

Pittsburgh's Musical Treasure House
Celebrates Its Golden Anniversary

Any resident of Allegheny County, interested in any aspect of music on any level, is most fortunate in having free access to the comprehensive collection of books, scores, records, and related items housed at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP).

During the fifty years of its official existence there has been, and still remains, some confusion as to the proper designation of this entity. It originated in September 1938 as the Music Room, a part of CLP's Fine Arts Division. But in March 1939, Music and Art became separate divisions. Reunited in 1971, they are known today as the Music and Art Department. Irene Millen, who served as head of this division/department from 1938 to 1974, notes that "The two subjects are logically and physically separated by the Library of Congress classification (M for music and N for art)." Also she is amused that two "obits" on her "demise as music librarian" (*italics added*) ignored the merger of art and music at CLP. Always ready with a striking comment, she asks, "Were the editors trying to tell the CLP administration something???"

This confusion is perpetuated somewhat by the presence since 1949 of a supportive group, ~~the~~ Friends of the Music Library (FML), whose board of directors Miss Millen has called "a kind of Rotary Club of Music." Among its many donations to the Music Library are two custom-built display cases, one used for music, the other for art.

Although the above-mentioned Fine Arts Division began in 1938,

its music collection dates back to 1890, when Andrew Carnegie offered the City of Pittsburgh a public library. His proposal eventually developed into what remains Pittsburgh's principal cultural monument, dedicated in 1907: a multifaceted Institute now known as The Carnegie. In presenting this magnificent combination of Library, Music Hall, and Museums "Free to the People," Mr. Carnegie endowed the Museums, but not the Library. He felt that the public should support the latter.

Anticipating the FML, a group of concerned citizens at once responded by giving \$2,000 to acquire about 1,450 books left by Karl Merz, founder-director of the then University of Wooster's Conservatory of Music. Other donors added further items, and Mr. Carnegie provided bookcases for storage in the old Thaw residence downtown. When the first section of what was to become The Carnegie, comprising Library and Music Hall, opened in November 1895, about 2,000 of its 16,000 volumes had to do with music.

Meanwhile, public support for the Library has continued on two levels: official, from the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Federal Government; unofficial, from individuals, foundations, and groups such as the FML. The former provides for basic needs; the latter, within limits imposed by current inflation, for the acquisition of items chosen to make this a distinguished music collection.

Gradually the ~~music~~ collection of reference materials began to include books for circulation. In 1912, with the advice of Charles Heinroth, organist at Carnegie Music Hall, 1,000 musical scores were purchased. By 1935, there were on hand about 4,355 books and 3,375 scores. Since 1938, constant expansion has taken

place under the supervision of professional librarians: Irene Millen, 1938-74; Ida Reed, until 1984; currently Kathryn Logan. In grateful recognition of Miss Millen's and Mrs. Reed's years of devoted service, the FML has donated special gifts in their names to the Music Library.

Annual reports by these librarians provide a vivid account of woes and joys, of gradual progress toward the realization of always advancing goals. At the outset there was a curious, scattered assortment of items in dire need of consolidation and indexing by an inadequate staff. Available, however, was the basis for a good reference collection. Amusing, in view of how times have changed, was the complaint that "Music much in demand is lacking," but that six Mahler symphonies, rarely played "and about which no music critic has as yet made up his mind, sat and continue to sit side by side on the shelf." To this a quite recent sequel has been the complaint that one of the now very popular Mahler symphonies was lacking.

In 1942, despite regrets that the Music Library owned only 150 recordings as compared with Seattle's 6,000, came the proud and joyous announcement that it had been a major source of research materials for an important new book, The History of Music in Performance, by Dr. Frederick Dorian, eminent scholar at what is now Carnegie Mellon University. He is still active as Senior Music Editor of the Pittsburgh Symphony's Program Magazine.

Also contained in the 1942 report was a sinister item: "War seemed close to the Music Division when a man who, we suspect, may have been from the FBI, spent several days here looking for information about German and Austrian musical societies in Pittsburgh."

By 1944, the Division's Reference Department contained about

12,000 volumes, more or less equally divided between books and scores.

An important factor in shaping the Music Library's development was and is its proximity to concert halls, colleges and universities, the Board of Public Education, an educational television station, hospitals, and musical clubs. Meanwhile, the Pittsburgh Symphony and Opera have moved downtown, but remain in touch for help.

A vital aspect of the Music Library's service to the area is the rendering of instructional assistance and answering of reference questions. Together these aids now total well over 100,000 a year. Typical questions have come from a psychiatrist, re absolute pitch; a symphony cellist and a violin teacher, re the makers of their respective instruments; a graduate student, re variant tunings of the lyra viol. Memorable is an inquiry as to the name of the dog listening to HMV (His Master's Voice) recordings. Answer: "Nipper."

Soon after the Music Room's inauguration in 1938, the Charles N. Boyd Memorial Musicological Library Association (BMMLA) was formed in order to acquire Dr. Boyd's personal library and to make it available at the CLP as a memorial to him. In realization of this end, a sum of \$5,650 was raised. Dr. Boyd (1875-1937), organist, teacher at the Western ^(now Pittsburgh) Theological Seminary and Pittsburgh Musical Institute, was a widely respected scholar. His library contained, apart from more than 2,000 volumes and many periodicals, over 100 carefully cross-indexed scrapbooks of unique value for their information on the musical life of Pittsburgh and vicinity.

A brochure issued by the BMMLA explained "musicology" to the public by posing questions, the answers to which indicate its scope:

acoustics; psychology of music; ^aesthetics; musical theory; musical history.

An important addition to the Music Library's lending service began in October 1941, with a donated collection of 21 records. By December that number had increased to 70. Thereafter this collection grew very slowly until 1955, when an unrestricted bequest of more than \$115,000 was received from the estate of Edward C. Bald, Jr., a young Pittsburgh composer. Income from this bequest has made^e possible the purchase of expensive reference resources, and has provided for furniture, office equipment, and room renovations.

A reference collection of records was established in 1943 by family and friends as a memorial to David H. Light, who had been active in several Pittsburgh musical organizations. He founded, edited and published The Musical Forecast (1921-48), a monthly periodical covering music and the arts in the Pittsburgh area. Initiated as a service for members of the Army Specialized Training Program, this collection assumed a significant role in the Music Library's further development. Miss Millen testifies that service personnel and civilians shared the listening room, and that it was "not unusual for such a group of chance acquaintances to leave the building together warmly discussing the relative merits" of works they had heard.

In support of the David H. Light Memorial Record Library there arose the Hundred Friends of David H. Light who, in addition to providing for immediate needs, established an endowment fund that has increased by well over a hundredfold. Miss Millen describes the Hundred Friends as "a committee" of the Charles N. Boyd group. In 1949, the latter proposed that the two groups

should merge under the name Friends of the Music Library. This met ^With approval in November 1949, but no action was taken on a further proposal that incorporation should be considered. Here Miss Millen comments: "We have proved that we did not need incorporation to carry out our objectives for lo! these many years. FML seems to thrive on informality and the almost casual way in which we raise funds." This "almost casual" procedure has consisted primarily of sending annual letters of appeal to a long list of potential and proven donors.

Thus far the FML and its parent organizations have contributed approximately \$135,000 to supplement the Music Library's income. Apart from its own contributions, the FML deserves credit for "instigating" donations from other sources. To cite just two examples: in 1965, thanks to the Pittsburgh Foundation's Wherrett Fund, Miss Millen was awarded a traveling fellowship to attend the International Congress of the International Association of Music Librarians in Dijon, France. And in 1981, a grant from the Pittsburgh Foundation's Charles H. Spang Fund made possible the placing of works by ^{living} Pittsburgh area composers in the Music Library.

Throughout the years, detailed reports note increasing use of the Music Library by scholars and general public; improvements in terms of space, equipment, security, and a larger, more stable and efficient staff; further gifts and bequests of books, scores, and records by many members of the musical community.

While visiting Pittsburgh in 1972, Dr. Harold Samuel, music librarian at Yale, declared our Music Library "one of the country's major music collections." Whether or not Dr. Samuel's pronouncement remains valid, this collection is indeed comprehensive in that it contains a wealth of materials to fulfill virtually every need of "the gamut of the population." In characterizing this gamut, the

~~The~~ late music critic J. Fred Lissfelt listed: "Grandfathers and youngsters, nuns and rabbis, business people and recreational leaders, students of every race and whim, teachers, historians and other writers, professional and amateur musicians, doctors, dentists, nurses, therapists, etc., etc."

To this list should be added occasional visiting performing artists such as the Beaux Arts Piano Trio, who once arrived for a concert at the Y Music Society--without their music. Fortunately, the indispensable scores were on hand at the Music Library.

A notable user of this collection has been the former governor of Pennsylvania, Dick Thornburgh, who, substituting on short notice for actor James Stewart, borrowed a record and score of Copland's A Lincoln Portrait ^{in which he took part as narrator} for a performance at his own inaugural concert in 1980. In 1981, the Pennsylvania Citizens for Better Libraries presented him their "Citizen of the Year" award for successfully supporting Act 200, which increased state aid to public libraries by 33%.

So vast is this music collection as to defy description except in general terms: books, covering every above-mentioned aspect of musicology; scores, of instrumental and vocal works, ancient and modern, "classical" and popular; reference materials, including two sets of the 20-volume The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians for use respectively by staff and public; numerous periodicals ranging from Rolling Stone to the Journal of the American Musicological Society, including some devoted to record reviews, medical problems of performing artists (reed maker's ^{self} elbow, strained backs, etc.), as well as Die neue Zeitschrift ^{für} Musik, founded in 1834 by Robert Schumann; records, many of historical interest as to performers, and representing a wide variety of styles. The

or: fuer

Music Library is keeping up with the times by acquiring compact discs.

Of particular interest and value to Pittsburghers is a rich assortment of scrapbooks compiled by Dr. Boyd and others; programs of musical events; correspondence of the Pittsburgh Orchestra, which Victor Herbert served as conductor (1898-1904); manuscripts by Pittsburgh composers: Harvey B. Gaul, T. Carl Whitmer, Nikolai Lopatnikoff, and others. Although the Stephen Foster Memorial across the street is the authorized repository for Pittsburgh's famous composer, the Music Library offers ample Fosteriana.

In view of its extensive holdings and competent, dedicated service, it is therefore no exaggeration to regard the Music Library as "Pittsburgh's Musical Treasure House."

As for its future prospects, Kathryn Logan envisions a complete renovation of existing space to be accomplished by 1990, plus the addition of the former Pennsylvania Room; extensive replacement of worn-out or lost books, scores, and records; improvement of record-listening facilities; ~~acquisition~~ acquisition of all available recordings by Pittsburgh musicians: jazz, Steele's songs, Gospel choirs, polka bands, the Symphony, etc., as well as of works being performed in Pittsburgh; continuation of service as the center of information on musical performances and festivals: local, national, and worldwide.

Like good Rotarians, FML board members enjoy mixing business and pleasure at luncheon meetings. On such an occasion recently, Robert B. Croneberger, Director of the CLP, presented a plan now in progress to establish a system-wide independently incorporated, tax-exempt organization called the Friends of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. This will be so structured as to allow each existing Friends group to continue its own pursuits under the aegis

of the "umbrella" organization. By a unanimous vote the FML agreed to cooperate in this project for the benefit of the CPL as a whole, and thereby of its parts.

A pleasant tradition inherited by the FML from the Boyd group is the presentation to its patrons of "thank you" concerts. Beginning in 1945 with a program of music from the 12th to the 18th centuries performed by Pittsburgh soloists and ensembles, these concerts have ranged in variety from the visiting lutenist-singer Suzanne Bloch (daughter of the composer Ernest Bloch) to the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. A notable event in this series was the appearance in 1950, with distinguished colleagues, of Lorin Maazel, a young violinist in the Pittsburgh Symphony, of which he is now the internationally acclaimed Music Director. Early FML concerts were elegant occasions, attended by ladies and gentlemen in formal attire and followed by receptions.

In celebration this year of the Music Library's Golden Anniversary, the FML will present to its patrons a program by the well-known Pittsburgh ensemble Dear Friends. May the next half-century witness a continuation of the firm support and steady progress our Music Library has thus far enjoyed.

This writer thanks Irene Millen, who guided the development of this vital cultural resource during 36 years from its inception, for a generous supply of documentation, regrettably much more than could be accounted for in the allotted space.

Roland Leich

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