Musicology and the Music Library

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Musicology is a comparatively young academic discipline. Although the study of music is ancient, it was well into the second half of the nineteenth century when scientific methods of research were adopted, leading to the foundation of musicology and its admission to the curriculum of the university. Chairs in musicology were first established in Vienna and Prague, but Germany soon became the leader, and by 1914 almost every German university had created a position for a musicologist. Assuming at least a basic training in music, a musicologist is chiefly a historian, although he may call on, or even specialize in, areas such as acoustics, psychology, aesthetics, and paleography.

What an exciting time were the first fifty years! Musical documents had to be unearthed, the works of individual composers brought together, biographical facts determined, stylistic schools and periods established, and the evolution of musical forms traced. The prehistory of music is extraordinarily long, for the notation of music is vague until the twelfth century, and few compositions prior to the thirteenth century have come down to us. Until about 1600 the notation of music was quite different from our present system, so this early music must be transcribed for study and performance. By 1914 the musicologists, mostly German, had collected and published in monumental editions the complete works of Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart, Palestrina, Schütz, Schumann, and Mendelssohn, among others; issued multiple-volume sets of early music organized by country and designated “national Denkmäler”; compiled extensive biographical and general music dictionaries; published a 10-volume bibliography of pre-1800 musical sources; founded several journals giving results of research; and written general histories of music and expansive biographies of several major composers.

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Non-German universities were slower to recognize musicology, so many of the scholars worked outside the university hierarchy. Much research was nevertheless accomplished in all European countries between the two world wars, and in 1930 the first American chair in musicology was established at Cornell University. Two other American landmarks are the foundings of the Music Library Association in 1932 and of the American Musicological Society in 1934. The first American musicologists were largely trained in Europe, and back home they continued their research in western European music, which was also the subject of their teachings at the university. The concentration on European rather than American music might not have continued had it not been for two factors: (1) the newly developed technique of microfilm, which provided European source material to the American viewer; and (2) the influx of European musicologists who fled Nazi Germany and accepted positions newly established at American universities.

Since World War II, musicology in the United States has mushroomed. In 1931, seven schools had doctoral programs in musicology, and only five degrees had been awarded, all by one of the institutions. It was not until 1939 that all seven schools had awarded at least one Ph.D. By 1952, 132 doctorates had been conferred; five years later this figure had tripled to 392. It grew to 523 in 1962, 802 in 1965, 1,327 in 1970, and 1,494 in 1972. The number of dissertations in progress increased from 208 in 1957 to 793 in 1972. Milos Velimirovic has estimated that “if this growth-rate is projected to 1980, we can easily have close to 3,000 Ph.D.’s in musicology and anywhere between 1,000 and 1,500 dissertations in progress at that time.” The number of schools offering a doctorate in musicology had grown to thirty-seven by 1961 and fifty-six in 1970, although only forty-seven had actually awarded degrees.

Given the current economic state of our schools, resulting in a cessation of growth or even in cutbacks of their faculties, the projected growth rate of Ph.D.’s in musicology will probably lead to a high rate of unemployment. This suggests that some of the doctoral programs at the fifty-six schools will not survive. Which ones might they be? The newest programs come first to mind, for their faculties, reputations, and library holdings are not yet adequately developed. Yet the momentum gained from the battles to initiate a program might carry them through to survival. On the other hand, one could speculate that the leaders of the oldest programs have such a strong sense of responsibility to the profession that they would drastically
reduce or even eliminate their programs in order to lessen the forthcoming unemployment. Surely a central consideration in this dilemma must be the library holdings necessary to support the doctoral programs.

The growth of musicology in the United States naturally brought on a corresponding proliferation of music libraries. By about 1920 separate music collections were well established, chiefly at the Library of Congress, at public libraries in New York, Boston, and Brooklyn, and at the Eastman School of Music and Yale University. The number of separate music collections at academic institutions (that is, excluding public library collections and academic collections housed in the general library) had grown to perhaps thirty by 1950, and today the figure is at least ninety-one.3 A recently published Directory of Music Librarians in the United States and Canada4 lists the names of 592 persons claiming to have primary responsibility for a music collection. The Music Library Association currently has 1,800 members, including librarians, teachers, performers, institutions, publishers, and others with a general interest in music bibliography and libraries. The vast majority of today's music libraries, however, do not have collections adequate for the support of their academic programs. As is often the case for other fields, degree programs in music were initiated before the libraries were equipped to serve them, and the libraries have still not caught up.

Because musicology is solely a graduate research program, our concern here is for music research libraries supporting doctoral programs in musicology. What is an “adequate" collection for such a library? Teachers, doctoral candidates and librarians would probably agree that it should consist of at least 50,000 volumes of books and scores (including the standard music dictionaries, bibliographies, monographs, biographies, complete runs of periodicals, editions of composers' complete works, Denkmäler, and performing editions of the concert repertory), subscriptions to about 250 journals, at least 10,000 LP recordings, and a minimum annual book, score, and record budget of $25,000 for current acquisitions. Of the 56 schools offering a Ph.D. in musicology, only 25 are identified in the Directory of Music Research Libraries as having 50,000 or more volumes: (The latter figure includes libraries having between 30,000 and 50,000 volumes in 1967, the date of the directory.) Thus in this paper “the trends in musicology and how they affect the music library" are being discussed before our libraries have caught up to the rapid growth of
musicology since World War II—before over one-half of our music libraries have acquired the basic tools of research in musicology.

In reference to the earlier question of which of the fifty-six doctoral programs might survive, the administrations of schools with inadequate music libraries should ask whether they will be able to invest large amounts of money to bring their library holdings up to an acceptable standard. The addition of 20,000 volumes at an average cost of $20 per volume for acquisition, cataloging and binding comes to $400,000. Added to this would be a steady annual acquisition of about 4,000 volumes of current publications, or $80,000 to sustain the collection.

Before turning to recent trends in the study of music, a minor matter of acquisitions should be noted. With the loss of German scholars by emigration in the 1930s and the lapse of research and student training in the 1940s, the quality of German scholarship varies greatly today, and world leadership in musicology has passed from Germany to the United States. In earlier decades librarians hardly questioned the quality of a German publication and placed standing orders for as many series of German monographs as could be afforded. Today the librarian should question each of these standing orders and cancel those that are not worthy of attention. We have been slow to recognize that such publications are no longer essential just because they are German.

Musicology, like other fields of study, is in an age of specialization. As early as the 1950s, doctoral seminars in musicology no longer aimed at producing generalists capable of covering the whole of music history and of relating it to other disciplines. Areas of specialization might be a national stylistic period, such as the music of the French baroque; or a type of music, such as early Italian opera or the eighteenth-century concerto; or an aspect of music, such as music theory in the sixteenth century or the performance practices of an instrument and era. Librarians should keep in mind that specialization spawns isolation and leads to narrow outlooks. The librarian must not be overly influenced by the specialties of individual scholars in his department and must take the responsibility for selecting a balanced collection.

A popular area of specialization for American students was until recently the Renaissance, which was the specialty of several of the German immigrants in the 1930s. A common project was to select a Renaissance composer, collect his works on microfilm, and prepare a dissertation consisting of an analysis and transcription of the music.
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While Renaissance and baroque topics were being favored, the nineteenth century was neglected, although—or perhaps because—it embraces the concert music most familiar to us today. As seems often the case in dissertation topics in all fields, the more esoteric the better. Beginning about a decade ago, however, perhaps as significant Renaissance and baroque topics became less easy to find, the wealth of nineteenth-century topics became more acceptable. This is confirmed by a comparative survey of dissertation topics completed and in progress in the United States, as reported by Cecil Adkins in (1) a list of all topics prior to 1971, and (2) the annual supplements to that list appearing in the fall issues of the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* for the years 1971 through 1974. Adkins lists the dissertations by stylistic period, and Table 1 compares the percentages prior to 1971 with those for the last four years (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1**

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<th>Period</th>
<th>Percentage prior to 1971</th>
<th>Percentage 1971-74</th>
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<td>General &amp; Misc.</td>
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<td>Middle Ages</td>
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<td>Renaissance</td>
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<td>Baroque</td>
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<td>Contemporary</td>
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Had it been convenient to compare the last ten years to the period before 1965, which is about the time the trend toward nineteenth-century specialization began, the comparative percentages would probably have been more convincing. As it is, we see that general (covering overlapping periods) and miscellaneous, medieval, and classical topics remain about the same, Renaissance topics decreased by one-third and baroque topics by one-quarter, while nineteenth-century and contemporary topics each increased by one-third. As we
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move further into the twentieth century, its history becomes longer, and more topics become subjects for research. Librarians in charge of research collections must keep this constantly in mind. Just as the Hemingways of literature leave the category of current fiction and become classic topics for research, so do the Poulencs and Prokofievs of music lose the designation "modern music" and become subjects for historical study. A major difference is that relatively few of Hemingway's works will go out of print in the near future, while the works of his musical counterparts might already be unavailable. The research librarian is advised to compile a list of twentieth-century composers ranging from Debussy to Stockhausen whose works are apt to be of interest to posterity (a list of seventy-five is easily compiled), and acquire all of their works in all editions, as well as all of the chief writings about them. As a supplement to this, each research library should be responsible for the acquisition and protection of the published and unpublished works of lesser-known composers living in the geographical area of the library.

The complete works of most of the major nineteenth-century composers are available in monumental, authentic editions, already issued or in progress. The research librarian must be concerned now with lesser nineteenth-century figures, whose music is finally receiving attention from both historians and performers. Although we still might smile upon hearing some of this music, the former grins are now only smiles and, furthermore, we are interested sociologically in this music as a reflection of its time. We are more willing to accept it on nonmusical terms. Fortunate is the library today whose curator began collecting twenty years ago the works of composers such as Auber, Bellini, Clementi, Donizetti, Hummel, Kalkbrenner, and Rossini; at that time these works were widely available and the prices were embarrassingly low. Today they are in the catalogs of rare book dealers at prices few libraries can afford.

Some of this nineteenth-century music is still on library shelves and available for public circulation. Bibliographies of early music publications, as well as Library of Congress subject headings, have traditionally used the year 1800 as the dividing line between early and modern music. This has been the practice for seventy-five years, and it is time to revise it. All publications between 1800 and, at the very least, 1850 or 1860 should be transferred from the open stacks to the music library's rare book section.

Trends referred to thus far have concerned primarily music stemming from western Europe. This music has always been of major
interest to American musicologists and will undoubtedly so continue in the foreseeable future, for it remains our standard concert fare. Non-European music, however, much of which has been totally ignored until recently, is now receiving attention from an increasing number of scholars. Three new areas of specialization are (1) popular music, (2) the so-called “serious” music of the United States, and (3) the ethnic music collected by ethnomusicologists. Libraries have been slow in their support of these new directions of research.

Ethnomusicology is as old as musicology, and until recently was considered a branch of the latter, designated “comparative musicology.” The ethnomusicologist is concerned with non-Western and folk music and their relations to society. The ethnomusicologist’s resources are current examples from oral traditions, so the emphasis of research is more descriptive than historical, and the methods stem from both musicology and anthropology. It is generally agreed today that ethnomusicology and musicology are not separate fields of study. The argument is whether the collective term should be ethnomusicology, with musicology as a branch for the study of Western concert music, or whether the term ethnomusicology should be eliminated, and musicology embrace all geographical and topical branches of musical study. While the discussion goes on, the two areas retain their separate identities, reflected officially by the American Musicological Society with its 2,878 members and the Society for Ethnomusicology with its 1,954 members (both as of 1975). Until the formation of the latter organization in 1956, matters of ethnomusicology were included on the programs of the annual meetings of the American Musicological Society.

Ethnomusicology is growing faster than any other graduate study in music, and more and more colleges are recognizing a need to add knowledge of non-Western cultures to the student’s general education. Researchers have only scratched the surfaces of possible topics, so the field will surely continue the rapid growth it has experienced since World War II; its scholars will become more prominent on music faculties, and its publications more noticeable on library budgets. The number of printed publications devoted entirely to ethnomusicology is not large. Most writings are found in the literature of musicology, anthropology and folklore. Because ethnomusicology deals with an oral tradition, the bulk of the study material is in the form of recordings, both private and commercial. The invention of sound recording was, of course, a prime factor in the development of ethnomusicology, and fortunately it was used from the very begin-
ning in the nineteenth century for the collection of raw material. Since the 1950s, when the recording industry burgeoned, a great number of commercial recordings have been issued. Here the librarian needs the aid of reviews by specialists for the evaluation of authenticity, for many of the commercial recordings are intended only as entertainment. Because urbanization contaminates traditional folk music styles, it is essential that field recordings, both private and commercial, be as authentic as possible, for they will be used for the repeated hearings of researchers as they make transcriptions and analyses. Major archives for the preservation and classification of these recordings have been established in the United States at the Library of Congress, Indiana University, Northwestern University, and UCLA, and since 1960 smaller archives have been established at other American institutions. Much work needs to be done with the classification of this material and the centralization of the information allowing researchers to make comparative studies.

The ethnomusicological practice of accepting music as it is found regardless of its intrinsic musical value, and of relating the music to the society that created it in the manner of an anthropologist, has unquestionably affected the outlook of musicologists. As a young discipline, musicology had to concern itself largely with the identification, development and history of musical styles, neglecting social factors such as studies of musical organizations, the social positions of musicians, the development of music publishing, the economics of music, the creation of audiences, and other social influences on the style of music. Specific stylistic studies will, of course, continue to dominate the musicologist’s time, for much remains to be done, and periodic reevaluations of earlier studies are necessary. Inquiries into nonmusical aspects of the time are already being widened and will continue to grow, however, so that music students will no longer be able to isolate themselves in the music library—which pleases the teachers who have been encouraging this for decades. While we are in an age of specialization, as noted earlier, perhaps the current trend is to become a nonmusical generalist within the musical area of specialization. Furthermore, the practice of accepting music as it is found has encouraged new areas of specialization, especially popular music and the history of American music.

The division of music into popular and serious types came about gradually through the nineteenth century and has persisted by and large down to the present. The wide acceptance today of jazz music, and more recently of rock music, and the adoption of aspects of their
musical styles by composers of innovative concert music have brought the two divisions closer together. Some observers claim the worlds of popular and serious music are already joined. Be that as it may, popular music is now an area of specialization acceptable to an increasing number of music graduate faculties. Jazz is America's major contribution to the art of music, yet the bulk of its research has been done not here, but in Europe. As jazz is largely improvisatory, which is to say, is mostly an oral tradition, libraries must prepare for future research by amassing extensive collections of recordings.

Another neglected area of American popular music is the vast mass of sheet music published from early in the nineteenth century until World War II, when commercial recordings replaced musicmaking in the home. It has been estimated that close to one million musical items were published in the United States in the nineteenth century. Large accumulations of this music are lying uncataloged in our libraries, and much more is rotting in the basements and attics of private homes. Because of its generally scant musical value, scholars have neglected this sheet music until recently, yet it not only represents the beginning of uniquely American music but was used as a vehicle for social change. Libraries must undertake cooperative cataloging of this material, noting, perhaps with the aid of the computer, information about the lithographed covers and their designers; full information about the publishers and copyright dates, the authors and topics of the texts; portraits; dedicatees; and, of course, the composer. Only after such cataloging has been completed can histories of these facets of American life be written. The guiding principle should be that nothing is trivial to a cultural historian.

Until the 1950s, American interest in contemporary concert music was devoted to the works of European composers, culminating in Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Bartók, and Hindemith, all of whom spent the late years of their lives in the United States and form the last foreseeable importation of composers. The breakthrough in acceptance of the music of Charles Ives and Carl Ruggles in the 1950s gradually overcame the rule that something must be fragile, foreign, or famous to be considered for research and performance. We have become tolerant and willing to accept each work on its own terms. The existence today of a half-dozen centers for the study of American music, and thus an increase in the number of students working on American topics, testify that American music is coming of age. (It is too early to judge the long-range effect of the impetus provided by the Bicentennial, especially the financial support provided by gov-
ernment research agencies.) Libraries, too, have neglected American music and are only now beginning to give more attention to their holdings of this material and to the filling of gaps in their collections. Some of the published music of neglected composers such as Henry Cowell, Roy Harris, Arthur Shepherd, Bernard Rogers, and Quincy Porter are still in print and should be widely acquired. Out-of-print works must be found on the secondhand market, and the manuscripts and private papers of American composers, if not already deposited in a library, must be sought out and processed for archival collections.

Until now, music libraries have at best merely responded to the immediate needs of their patrons, who were concerned principally with the concert repertory. Ideally, libraries should have been collecting musical evidence of all kinds. The needs of the patrons are now changing, and the libraries are not prepared.

Two trends in collegiate music programs which are related only in part to musicology but affect music libraries are: (1) a greater emphasis on performance, and (2) an increase in the number of undergraduates majoring in music. Performance has always been an integral part of our college music program—unlike European training, in which performance and theory are taught at conservatories, while the university curriculum is limited to musicology. Some American doctoral programs were influenced by the European emigrants of the 1930s, who brought with them the traditional division of performance and scholarship. That shackle has now been largely shaken, so that most faculties of musicology insist that their students attain a high level of ability as performers. This has proven in recent years to be a wise requirement, for as the number of available positions declines, it has often become necessary for recent graduates to combine the teaching of performance with that of academic subjects. Too many faculties of performance, unfortunately, have not insisted that their students be adequately exposed to music history and theory. As a result, few of these students are prepared for the positions combining performance with the teaching of academic subjects; moreover, they are not becoming acquainted with the findings of music historians, which could be applied to performance practices.

Since the late 1960s, at the time of student disillusionment with the sciences, the number of undergraduates majoring in music has steadily increased to the point of doubling or even tripling the size of these programs at many institutions. The new students are of a somewhat different breed. They rightly think of music as sound, as something to be heard, and they want to make music themselves.
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Furthermore, many of them arrive with a healthy curiosity for, and occasionally with a corresponding familiarity with, a large variety of musical sounds from several stylistic eras, perhaps brought on by the myriad of available commercial recordings which have become a common part of our lives. Many of these students have no plans for advanced study in music or for a career in the business world of music. They have simply adopted music as the major subject for a general education in the humanities, and upon graduation will turn to graduate study in other fields, such as medicine, law, foreign languages, or library science. Such students have a large interest in interdisciplinary studies, and to meet this need appropriate courses are being established at many schools. For the music library, this means more cooperation with other branches of the library system, and a determined effort to avoid duplication of acquisitions.

At about thirty institutions across the country, yet a third source has created an increased need for performing editions. During the enormous expansion of college education after World War II, and especially during the establishment of new branches of state universities, college administrators (due largely to the insistence of state legislators) required doctoral degrees for their faculty members in order, it was believed, to assure high standards in classroom teaching and institutional reputation. Doctoral programs in musicology fulfilled this requirement for the scholars, but new programs had to be established for conductors and performers, who until then had succeeded with musical talents and with formal training usually not exceeding a master's degree. The new degree programs were designated “Doctor of Musical Arts” (D.M.A.) and enabled performers to receive a doctorate by lengthening the period of formal training on their instruments and by adding historical and theoretical courses to their schedules, thus extending their residency normally by two years past a master's program. D.M.A. programs assume that during the course of study, the candidate in oboe, for example, will become acquainted with the entire literature for the instrument, as well as the history of its performance practice and all writings about the instrument and its performers. Anything short of this makes a sham of the doctorate, yet these goals cannot be reached if the candidate's library does not have the required material among its holdings.

Thus three programs—the Ph.D., the undergraduate major, and the D.M.A.—have brought about an increased need for performing editions. Unfortunately, the response to this need has been far too inadequate at most libraries. Music libraries generally are missing a
marvelous educational opportunity—in fact, they are neglecting their responsibility—by not having available a vast array of performing editions for all media. It is as if the college or university library had available for circulation only a few selected works of Hawthorne, Huxley and Hobbes. Unquestionably, this is the major shortcoming of music libraries across the country. The blame must be shared by librarians and teachers alike. Librarians have set their goals too low and have not persisted in the quest for adequate funds. Scholars have too long neglected the library's need for performing editions and have not added their voice to the plea for proper financing. Teachers of performance are too often caught up in the warhorses of their repertory and do not provoke their students to a broadened outlook.

Increased funds are difficult to come by now that the boom of the 1950s and 1960s, supported by federal and state funds, has ended for higher education—but this hardship has had its good points as well. Now in a period of slow or no growth, faculties are no longer transient as they were during the previous two decades, when offers from other institutions motivated bargaining such as teaching only graduate courses or acquiring for the library extensive materials in the researcher's area of specialization. Faculties today have a greater interest in their present (which is probably also their future) institution, and the librarian has a freer hand in the development of a balanced collection. Furthermore, the art of teaching receives more attention today, as the job market has turned to favor the employer.

For libraries, the end of the boom has led to a consolidation of what they already have. Most conspicuous are the numerous systems of cooperative sharing of resources among libraries of a geographical area. Librarians are now telling patrons, perhaps for the first time, that the library lacks a requested work, it will not be acquired, but in due time a copy can be borrowed from a cooperating neighbor. Some libraries are now charging a fee for interlibrary loans to institutions outside their systems. This practice may be a prelude to fees for the use of rare material, the acquisition, processing, storage and circulation of which are such a burden on the library budget. Consolidation is also the byword in matters of preservation, not only in the identification of and proper storage for rare books, but also by photoduplicate replacement of the thousands of more recent works on paper which is disintegrating. In the field of music, as in other fields, commercial facsimile editions of secondary sources have been extremely helpful in filling the gaps of young collections and in replacing worn copies. At the beginning of the reprinting flurry, the
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The music librarian's rule of thumb could be that "if it is worth reprinting, it is worth acquiring." Although the supply of musical writings worthy of reprinting was for the most part exhausted a few years ago, some publishers continue the business by issuing works that have long been superseded. Other publishers have turned to facsimile editions of primary sources, both printed and manuscript, but a small market necessitates high prices, and few libraries can afford the acquisition of this desirable material. Another economic factor which, like cooperative library systems, affects the tempo of library service is today's extraordinarily high cost of construction. A basic premise of libraries is that their collections will expand and additional housing will be required periodically. Today the "additional housing" is often a storage area some distance from the library itself, and a patron must wait several hours or even a day for delivery of a requested book.

In summary, until World War II and perhaps even until the 1960s, it was possible for the music librarian to develop an elite collection consisting mostly of materials relating to the so-called "serious" music of western Europe, the chief concern of the young field of musicology. The upsurge of interest in the nineteenth century in ethnomusicology, popular music, American music, and performance has, however, considerably broadened the basis of music for performance and research. This occurred at the very time that funds diminished, making it difficult for libraries to expand; unfortunately, it also occurred before newly established libraries had acquired collections adequate for the support of the many new doctoral programs in musicology.
References

2. Ibid., p. 28.
5. Adkins, Cecil, ed. Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology. 5th ed. Philadelphia, American Musicological Society, 1971. The percentage figures in the table, while not precise, should reflect the changes noted. The figures were arrived at by counting the number of pages in Adkins’s 1971 list and the actual number of dissertation titles in the four annual supplements. Both include notices of cancellations and completions of titles announced earlier.