



THE MARVIN DUCHOW MUSIC LIBRARY

McGILL UNIVERSITY

-by Cynthia Leive, Librarian

Over the 1990 Christmas holidays, the Marvin Duchow Music Library of McGill University moved from its home within the Faculty of Music's Strathcona Building to new facilities in an office tower across Sherbrooke Street West. As with most moves, this one was made with mixed emotions. On the one hand, the physical separation from the Faculty and the inconvenience for students and staff of having to cross Sherbrooke Street (particularly during Montréal winters) made the relocation seem less than desirable. On the other hand, deteriorating building conditions and a critical lack of space could no longer be tolerated. In the end, an overwhelming desire to provide a clean and spacious work environment for users, and home for Library materials, tipped the scales in favour of the move.

The general consensus now is that the decision to move was the right one. The new Library is in a spacious, well-lit, environmentally stable location, which has allowed for optimum integration of traditional and innovative Music Library services. The Library is located on the eleventh floor of 550 Sherbrooke Street West, and features panoramic views of Mount Royal and the City of Montréal (including Place des Arts!) The L-shaped floor space totals 14,000 net square feet, which represents an increase of 100%. Audio and general seating has been built in along the perimeter to take advantage of natural light. The circulation desks and technical services rooms run the length of the Library on the opposite side to allow for efficient communication and freedom of movement, particularly between the main and audio circulation desks.

The Audio Room, situated at the north end of the Library, has a magnificent view of Mount Royal, and along Sherbrooke Street in both directions. Anticipating that our space requirements for audio carrells would evolve as technologies and services changed, we wanted an adaptable design. The forty-eight carrells were built in clover leaf formations and then

attached together in groups of sixteen. The units have a large work surface which can accommodate oversize scores, and incandescent lighting which does not interfere with audio signals. Each unit has a CD player, cassette deck, or turntable, placed on adjustable shelves at the top of the carrell. This arrangement ensures that users do not put heavy books or scores on top of equipment. The design also incorporates a security compartment in the centre of each unit for wiring and locks. Because the wiring is not visible or readily accessible, students are discouraged from bringing their own patch cords and recorders.

When we originally planned to locate the Audio Room opposite Mount Royal, we did so hoping that the pleasant visual surroundings would enhance listening experiences. What didn't occur to us was the danger of electrical interference from the transmission towers, which are in direct line-of-sight to the equipment. One model of CD player (now discontinued) did not have enough shielding to protect it from signals coming from the mountain, and acted very strangely indeed! Our Audio Technician solicited advice from government officials, the manufacturer, and the retailer to no avail. We were ultimately obliged to transfer the three "crazy" players to the Faculty for classroom use, and to purchase new models with better shielding.

The Library includes special facilities for rare books, microforms and videos. The Rare Book Room also contains special collections of scores and sound recordings. These include archives of compositions of Kelsey Jones and Marvin Duchow. The Library also holds the papers of Alban Berg's student and copyist, the composer Julius Schloss, and the large collection of Handel sound recordings, scores and books recently donated by the estate of David Edelberg. A PC (containing the Handel collection data base and word processing software) is available to scholars for use in the room. Adjacent to the Rare

Book Room is a small storage area which houses scores and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century music periodicals.

The Microform Room contains scores, books and periodicals in microformats, readers, and a copier for microfilm and fiche. As a result of successful SSHRC grant applications over the years, the microform collection is strong in Renaissance manuscripts and early printed editions, and music theory books from before 1800.

Video collections are a relatively new feature of the Marvin Duchow Library. Until recently most music and dance videos were held by the AV Centre in the Undergraduate Library. As a result of reorganization and decentralization, the Music Library will now be acquiring and housing music videos in VHS and laser disc formats. We currently have mobile players which can be used in the designated video-viewing room, or in Library classrooms.

With advances in microcomputer applications in music, Music Library services have expanded. Students have access to a computer room equipped with IBM and Macintosh personal computers, and even a few typewriters! They may do word processing and programming, or connect to the McGill mainframe or the Faculty of Music local area network.

For verification, inter-library loan and bibliographic searching, Library patrons have access to online cataloguing and bibliographic data bases. Library-assisted searches of UTLAS, EPIC and a variety of OPACs via Telnet are available. A CD-ROM work station provides access to several bibliographic data bases, including Music Index (1981-89), RILM Abstracts, ERIC and OCLC. Students may print the results of their searches, or download information to a diskette. Of course, the McGill OPAC, "MUSE" (NOTIS) has been with us for a few years.

Information concerning all music books held at McGill is available online, and approximately 50% of the scores have been added to the data base.

Teaching and study areas within the Library consist of three seminar rooms (two seating ten and one seating thirty-five). These rooms are equipped with audio playback and electronic pianos, for seminars and group study.

Musicians have the option of practising their instruments or rehearsing in small ensembles in the new Music Library: we are equipped with nineteen practice modules of various sizes, the largest accommodating a piano and three players. The modules are soundproofed and physically isolated from the rest of the Library. The graduate students in the Department of Theory use assigned carrells in the main part of the Library, but also have access to a common room which serves alternatively as a gathering place and a room for quiet study and consultation.

Overall, the relocation of the Marvin Duchow Music Library has been a very positive experience. As a medium-sized facility serving a very large and diverse Faculty of Music, the Library must be extremely flexible. Inasmuch as the right environment has helped us to achieve this and to provide efficient service, the Library is a success. As we look ahead, we are faced with perhaps the more difficult task of providing the scores and recordings which will satisfy our users' needs. We would hope that the next time the Music Library is faced with a space problem, it will be because our collections have overwhelmed us!

The Marvin Duchow Music Library is open during Fall and Winter terms, M-F, 8.30 am - 11.00 pm and Sat.-Sun., 10.00 am - 5.00 pm. We are located in the heart of Montréal, close to some of the best restaurants and cultural experiences in Canada. Come see us!

94

L'enfant de McGill.

PAROLES DE L. FRÉCHETTE.

MUSIQUE DE G. COUTURE.

Allegro moderato.

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