

MLA in LA

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“It never rains in southern California,” according to the song. Well, actually, it *did* rain early Saturday, but only briefly...and not enough to dampen the spirits of those who attended the 68th Annual Music Library Association Conference at the Regal Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles on March 17-20.

MLA President Diane Parr Walker welcomed the attendees and introduced UCLA University Librarian Gloria Werner. Werner spoke of the diversity and lack of formality of southern California, and noted the importance of music to the culture. Music, film and television thrive in Los Angeles. The area became home to numerous emigré composers, artists and musicians: Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Dahl, Rachmaninoff, Korngold, Krenek, Klemperer, Heifetz, Piatigorsky, Thomas Mann, Brecht and Werfel, to name a few.

Los Angeles is also home to many archival collections of note, and from the 1920's has been an important centre for jazz, nurturing the likes of Charlie Parker, Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie and Nat King Cole on Central Avenue. Opera was a “missing link” for a substantial period of time, the Los Angeles Opera being established only recently (1984), with Placido Domingo as the current Artistic Director. In closing, Werner noted that the city of Los Angeles sells the greatest number of books in the entire United States.

Screen Gems Robert Kosovksy (NYPL) and Steven M. Fry (UCLA)

Los Angeles is the media capital of the world. The art of illusion requires a massive collaborative effort, and the contribution of a musical soundtrack is often overlooked. For many years, the legal rights of the composers of film music was either ignored or overlooked; the music was deemed inferior and not available for study. Yet, productions like *Peter Pan* - which exist in several versions of film, stage and cartoon, in addition to the original book - are part of our collective memory and cultural history, and have an indelible impact on a generation.

Elmer Bernstein is the President of the Film Music Society and a composer. He studied at Juilliard with Roger Sessions and Stefan Wolpe, and has an enormous number of film scores to his credit including *Desire Under the Elms*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, *Men in Black* and *The Ten Commandments*.

Bernstein apologized in advance for a precipitous departure as he was unwell. He was quoted in a recent issue of the *The Hollywood Reporter* under the headline “Bernstein: Troubled in the Key of Now.” There is a terrible rot in the field of film composition. Years ago classic film scores were composed by the likes of Bernard Hermann, Miklos Rosza and Alfred Newman. Bernstein was given the opportunity to score his first film in 1950. Chosen by producer

Sidney Buckman, Bernstein was given an office next to established film composers and musicians. Back then, there was the notion that people had expertise in their field and should be allowed to work. A studio generally had a head composer to whom a rookie could turn for advice. When Bernstein was asked to score a romance, Alfred Newman said he had just done one and offered to run the film for him; it was *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*.

The breakup of the studio system has done great damage to the art of film composition. Today's *auteur* filmmaker-director meddles in everyone else's business, including the composer's. In the past, the composer viewed the entire, completed film and crafted music to support and enhance the production. A reasonable time span (at least six weeks) was allotted to create the score. The present system allows *no* time for the creation of a musical score in the overall film schedule. The film director now says to the composer, "When can I hear something?" while the filming process is still ongoing! Directors don't understand that it's an architectural process which requires both thought and the ability to translate drama into music. Today all scores sound alike because the process of creating them has become very gray. Bernstein challenged us to name any film scores from the past five years which "stick in the head." Other than one or two scores by John Williams or Jerry Goldsmith, not much is memorable. The schedule for one of his own recent projects, *The Wild, Wild West* called for the film "to lock" on April 30, and the scoring to be complete by May 10. Ten days is not enough time to create 75 minutes of music! In the frenzy to get a film out to previews, the foreshortened schedules mean there is no time to finish a film by putting the proper score with it. So, a "temp score" is put with the film

as an aid to market research. But the filmmaker is the real victim of the "temp score." A properly-crafted score shapes a scene; the wrong music can cause a scene not to work, prompting it to be cut for the wrong reason.

Bernstein reiterated it takes time to craft an appropriate score. He said it took six weeks to come up with the first three notes of the score to *To Kill a Mockingbird*...such a luxury would not be permitted today. Bernstein's privileged status does afford him some clout. He was contracted to score an HBO production, *The Life of Dorothy Dandridge*. The producer told him, "HBO requires a mockup of the score." Bernstein replied, "Well, then they need to hire another composer!" In the end, Bernstein prevailed and wrote the score in his own time.

Young film composers are at risk under the present system. There is fierce competition and they are forced to work under appalling circumstances. Agents do not understand the compositional process and are not representing their composers well. Bernstein teaches a film composition course at UCLA and praises the brilliance of his graduate students. But he fears for their longevity in the business knowing they won't have a proper apprenticeship with time to learn their craft. The ever-present "marketing" angle means that even the soundtrack for the classically-oriented *Shakespeare in Love* was dubbed at very loud volume in an attempt to reach 14-year-olds. "I wish I could have brought you a happier message, but it's a true message," says Bernstein.

Fred Karlin studied with Alvin Ettlter, arranged for the Benny Goodman Band, and

has scored 30 films (including *Up the Down Staircase* and *The Sterile Cuckoo*) and 100 television movies and miniseries. He has written several books about film music. *On the Track: a Guide for Film Composers* and *Listening to Movies* are both published by Schirmer Books. Karlin is a Trustee of the Film Music Society with a special interest in the Oral History program.

Karlin began a series of historical projects in the 1960's that studied the birth of Broadway in the 1920's, street bands of the 1910's and circus music. It was difficult to find this material in New York City in the 1960's, so Karlin became involved in the preservation of folk and pop Americana. He became a dedicated preservationist when he learned that a friend was using Edison cylinders for skeet shooting! Many collections were destroyed, such as the Radio City Music Library and the CBS Library, but thankfully the Roxy collection was saved.

Karlin gets excited about history in the first-person. He has used the resources of the University of Wyoming and UCLA to create his documentaries and books. His documentary study of Elmer Bernstein prompted him to wonder about the early TV series *Riverboat*, for which Bernstein had composed the score; UCLA had copies to see and study. His work with the Oral History Program made him realize there is no "finding aid" to what exists in oral history archives around the country. A database for the holdings of the American Film Institute, Yale, UCLA, etc., would be very useful.

Karlin's aim is to tell the stories that deserve to be told since the characters themselves will probably never write their own books. He is fascinated by the era of the

Hollywood studio system when film making was a craft, and artisans prepared look-alike antiques and all of the costumes were hand-sewn. Everything had to look authentic, and that included actors who were supposedly playing the violin or the piano. Karlin rolled a clip from a John Garfield movie showing the elaborate steps taken to portray Garfield as a virtuoso violinist in performance (the violin was actually played by Isaac Stern).

Karlin believes that a documentary is part of an oral and video history of a subject. He ran a portion of a documentary on Elmer Bernstein showing footage of Bernstein unveiling his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. It was a rainy day and Bernstein remembers the advice he was given when he was contemplating a career in film-scoring: "You'll never make a living. You'll end up out on the street in the rain!"

Karlin has also done a documentary on Jerry Goldsmith from his beginnings as a clerk-typist at the CBC through to his stint in live-television drama which required him to produce sound and music for an hour-long weekly show (*Climax*) over a three-year period. Goldsmith's other TV credits include *Gunsmoke*, *Perry Mason*, *Have Gun Will Travel* and *The Twilight Zone*. The documentary illustrates the importance of the relationship between the filmmaker-director and composer, such as the one between Paul Verhoeven and Goldsmith, who have collaborated on film like *Basic Instinct* and *Total Recall*, and how the composer can create "sound characters" during the course of a film. Karlin ran several clips that showed Goldsmith's inventiveness: the use of rub rods in *Poltergeist*; the use of stainless steel mixing bowls in *Planet of the Apes*, and the use of "the beam" in *Total Recall*. The

relationship between Goldsmith and Verhoeven evolved over several years and is the exception rather than the norm in the industry. One of Goldsmith's most notable accomplishments was to raise the level of thriller soundtracks. Thrillers tend to have the worst scores. Either they "rip off" Bernard Hermann or over-use the "wah-wah" pedal.

Linda Mehr is the librarian at the Margaret Herrick Library of the Centre for Motion Picture Study, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Mehr assured us that the Academy is not *just* the Oscars, but that it also organizes screenings and lectures, and sponsors student awards. The Margaret Herrick Library receives 20,000 visitors per year, answers 30,000 telephone questions and is interested in preservation of film-related materials. The collection includes periodicals, books, clippings, photographs, posters, screen plays (including John Huston's library), costume sketches, story boards, cue-sheets from the silent era, Oscar-nominated songs, and music. Specific collections include the Screen Composers' Association Collection, Richard Brooks, Jerry Goldsmith, Alex North and Sammy Cahn. Sound recordings are also collected in all formats. The library holds unique items that were thought to be lost including a May 1923 recording of Rudolf Valentino singing in English and Frank Sinatra singing a 1955 song that was cut from *The Man With the Golden Arm*. There is a large collection of letters and an oral history program that is fully transcribed and indexed. Where else would you learn that Alex North chose jazz as the music for *A Streetcar Named Desire* to demonstrate the sensual nature of the characters? Or that the saxophone solo chosen for Stella's descent down a staircase was decried as "too carnal" by the Legion of Decency, and had to be rewritten.

Reference Sources for Film Music H. Stephen Wright (Northern Illinois)

A typical question posed with some regularity at reference desks is, "I saw a movie, and there was classical music played. What was it?" Twenty years ago, this question would have been much more difficult as end credits were minimal. However, credits now list everyone involved with the production and usually include musical credits at the very end.

A complete listing of classical music played in the movies would be massive. Stewart Craggs' *Soundtracks* is not as helpful as one might wish. Naxos has its own Web site, but only includes soundtracks recorded on Naxos. For current or recent films, try Borders, Amazon or CD-Connection. Also try the *Internet Movie Database*. The latter is non-scholarly and compiled by fans, but is terrific, quick and fairly accurate. Be forewarned that movies often advertise the availability of a soundtrack in the end credits, but occasionally the movie "tanks" and the soundtrack is never produced. Much of this stuff is discarded. If your university orchestra seeks music for a film-music concert, they should get in touch with John Waxman (son of Franz), who maintains a rental library.

Large Academic Libraries Roundtable Judy Marley (Princeton)

Marley asked how we can be assertive and make sure that our music journals are included in electronic databases such as *J-Store*, *RILM* and *MUSE*? Tom Moore indicated that the Humanities and Arts are not considered. A recent inquiry to *J-Store* prompted the reply, "At this time there are no plans to index journals in the field of music." The WWW-

based *RILM Abstracts* does not cover performance-based journals.

The full-text version of *IIMP* was discussed at length. Given its title list, which isn't particularly scholarly, it is not as useful as one might hope. The cost of providing full-text access to 100 journals would be astronomical. Several attendees thought we were being used as guinea pigs by investing in *IIMP*'s R&D. There were complaints of miskeying, bad scanning, blurry displays and truncated search screens. It prompted some to inquire whether access was provided via the Web or by mounting a CD-ROM on a server.

Marley asked whether MLA should become involved with SPARC, which coalition has been formed to address the skyrocketing prices of journals. The premise is that member-libraries invest some money to provide start-up funding for alternate publishing arrangements. This has had some success with one journal in particular, *Evolutionary Ecology Research*, which in 1999 was to cost \$777. Michael Rosenweig produced the title himself at a subscription cost of \$305 (paper) or \$272 (Web-access). While this may be useful for acquiring some material, the music library might also possibly contribute something from its budget towards the purchase of a large-ticket item from the university library's central fund. Moore commented that at Princeton, the music budget is "taxed" a percentage by general-interest titles and loses a portion of its own budget to a central fund in this manner. Monica Fazekas commented that she gets her central fund to pay part of the cost of *IIMP* due to its interdisciplinary nature. Marley announced that the Percussive Arts Society's journal will be available on the Web from the University of Arizona for the next three years.

Supporting Handel with Subscriptions to *Rodelinda* and *Faramondo* (from the Bibliography Roundtable)

David Hunter (Texas)

Hunter reported on Rose Mason's (his wife) research. *Rodelinda* and *Faramondo* are from different phases of Handel's career, with *Rodelinda* being the first of Handel's works to be offered by subscription. Three different publishers had published Handel prior to 1725, and all material was issued without subscription. Did the publisher suggest that Handel could make more money through publication of his works to subscribers? Considering that Handel made only 25 guineas per subscribed title, the supposition seems odd and leads one to question Handel's popularity. Certainly other subscribed titles had a much larger subscriber base than did any of Handel's titles. Who were Handel's subscribers - friends, opera buffs, fans, politicians? Thirty-six percent of *Rodelinda*'s subscriber list is unidentified; *Faramondo*'s list has 27 percent who cannot be identified. In any case, the small number of dual subscribers for the two titles is striking. Hunter suggested that opera in 1725 was fashionable with the ruling elite, and this might explain the decreased number of subscribers from this group when in 1738 *Faramondo* was issued. Notable also is the absence of musicians, chapel and solo singers, and composer-performers like Boyce, Arne, and Greene from these lists. Of the 10 surviving Handel subscription lists, 539 different persons are noted. No other operas were available by subscription during this time, and no one knows what subscribers did with the volumes. Were they played? Perhaps Handel himself did not feel the need to solicit subscribers, although in the case of *Faramondo* an advertisement notes that

“Subscriptions [are] taken by the Author in Brook Street, Hanover Square, and by John Walsh.” After all, Handel had a pension of 600 pounds sterling, which contrasts with Eccles’ income of 200 pounds as Master of the King’s Music.

Instructing Foreign Speakers of English (from the Bibliographic Instruction Subcommittee)

Alice Kawakami, a third-generation Japanese with no Japanese language skills, noted that demographics are changing. Serving diverse populations means that one must understand that culture denotes a set of behaviours which are characteristic of a particular group of people. Whether or not this is exotic depends on your own point of view. For instance, Japanese patrons strive for conformity and uniformity. Head-nodding is the “listening behaviour,” meaning that they are listening to you, but it does not necessarily indicate they understand what you are telling them. Remember also that Japanese is a non-Roman language, so that alphabetical order is a foreign concept. The role of learners is different in Japan (listening vs. questioning). There is a fear of asking for help; it may be seen as shameful or demeaning. Libraries in other countries are often only for the privileged, and you must wait your turn to enter. Libraries are also often study halls for silent reading, with no open shelves, and the librarians are not to be disturbed. The differences between foreign library-users and ours can include shelf arrangement, service expectations (closed vs. open stacks), concept of time (some students will always keep books past the due date), difficulty in distinguishing surnames from given names, and difficulty in distinguishing the difference between singular

and plural forms. Kawakami offered the following advice: be welcoming, smile; allow a little time to pass before approaching the patron directly; empathize with the fact that they may not be comfortable asking for help; listen for words you recognize; ask the patron to spell the troublesome word; speak clearly and slowly, not loudly; rephrase your response rather than simply repeating it; avoid double negatives; and choose your analogies carefully.

The Listening Centre Moves to the Web: Indiana University’s Variations Project Constance Mayer (Indiana)

The technical specifications were addressed, wherein each sound file is equal to one CD. Compression at a ration of 36:1 (.bkm) is necessary, particularly from a storage point of view. A “.not” file is created as a track file for each CD. Programming is done at Indiana, and a URL is added to the 856 MARC field, so that students can find sound recordings through the catalogue as well as the reserve lists. The sound capture is achieved by creating a WAV file which is then FTP’ed to the server “gigue”. “Disc-to-Disc” software (Microsoft) is no longer available for purchase, but is used to create the sound files. The “Tiger Shark” file system was chosen so that many students can access the same sound file with little delay, and supports up to 130 simultaneous client-users.

The Variations player was developed in-house, using C++ programming. It functions as a CD player, with all items played off the disc cache. Retrieval takes approximately three minutes, on average, and the player has handled 4,800 accesses in one day. Statistics of 97 percent hits from the disc cache

demonstrate that people are doing the reserve listening. On an average day, there will be 200 retrievals per day, with 80 percent coming from the disc cache and the remainder from people doing non-reserve listening. Thus far, they have been unable to get this project to work in the MAC environment. Access is limited to the Indiana Music Library, as files are high-level and high band-width files take up a great deal of space. They also tend to sound bad over phone lines.

Disaster Preparedness: Tales from the Front (Preservation Committee)

Diane Ota (Boston Public Library) presented slides and a heart-rending description of the flood at Boston Public Library (BPL) shortly after MLA met there last year. Nearby construction caused a water main to burst, and flooding was rapid and destructive. BPL's flood experience was a lesson in "what not to do" as circumstances and events seemed to conspire against recovery at every turn. There was no disaster plan and the Director was out of town. It seemed that no one had the authority to contract with suppliers and recovery and salvage personnel. When the LP collection was transferred to the top shelves of old wooden shelving, the shelves then collapsed under the weight and the entire LP collection was declared a write-off. It was obvious that BPL and its staff will suffer the aftereffects of this disaster for years to come.

Steve Smolian, Sound Studios, was called to assist with the BPL disaster. He offered a long list of recommendations to mitigate the damage of a disaster: keep replaceable items *only* below ground (never store irreplaceable material below ground); acetate tapes and unique items must always be stored above

ground; never use bottom shelves for important materials, instead use these shelves for duplicates and supplies; and never freeze tapes. Should your collection be flooded, remember that shellac is water absorbent. If your acetate recordings develop a dry and powdery surface, it is ok to leave them in this condition and clean them *only* before copying. When cataloguing, keep track of label and condition; shelve by genre and size, then by manufacturer's number; and when producing finding aids, include prefixes or suffixes where required. Supplier shelves are arranged this way.

Reel-to-reel tapes suffer the most in a disaster. It is best to let them air dry and prioritize them for salvage. Do *not* play them now. See Smolian's Web site for assistance: www.soundsaver.com. If totally wet, it is best to keep them under water and isolated from air.

Personnel and health are extremely important during a disaster recovery. Cancel all leaves. You may need to have an "appeal system" to deal with union issues of cancelling leaves. Have an emergency petty cash fund and know who has signing authority for same. Know the limitations of your insurance policy, and which actions affect refunds. You need to keep informed about policy changes. Salvaging the collection must not affect the lives and health of employees. Find out what ServiceMaster employees wear to protect themselves from mould and bacteria, and equip your staff similarly.

Barbar Sawka described the torrential rains of February 1998 that brought a third flood to Stanford. Michael Keller, the University Librarian, lives on-campus and was immediately available. The staff response was

stellar. The Assistant Archivist happened to be at work at 11:30 p.m. and noticed the water. Three libraries were affected. Students turned out at 3:00 a.m. to help. Friends of the library and faculty also came to assist. Wise decisions were made under pressure and the libraries received superlative support from the Press Department. In the final debriefing, this was a "happy flood."

The Electronic Grove (Electronic Services Subcommittee)

Margo Levy and Sara Lloyd of Grove's Dictionaries, Macmillan, travelled from the U.K. to address the assembly. Levy gave a history of reference publishing at Macmillan, and spoke about the exciting Internet-publishing opportunities afforded with the upcoming editions of *New Grove Online* and *New Grove Opera Online*. The next edition of *New Grove* is projected for 2001, on which work began in 1993. It will be 28 volumes, comprising 20 million words and 29,000 articles by 4,000 contributors. There will be new major biographies (including Machaut and Britten), and new topics (deconstructionism, post-modernism, women composers) and 2,300 new entries covering 20th-century composers. An expanded article on world music will be included, as will 700 new entries dealing with jazz, popular and film music. Bibliographies will be updated throughout the work.

The Electronic Grove will be published simultaneously and will contain the complete text of the print version. All music examples will be contained online, and full-text searching will be possible. In addition, there will be hypertext links to images on the Web, and the issue of sound is being considered. Continuous updating is planned for the

electronic version. *The New Grove Dictionary of Art* is already available in electronic form; *New Grove Opera* is projected for May 1999 and the present "Browsable Grove" (demonstrated by Levy) represents the current state of the next edition. For instance, you will be able to find which operas premiered in 1795. Birth and death dates will be added automatically to the *Electronic Grove*; abbreviations will be "clickable" and phrase-searching will be possible (e.g., vocal score). You will be able to see costumes, and see interior and exterior views of theatres; links to Web sites will make it possible to book tickets for performances at these theatres. Nationality searches will be possible: at present, for instance, there are three Japanese opera singers listed as active between 1950-2000.

Opera Grove Online contains 30 new articles, and over 20 newly-revised articles on specific subjects. In-house revisions and corrections (obituaries, premiers, events) will continue. There are 500 image-links (opera houses, singers) and links to databases such as OperaBase. The Web has necessitated reappraisal of entire areas and brings up archiving considerations. Whereas the print edition is a finite snapshot, the online version can offer factual updates, new articles on living composers and new works, revisions of research (articles and bibliography). However, one needs constant access to older versions: "Head Words" which provide entries for all editions of Grove are being considered. And, at present, pricing is being considered: \$300 annually (1-5 users); \$450 for 6-10 users, with discounts for purchasing both the paper and electronic versions, and discounts for multi-year subscriptions. Check the site: www.groveopera.com for further details.

The difficulty of keeping up with changing URL addresses was mentioned, and requires eternal vigilance. The possibility of adding sound files has been discussed with Global Music Network, which would involve commissioning performances by their family of artists, thereby avoiding copyright difficulties.

The revision process was also questioned, as was the need for collaboration with original authors when revising articles and bibliographies. Amendment requires a level of expertise which is not possessed by all. Updates will not be automatic, but will require continuous author or editorial board collaboration. It is proposed to use three or four symbols to denote factual changes, revisions and revised bibliographies. Articles and revisions will be commissioned.

One attendee spoke from the point of view of the collections librarian: the 1980 Grove cost \$2,000. Over 20 years, that has worked-out to \$100 a year. Granted, there will be convenience and advanced searching capabilities (not to mention savings in shelf space), but somehow the "libraries as cash-cows" principle appears to dominate. Levy assured us that the pricing for *NGOnline* has not yet been set, and that consortia may lessen the cost to individual libraries. The general tendency of the editorial board is to err on the side of conservatism in terms of offering quality (especially with respect to offering sound files) and links to other sites.

LA's Central Avenue Sounds: The Oral History Project, the Book and Beyond (Jazz and Popular Music Roundtable) Victor Cardell (Kansas)

This session was one of the highlights of

the meeting. Participants included Dale Treleven (UCLA), Steve Isoardi and special guests musicians Clora Bryan and Buddy Collette. Treleven introduced the session, saying that UCLA is taking a more pro-active approach with respect to the oral history project. Isoardi is a saxophonist who interviewed the surviving musicians of Central Avenue. The interview and publication process were outlined, and Isoardi expressed the wish that other cities would embark on similar projects, as time is running out. Many writers have suggested that jazz languished in California in the 1940's, but recent oral histories and autobiographies tell a different story. It is a rich past that is well worth recording and preserving.

Bob Carlton, VP Sales, Rhino Records buys all jazz books as they are published. He usually manages to read the first 20 pages, then heads for his record player. However, he found *Central Avenue Sounds* was engrossing, to the point where he phoned Isoardi and said, "You need a companion CD to this book, and I can help you do it!" The four-disc set should be available by August 1999.

Clora Bryan was renowned for her trumpet and jazz vocals. In fact, she was the only female trumpeter to share the stage with Charlie Parker. Buddy Collette was a childhood friend of Charles Mingus and a saxophone player. They would hang out together at a local chili parlour near Central Avenue to watch the stars who congregated there. Occasionally, they would be invited to sit in and play with the pros.