

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As a member - off and on - for the last 20 years - of the Canadian Music Library Association - I must say now how disgusted I am with the periodical newsletter.

Surely the aim of this publication should be to report upon the state of the Profession [sic] and its activities in Canada. Why do we need Mr. M. Lewis' tin-pun-alley - which is not amusing - or Calderisi's reports upon "delicious dinners in Lisbon" or I. Rose's touting of U.S. publication and local restaurants.

The Newsletter stands as a monument to the amateurism and un-professionalism of music librarianship in Canada.

Peter Cheetham.

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BROADCAST LIBRARIES: MUSIC FROM CREATION TO WRITE-OFF\*

It is essential, before you read this litany of jobs that the CBC Music Library in Toronto handles, that you understand a bit about the nature of broadcasting and the attitude that exists toward libraries in broadcasting organizations. The people who use the Music Library services regard a library as a specialized warehouse that furnishes them with scores, parts, and musical instruments. No broadcasting organization ever plans for a library staff until their collection becomes too large to handle quickly. When a library staff is finally hired, their jobs are defined in control and custodial terms, not in information science-oriented terms. All broadcast libraries have to be tailored to the very special needs of its users; and therefore, standard library cataloguing systems and procedures do not work -- all broadcast libraries are hybrids. Standard subject headings are not adequate for our needs; for example, a "Christmas Music" category is essential. Another characteristic of the broadcasting library is instant service. For example, music for a program is often left to the last minute -- music or recordings are needed instantly -- hardly time to get the numbers down before the production assistant flies out the door on the run. Orderly checking out and searching procedures are negated, everything must be closed stacks, and the music staff must be constantly on call. In line with broadcaster's view of our custodial role, we also are in charge of the care, maintenance, moving and tuning of the CBC's 28 pianos, celestes, large drums, and vibraphones. Our

\*(A summary of an address given to the New York/Ontario Chapter of the Music Library Association in Toronto in October, 1978.)

staff must be trained in the specifics of instrument construction and maintenance -- would you like to evaluate four estimates for repair of a grand piano and decide who is giving the CBC the best value for the money? Do you know how much it costs to re-string a grand piano? Well, ...

Besides the standard music library functions like music selection, acquisition, cataloguing and circulating, we also administer the creation of new music. The CBC commissions a number of new works each year, and it is the librarian's job to check the new score and arrange for the proper copyist to copy the parts. Some copyists can't cope with contemporary notation, others can. The librarian also arranges contact between the composer and copyist if necessary, and sees that the proper number of parts required are duplicated and that the score and all the parts reach the performers in time for adequate rehearsal before the recording date.

Broadcast libraries also do very specialized kinds of reference work. Most producers and script writers depend on popular publications for their material -- the library furnishes backup and in depth research for difficult subjects. Our staff located materials in every library in Toronto. We bring the material to the script writer, arrange for translations if needed, and give advice on the best material for the program's purposes. We also aid in the planning process by researching in advance the feasibility of a program proposal and reporting to the producer any difficulties we have found in locating suitable music or finding scripting materials. These services are used equally by radio and television and range from requests for popular music of today through all types of jazz to every aspect of classical music.

The write-off part of the job is an administrative one as well. Decisions must be made as to when an instrument is becoming too expensive and too worn out to be fixed any more for broadcasting. I always thought that grand pianos lasted forever, but in fact in broadcast use a grand lasts about 10 years. Then they have to be retired to the rehearsal halls and the rehearsal piano in the worst shape is written off the inventory. We also perform an archival function which includes the weeding of the collection for scores and parts of pieces or arrangements especially contracted for a given show -- like CBC Tuesday Night. When those materials have been on deposit with us a certain length of time or the show is over, the contract on CBC use runs out. The arrangements can not be used again without paying additional fees for them, so they are no longer used. These kinds of performance material must be housed in a secure place and kept for historical purposes. We are beginning this process now and will be working closely with the Music Section of the National Library of Canada to see that this special music is properly preserved.

In music, the broadcast library does everything from supervising musical creation to writing-off dilapidated pianos. What makes it really stimulating is that everything should have been done yesterday! Time is money. It's an area that more library school grads should be encouraged to investigate. We can offer broadcasters a lot more than control and custody, but most outlets don't even begin to realize what the information specialist can do for them. We have to sell ourselves.

Pat Kellogg.

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PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

It is with great pleasure that the CAML Publications Committee announces the imminent appearance of two new bibliographical works:

Musicians in Canada: A Bio-Bibliographical Finding List is a fully revised and updated version of the 1961 edition. The main file, expanded to some 3000 entries, includes dates, place of birth, musical contribution and a list of biographical sources.

Pre-publication: \$15                      After June 1, 1979: \$18.

A Union List of Music Serials in Canada, edited by Larry Lewis, comprises some 1300 titles with locations indicated from approximately 48 responding libraries.

Pre-publication: \$5.95.                      After June 1, 1979: \$7.95.

Orders should be sent to:                      CAML Publication  
c/o The National Library of Canada  
395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4.

Kathleen Toomey.

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