is willing to bear the responsibility for library losses.

To obviate the arid impression of the closed stack that is out of sight to the borrower, book shelves and score cabinets in the new music library will be made visible over a long low counter which will serve as the dividing wall between the stack and reading areas. This arrangement will also help to increase the amount of light and ventilation in the two rooms. Other details, such as a display window, study carrels, etc., are also included in the plan. But most important of all, space for growth has been given the utmost consideration, so that when the need for expansion comes, an annex could be built without deforming the original design.

In spite of many difficulties, some seemingly insurmountable at present, the future of the University of the Philippines Music Library is assured. It enjoys a steady if somewhat limited budget; it plays an active role in the life of the University, with special stress on scholarship and research that could have an impact that is both national and regional for Southeast Asia. In its own special way it is contributing to the development of music in the Philippines as a creative and refining force of the national spirit.
References