

MLA WINTER MEETING MINNEAPOLIS FEBRUARY 1988

It was cold. Sunny, but cold. I was very glad to have had my fur hat with me, even though a blue fox had given up its life so that my ears would be warm. But warm ears are pretty important at MLA conferences, and the 1987 one was no exception: there was a great deal to listen to. Almost too much, in fact, which meant that often one had to choose between two equally desirable sessions, and more than once it was a question of making a mad dash from the end of one session to a conveniently-located fast food outlet, and breathlessly on to the next, with a croissant or bowl of chili-to-go balanced on one's folder. Here follows a description of some of the sessions attended.

"Mining the Govdocs Music Lode: Govdocs and the Music Library": Here Marie Kroeger (University of Denver) gave us an introduction to U.S. government documents, as seen through the eyes of the music librarian, which contain information potentially useful to the music world. She outlined the system by which government documents are supplied free to depository libraries, and the arrangement of the Superintendent of Documents Classification numbers, then highlighted the agencies publishing documents of musical interest. As well as the Music Division, which we all know, the Library of Congress also publishes items of a musical nature through the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the American Folklife Center, and the Motion Picture Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division. The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities have a large number of publications of musical interest, especially periodicals. Publications of the Smithsonian, and the Bureau of American Ethnology contain material relating to folk music and ethnomusicology, while the Department of Education

produces the ERIC indexes, which include curriculum and other resource materials. The Defense Department publishes field manuals for bandmen, and design guides in some relevant areas. The Legislative Branch produces accounts of hearings before congressional committees, and reports on other congressional matters, the Department of Commerce statistics on topics such as import and export figures on the number of musical instruments sold, etc., and the Labor Department figures on earnings, and employment statistics.

As the Superintendent of Documents Classification is not a subject one, indexes to government publications, such as the Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications, and the Index to U.S. Government Periodicals, both available in paper and online, are essential to track down music items. Marie's final words of advice were to get to know your local govdocs librarian, who will probably be only too delighted to help you locate musically relevant documents.

Dee Bailey (Brooklyn College), speaking on "Business Sources in Music" handed out an extensive bibliography of sources, and outlined what one could use these publications for, and how. She explained the SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) code, which divides businesses into broad economic categories, how to look up information about companies, parent and subsidiary, and business ratings. She highlighted areas that would be of special interest to music librarians, such as music publishing and retailing, the recording industry, instrument makers, and so on. She pointed out that indexing for business sources, as well as being more detailed, is also much faster than in the humanities, and is of course readily

available online. She also advised us not to overlook our local public libraries as a potential source of business materials.

Finally, Jan LaRue (New York University) gave "A brief report on SYMPCAT" (a thematic catalogue of 18th-century symphonies). This project began many years ago as a "clean-up job", when he discovered while consulting many European sources, that the same symphony was often attributed to different composers. His first volume will appear soon: it is a thematic identifier, providing a list of over 13,000 incipits, arranged in alphabetical order of note name. Dr LaRue then asked his audience for comments on the organization, content, and mode of production for the second volume.

"Deadends and open doors: the state of music librarianship" was a fascinating statistical exposé of why we came, stayed, or quitted the profession. Laura Dankner (Loyola University) spoke of "Trends in the Job Market", basing her facts and figures on the MLA job lists and annual reports of the Placement Officers of the last thirteen years. The mid and late 1970s showed a low in the number of jobs available, and in membership of the service: ten years later, the mid 1980s show a high in available jobs, but a low applicant pool, indicating a fair number of reposts. The types of jobs open show cataloguing as the leader of the pack, followed by administration, and third the "mixed bag" category, with reference and fine arts bringing up the rear. Salarywise the number of jobs paying under \$25,000 p.a. (US) are decreasing, and the over \$25-30,000 increasing. So, the job market is good, but low salaries for high expertise, and unexciting job descriptions seem to be keeping applicants away.

Mary Kay Duggan (University of California, Berkeley) "Music careers in Library and Information Studies", examined the

progress of students in the Masters program at Berkeley over the past seven years. The overall conclusions are that those entering the program have a good musical background, and in many cases previous library experience. Most of them move into music library or library related positions after graduation, but find upward movement difficult. In many libraries, she observed, music librarians are becoming media librarians, adding fine arts, film, AV etc. to their responsibilities.

Richard Smiraglia (Columbia University) speaking on "Education for Music Technical Services" felt that "there is as much opportunity as you want out there, all you have to do is to take it". Partly due to the development of networks and authority control, an increasing number of jobs in music cataloguing are available. He firmly believes that music cataloguing is not dull, and that the analytical ability one develops as a music student can be applied to good use in music cataloguing skills, which are important to all aspects of the trade. Librarians should understand all aspects of bibliographic control. Therefore we should be looking for students in music schools with good analytical abilities, and attracting them into music librarianship.

Jackie Facinelli (NASA) a former music librarian, asked "Why are people leaving the profession?" She had sent a questionnaire to 37 people who had left, and analysed the results. Overall, the main reason was lack of opportunity for growth, rather than any unhappiness. All experienced salary increases, ranging from 10 to 300%, but agreed that money was not their main reason for quitting. Recurring specific complaints were - no staff, no budget, no technology, and the library viewed as unimportant. In general most were happy with their new careers, but when asked if they would consider returning, 60% said yes.

Susan Sommer (New York Public Library) provided an evangelistic wind-up with "Why do people stay in the profession?"

She claimed we are not in it for the money, or the job advancement, or the opportunities, or the status in society: we stay because we want to be music librarians! Librarianship is often viewed as having a low social profile, but our job is to maintain the written record of society, to maintain order, to be cooperative, and to work with people with similar values. This is not bad! We "know" music, and know that it is basic and essential, not a frill and not just "nice". It has great spirituality and healing power, is an aural representation of the natural order of the universe, and contains some of the most impressive of human achievements. Finally, we get to go to MLA meetings, and should therefore all rise and sing a spiritually uplifting song such as the MLA anthem, if there was one. A voice from the back of the room suggested the Chicken Singers, but this did not perhaps quite fit the bill!

The following cryptic notes pertain to some of the sessions on cataloguing, for interested aficionados.

#### ISBDs

ISBD PM is undergoing worldwide review. ISBD NBM is now available in a revised form. ISBD for component parts has been approved for publication. ISBD A does not yet have a schedule for appearance as a review document, and ISBD CF is "coming along well".

#### Subject access

The proposed elimination of indirect geographic subject headings, and the cancellation of the subdivision "Addresses, essays, lectures", rendering it inappropriate for use with topical material, were discussed, and retention of both recommended. Concerns were expressed about the shortcomings of subject headings for contemporary music (i.e. of the last fifty years).

#### AACR2

The revised edition should appear in late 1988.

#### Working group on the 028 field

Recommendations were made for authority control for subfield \$b (manufacturer's name), guidance on the transcription of information in 028, provisions for treating 028 as an access point, and standardized treatment of material in subfield \$a (manufacturer's number).

#### LC minimal level cataloguing standards for music materials

A project to catalogue music scores at a minimal level was begun by the Library of Congress in October 1987, and, after a successful trial period, instituted on a permanent basis one day a week. The records will appear on LC MARC tapes, with a print constant in the 5xx field "Minimal level cataloging". The time saved/taken varies from twice as fast to just a bit faster, and the main aim is to speed up the accessibility of cataloguing data. The extent of the cataloguing is, in fact, fairly substantial. The main areas where information and work are cut back are authority work, bibliographic history, contents, and other notes: the notes field has been considerably cut down. Only one subject heading is given, with some exceptions, and added entries are limited. The project is mainly intended to handle the volume of material received at LC via the Copyright Office, and is for monographs only. It will continue indefinitely, and there are no plans to upgrade these records.

This is, of course, only a sampling of the many and varied sessions taking place at the conference. There were others that I was not able to attend, and some for which coherent and decipherable notes were not available; I advise those interested in more to read the MLA newsletters. As ever, as I made my snowy way back to Ottawa via Thunder Bay, I was reminded that a major reason that many of us make the annual pilgrimage to MLA is not only for the items on the conference program, excellent though they may be, but for all the wonderful music librarians one meets there, and who have become good friends over the years.

-Alison Hall  
Carleton University Library