

Travel Report, MLA 2003 – Gisele Glover

From February 13-16 I attended the Music Library Association's Annual Meeting at the Renaissance Hotel in Austin, Texas. The theme for plenary session one was "You Can't Hear American Music Without Hearing Texas." Among the speakers was Casey Monahan, Director of the Texas Music Office, who offered some sobering statistics on the status of employment for the thousands of students who graduate with music performance degrees each year. The Center is one of the first of its kind, and its mission is to foster employment for musicians throughout the state. It keeps tracks of events and activities that need live music. It provides general legal information, directories and networking information. Monahan urged music librarians to nurture a national conscience about providing information to music students not only about their instruments, but about how to begin their careers in a highly competitive field. He encouraged us to push our music departments to develop its career counseling efforts and to offer a required course devoted to all aspects of the music industry.

One of the speakers at the MLA Meeting's Bibliography Roundtable was Patricia Stroh, from the Center for Beethoven Studies at San Jose State University. As she discussed, this Center is the only institution in North America devoted solely to the life, works and accomplishments of Ludwig van Beethoven. It owns several original Beethoven manuscripts, including a sketch leaf entirely in Beethoven's hand, copyists' manuscripts of Beethoven's music from the early 19th century, and nearly 300 first editions of Beethoven's music, the largest collection in North America. An ongoing project of the Center is its Beethoven Bibliography Database, which is a fully indexed bibliography of published and unpublished materials relating to the composer. At present materials in the database come from the Center's collection of books, scores, manuscripts and articles. However, there is potential for the database to expand to include other existing collections.

Marian Ritter of Western Washington University spoke about the activities of her Friends of the Music Library. It is composed of a large number of campus and community patrons who help with fund-raising. A large portion of Ritter's collection development efforts would not be possible, she says, without financial support provided by the Friends. Among its activities is an annual bus trip to see an opera or ballet. Benefits of being a Friend of the Music Library include: a library card, an invitation to a tour and reception in the Music Library, lectures, concerts and other events. The membership rates are: student \$15, Family \$25, Musician's Circle \$100, and up.

At MLA's Bibliographic Control Committee meeting, Harriette Hemmasi of Indiana University spoke of her music library's involvement with metadata. The goal of the project is to "create metadata elements to enable discovery, identification, and navigation of digital content in a digital music library." It will "contribute a set of proposed standards and practices that others in the digital library community may adopt; the standards may also be useful for those working with other time-based media." Indiana University's Music Library was the first to provide an extensive collection of

sound recordings transferred into compressed MP1 sound files, thus making the music selections simultaneously accessible to a wider number of patrons.

Several staff members from the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts spoke at the MLA Meeting's Facilities Subcommittee meeting. This library recently completed a \$38 million dollar renovation which had required staff to move collections and services temporarily to other branch locations throughout Manhattan. Both staff and patrons have returned to the Library's permanent location on 66th and Amsterdam to discover a number of significant changes. The 3rd floor research area is now a unified reference room for music, dance and theatre collections. Previously, the three departments were physically separate. Unfortunately the new configuration of materials, equipment and service desks creates a noise problem that is not at all conducive to serious study. The problem was discussed in a New York Times article of January 28, 2002. At this meeting the librarians conveyed disappointment and frustration that their input was neither sufficiently respected nor heeded. Administrators have promised to address the acoustical problems as soon as possible.

Finally, in a thoughtful Powerpoint presentation entitled, "Portland Music Remembered, 1900-1923," Beverly Stafford combined visual representations of music scores from the Multnomah Public Library with photos of a number of Oregon composers from the early twentieth century, along with other information provided by the town's historical society.

The MLA meeting always affords me the opportunity to visit exhibits and talk with vendors in person, including Harrassowitz and OMI. This allows me to make more informed decisions regarding collection development and to indicate our interest quickly for limited editions newly acquired from Europe. Such was the case for a new Verdi manuscript facsimile of "Othello," and several other music scores.