

A close-up, low-angle shot of a hand reaching up to touch the spine of a book on a high shelf. The background is filled with the spines of many other books, creating a sense of a vast library. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

SELECTING MATERIALS *for* LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Audrey Fenner • Editor

Selecting Materials for Library Collections

Selecting Materials for Library Collections has been
co-published simultaneously as *The Acquisitions Librarian*,
Numbers 31/32 2004.

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The Internet and Acquisitions: Sources and Resources for Development, edited by Mary E.

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Vendors and Library Acquisitions, edited by Bill Katz (No. 5, 1991). *"Should be required reading for all new acquisitions librarians and all library science students who plan a career in technical services. As a whole it is a very valuable resource." (Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory)*

Operational Costs in Acquisitions, edited by James R. Coffey (No. 4, 1991). *"For anyone interested in embarking on a cost study of the acquisitions process this book will be worthwhile reading." (Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory)*

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Automated Acquisitions: Issues for the Present and Future, edited by Amy Dykeman (No. 1, 1989). *"This book should help librarians to learn from the experience of colleagues in choosing the system that best suits their local requirements . . . [It] will appeal to library managers as well as to library school faculty and students." (Library Association Record)*

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Audrey Fenner
Editor

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

Audrey Fenner, MLS, BMus, BMusEd, ARCT, is Head, Acquisition Department at Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. A librarian since 1984, Ms. Fenner has held professional positions in academic, research, business, government, and public libraries in the United States and Canada. She has had experience in a wide variety of library settings, from a one-person branch library housed in a trailer in the Arizona desert, to the National Library of Canada, where she did both original cataloging and reference work in two languages. Ms. Fenner holds a Master of Library Science degree from the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada.

Preface

Practical, up-to-date library literature on selection is always needed, and it is hoped that this volume will be of real interest and help to working librarians. For selectors, whether librarians or bibliographers, knowledge of the literature of subject disciplines is essential. Familiarity with collection development processes and tools is also vitally important, and this is generally acquired through practice rather than training. The experience shared here by librarians active in selection work should provide a head start for others new to selection, and for those who have been assigned selection responsibilities in disciplines that are new to them.

It is obvious to users and librarians alike that library collections incorporate materials in a wide variety of formats. Print, non-print, and Internet selection resources are presented here, useful library-wide and also in acquiring materials for specialized collections within libraries.

Selectors need to know what they are collecting, for whom, and for what purpose. In an academic library, for example, the collection must support the institution's research and educational needs. From the resources made available, users determine what is of value to them. It is the library's responsibility to provide what is needed, as promptly as possible. Librarians may try to anticipate user needs by studying what users request, what they actually use, and what methods are most efficient in providing these materials. The results of such studies provide an overall understanding of users' expectations. This understanding must be combined with knowledge of the resources available for purchase, alternative formats, costs, and available funds.

The volume covers subject areas of interest in both academic and public libraries. The majority of writers focus on selecting materials in a specific subject area. These evaluate selection resources of all types, based on their use as selection tools.

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Some contributors use one discipline as an example of particular approaches to selection, or to illustrate concerns that may arise for selectors. In "Dilemmas in Balancing a University Literature Collection," David Isaacson argues against intellectual elitism or excessive delicacy in selecting library materials. Isaacson recommends reconsidering traditional collecting priorities and makes the point that academic library collections need to include representative examples of genre literature and pornography. Isaacson also discusses hypertext fiction and the difficulties this new format presents in the context of book collecting. If a text does not exist apart from its interpretations, Isaacson asks, how can a library preserve it in any definitive version?

Susan Herzog presents selection from the viewpoint of the librarian new to collection development, or the librarian with other responsibilities besides selection. Herzog emphasizes the importance of consulting library policies concerning collection development, gifts and weeding.

Other contributors have chosen one particular subject and present selection resources in this area of emphasis. Stephen Luttmann writes on selection of music materials. In music, he says, the selector must possess a considerable degree of subject competence as well as knowledge of the needs of the user group. Elizabeth A. Lorenzen discusses acquiring art materials, stressing the effect that new technologies may have on the way art librarians acquire resources. As technology changes the art world, parallel changes take place in art librarianship.

Deborah Lee introduces major selection tools in business and economics. She presents examples of collection development policies in these areas.

Several contributors discuss health-related resources and their selection. Eva Stowers and Gillian Galbraith describe the process of planning and building a collection to support a completely new academic program in dental sciences. When the University of Nevada, Las Vegas planned its dental school, few pertinent resources were held in the general library collection. A dental sciences collection had to be developed and incorporated into the university's library. Parts of the planning process in this instance are applicable in other academic libraries, such as reviewing the school's curriculum, and studying published standards to prepare for an accreditation team's site visit.

Janet W. Owens provides comprehensive coverage of selection resources in nursing, including tools useful for both current and retrospective selection and acquisitions. Susan Suess writes as a librarian at a medical school, emphasizing the need to incorporate materials in many formats in a balanced, broad-ranging collection.

Two writers present selection resources for interdisciplinary fields. Lisa Wallis has contributed a guide to selection tools in public health, and Patricia Pettijohn describes the crossing of subject boundaries in her article on selection for another broad field, mental health.

Mary Beth Allen, writing on selection in the areas of exercise, sport and leisure, describes the use to be made of reviews and other sources of information, such as professional organizations.

Several writers discuss selection in subject areas that may be unfamiliar to many librarians. Jane Brodsky Fitzpatrick provides an account of library work at a maritime college where very specialized disciplines are represented. Resources used in the selection of appropriate library resources are similarly specialized.

Rhonda Harris Taylor and Lotsee Patterson describe strategies and tools for selecting materials concerning Native Americans. Resources in several formats are considered, and the selection approaches the writers describe are valid in any library.

Karen Wei's topic is the acquisition of materials for academic collections supporting Chinese Studies programs. Wei provides guidance on identifying and purchasing materials from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Some contributors have written on selection for collections to be used in a particular way. Arthur McClelland presents a description of a local history and genealogy collection in a large public library in Canada. The needs of the researchers who use this collection play an important part in the way the materials are selected and made available. Retrospective selection is the focus of a chapter on assembling a core collection of resources to be used chiefly for academic research. The writers, John Fenner and Audrey Fenner, have assembled a basic but representative title list for a New Thought core collection.

Information provided by some contributors is applicable to library selection and acquisitions in general, and does not focus on a specific subject field. Selection aids for acquiring media are presented by Mary Laskowski, who discusses the impact of new technologies on media collection development. Audrey Fenner's article on approval plans discusses the role of these plans in library collection development and management. As an adjunct to title-by-title selection, a well-planned approval profile can be the means of freeing selectors for work with a smaller but harder to find portion of a library's yearly acquisitions.

Collection development is a process continually in flux. Acquisitions budgets remain static or shrink, library programs and policies change, new and traditional formats gain or diminish in importance, and administrators call for accountability in spending. It is important that librarians do not allow themselves to be driven either by lack of time or by budgetary constraints into neglecting their responsibilities as selectors of library resources.

Audrey Fenner

Dilemmas in Balancing a University Literature Collection

David Isaacson

SUMMARY. This essay explores some of the conflicts faced by the author, a liaison with book-selection responsibilities to a university English Department. These conflicts include: trying to fill gaps missed by profiles set up with our book vendor; trying to achieve a reasonable balance between canonical and non-canonical texts; between primary texts and the secondary works interpreting these texts; between works that might become classic versus those that are truly ephemeral; between controversial pornography and less controversial or non-controversial erotica; and between hypertext fiction and traditional print resources. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2004 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

KEYWORDS. Book selection, English literature, American literature, pornography, canonical works, hypertext fiction

THERE IS NO SCIENCE TO SELECTING LITERARY RESOURCES

Sometimes I wish library science actually were as rigorous, predictable and reliable as one of the “hard” sciences. If it were, then I could do my job better

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as the librarian most responsible for acquiring the best materials to support my university's Ph.D. program in English and American Literature and Creative Writing. An ideal library scientific method would imply there were reasonably predictable and reliable ways of obtaining most of the books we need. Our library does not have the budget to hire full-time bibliographers, so collection development perhaps relies too much on the selection criteria we establish with our book vendor. Through the collection profiles we set up with Blackwell's of North America, after discussing the subjects and publication formats with our subject specialist teaching faculty, we hope we acquire on approval most of the academic books necessary to support our undergraduate and graduate programs. As the Humanities Librarian and Liaison to the English Department I supplement these automatic book purchases by selecting other books offered each week as form selections from Blackwell's. To further supplement these selections I try to find time to scan book review sources and publishers' catalogs to choose books that are not part of Blackwell's inventory. A few bibliographically astute English Department faculty also order materials we don't own but which they need for their teaching and research.

Despite these careful procedures, I know that numerous potentially very useful books, videos, audio recordings, CD-ROMs, journals, and online resources are not being ordered. I am not referring to materials we know about but can't afford to purchase. More distressing are the materials we don't acquire because we simply don't know they exist or because we interpret our collection guidelines too narrowly. This essay discusses some of the types of English and American literature materials many academic libraries like my own do not regularly or thoroughly collect. My purpose is to suggest that we reconsider some of our traditional collecting priorities.

THE PROBLEM OF COLLECTING NON-CANONICAL WORKS

If we assume that a university library has a responsibility not only to collect resources immediately necessary to the curriculum but also to build a repository of materials for posterity, we may be paying too much attention only to established authors and canonical texts. There are many second tier, not yet fully established writers, who are either not represented or under-represented in traditional university literary collections. A selector like me is faced with a number of dilemmas concerning works by these authors.

Our first responsibility is to be as sure as the budget permits that we have as many of the primary and secondary resources as we can afford to support an accredited Ph.D. program in English. But after we have acquired the most recent and authoritative primary sources—the scholarly editions of Chaucer,

Shakespeare, and Hemingway, as well as the reliable secondary sources—the university press books and peer-reviewed journals devoted to interpreting these authors’ works—there are still some gaps to fill.

***DO WE HAVE TOO MANY SECONDARY WORKS ABOUT,
NOT ENOUGH PRIMARY WORKS OF LITERATURE?***

Before multi-cultural studies, Gay and Lesbian studies, Women’s studies, African-American studies, Native-American studies, and Ethnic minority studies became popular, our collections were woefully deficient in these and other areas outside of the traditional canon. I know that we have been building much more thorough and representative collections of what used to be called “fringe” materials than in the past. My concern now is that, ironically, we seem to be collecting more of the secondary materials than the primary literature in these areas. And we may even be missing some important secondary resources on the canonical writers because we may be ignoring or at least missing some of the important non-mainstream books and journals discussing these writers.

Granted, it is often difficult to identify works by lesser-known or little-known authors which may have enough staying power to warrant inclusion in a university collection. It is also difficult to know which of the small presses and journals are publishing materials important to add to our collections. But I think libraries have a responsibility to try to fill in some of these gaps. Our English Department has a number of quite different, sometimes competing, and indeed, even sometimes nearly hostile constituencies within it. As the liaison to the whole department I try not to play favorites, but I have to acknowledge that the needs of a Milton scholar are often very different from a professor specializing in English education, and their needs, in turn, are quite different from a Women’s Studies specialist or a poet teaching creative writing. Each of these specialists sees the library differently. They should. It is not the responsibility of English professors to build a comprehensive and balanced collection. That’s the job of a Humanities Librarian like me in consultation with them. But can I be sure that I am being a reasonably objective, unbiased, and informed selector playing fair with all these different groups? This is not an easy question to answer.

If we are to build the collection to assist traditional scholars with their work, it is incumbent on a liaison like me to consult with English professors to make sure we have as many of the authoritative print and online resources as we can afford. If there is a new variorum edition of Henry James’s work the library must acquire it. All the university press monographs and all of the reputable commercial press books about James published in the United States as well as many of them published in England, and some of them published in other

countries, should also be acquired. However, I don't think we have any obligation to purchase works with questionable scholarly authority, such as most of the books published by the University Press of America.¹

If we have to make hard choices among reputable books I hope the balance tips in favor of primary rather than secondary works. There's no question that we must have a new edition of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. But we don't have to acquire *every* study that is published about that novel. In addition to collecting all the works by and many of the works about a classic writer like Hemingway I think we should also acquire as many new books by the so-called small literary presses as possible. Many future Ernest Hemingways will not have their first novel published by a mainstream publisher like Scribner's. We would not have acquired Hemingway's first book, a collection of stories and poems, unless someone had the prescience in 1923 to acquire *Three Stories & Ten Poems* by a small press in Paris called Contact.

WE CAN'T ALWAYS PLEASE ALL THE COMPETING INTERESTS IN AN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Our creative writing students need as rich a selection of contemporary fiction and poetry as our literature students need of the established masters. As a matter of fact, the English literature majors have as much potential interest in the books and journals published by the small presses as the creative writing majors need copies of the established and classic authors' works. If a large book vendor like Blackwell's does not include some of the small press books, we should, if the budget permits, try to set up separate standing orders with these presses. In many cases, setting up standing orders for the limited number of titles of many of these presses makes more sense than selectively ordering individual titles, since a busy selector like me, who is not a full-time bibliographer, may not get around to ordering these books before they go out of print.

No library has an obligation, however, to try to purchase *all* of the small press books. Some of these publications are truly ephemeral, some little more than vanity press publications, and many of them may not be read by our users, or not read very often. But I would rather err on the side of the inclusion of the mediocre rather than the exclusion of the good or excellent. For every librarian with the exquisite good taste to recognize the genius of a first book of poems by the next T. S. Eliot there must be hundreds of us who have neither the time nor the reading knowledge to make such wise choices. Considering the relative low cost of most novels, story collections, poetry books, and plays compared to the average price of a book in the social sciences or the sciences, I think libraries can afford to waste a little money setting up standing orders which will

bring in some literary works that may not have enduring literary value, in order to acquire expeditiously other books which we will be very glad later that we purchased as first editions.

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES SHOULD COLLECT SOME EPHEMERAL WORKS

In an ideal world, I would also like to see book selectors in positions like mine making a greater effort to collect at least some representative samples of genre fiction and other mass audience popular culture materials usually thought to be the province of public libraries. Unless there are regular classes studying such material, the library has no need to acquire a large cache of romance fiction, detective stories, horror fiction, or pornography. A university library has no more obligation to collect a comprehensive collection of bodice rippers than it does a similarly complete collection of Christian fiction. But if there is a legitimate research and teaching need for such materials, some of them need to be made available in the circulating collection. For a very extensive discussion of the numerous issues raised by collecting popular culture materials in academic libraries see “Popular Culture and Acquisitions,” edited by Allen Ellis.²

THERE’S A PLACE FOR PORNOGRAPHY AS WELL AS PIOUS RELIGIOUS FICTION

Determining which popular books—and especially which scandalously popular books—should be added to an academic library’s collection presents a book selector with some deliciously difficult dilemmas. It would, of course, be absurd for libraries to “balance” their collections by collecting a certain number of books of questionable taste to “offset” the classics. I am not a First Amendment purist nor a firebrand out to *epater le bourgeois*, but I do think many academic libraries have an obligation to have at least a few examples of wretchedly awful fiction in all of the popular genres if only so that students will then be able to distinguish, say, between hard and soft-core pornography, run-of-the-mill romance fiction versus classic Gothic literature such as *Wuthering Heights*, or between genre Christian fiction and a genuinely classic work of Christian piety with literary resonance, such as *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

I’m making a libertarian, even an old-fashioned conservative argument as well as a traditional liberal argument in favor of a collection that includes both popular and elite literature. How can we tell the difference between so-called

elite, classic, or canonical texts and popular, general audience fiction, not to mention pulp fiction, if we don't have examples of each to compare? We should also acknowledge the fact that some works of classic literature are quite offensive to some readers. The graphic depiction of sex and violence, not to mention the excremental details of some passages in Boccaccio, Chaucer, Dante, and Shakespeare should make mass market pornographers blush with shame for their lack of imagination. Real erotic literature is fanciful and liberating; true pornography is demeaning, ugly, and very unimaginative. D. H. Lawrence is persuasive when he argues, in his essay *Pornography and Obscenity*,³ that the truly obscene is that which the ancient Greek dramatists chose only to allude to "off-scene" or away from the main action of the stage (Lawrence speculates that the Greek origin of "obscene" is "obskena" meaning off-the-main-scene, although the Oxford English Dictionary says the etymology is obscure). In the same essay Lawrence argues that pornography (literally, writing by prostitutes) confuses the creative and the excretory. Literature that honors the creative life-force (the kind Lawrence hoped he was writing) is nothing if not sensual and sexual. But pornography does just the opposite: it mocks and casts dirt upon true sensuality and the open expression of the sexual. Just look what prudes have done to dishonor the unabashed celebration of love-making in *The Song of Songs*, one of the most poetically intriguing books of the Bible.⁴

Only libraries with a special purpose like the Vatican Library's famous collection of prohibited books, or the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research Library at Indiana University, have the need for comprehensive collections of pornography, but genuine erotica may be a different matter. Although some people even in the rather privileged world of academe may find some of Henry Miller's writing pornographic, a strong case can be made that his work is more accurately described as erotica. We simply cannot have a representative collection of English literature without including controversial writers like Miller. We surely need to try to have all the works of William Burroughs as well. But I don't think we must have every book that Howard Stern writes. His books are interesting social phenomena, some of which are necessary to the study of popular culture, but they have little or no aesthetic merit.⁵

A similar argument can be made for acquiring *some* copies of popular evangelistically Christian fiction. Some books from this genre are just as necessary to accurately reflect popular culture as any other popular culture literary format. Similar reasoning suggests that academic libraries need to have some copies available of historically important racist and anti-Semitic tracts such as *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of Zion*. Academic libraries are under no obligation to purchase all the books purporting to offer historical evidence that the Holocaust is a hoax, but some books in this genre do belong in our collections.

BUT DON'T WE HAVE TO DRAW THE LINE SOMEWHERE?

But where should we draw the line between a representative sample of such fringe or fugitive works and too much? That depends on an assessment of the number of users likely to want to see this material as well as on the budget. Our first responsibility is obviously to collect books of legitimate rather than illegitimate authority. Surely good sense (I hope I don't offend social scientists, but most humanists I know don't need a definition of what good sense is) is the final arbiter about how much blatantly racist or sexist or pornographic material needs to be represented in our collections in order to have a sufficient quantity of such materials for study purposes.

For some scholars and students it is essential they have actual hard copy primary texts for close study. You can't study Henry James seriously unless you have both the earliest editions of his work and the famous "New York Edition," in which James edited many of his previously published books, sometimes very extensively revising them. A library offering an old-fashioned Ph.D. in English needs a collection of manuscripts, or at least facsimiles of manuscripts, of some literary texts so that students can learn how to do close textual analysis. Although a Rare Books collection is expensive, it is not just a dispensable addition to the traditional collection. Immediate and widespread use is not the only criterion we need to apply to acquisitions of literary materials. If we were to acquire the manuscript of Garrison Keillor's novel, *Lake Woebegone Days*, it may be just as useful to some scholars as a copy of the manuscript (or facsimile) of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

One of my responsibilities in building literature collections is acquiring micro format reproductions of texts that are unavailable in print or whose price in print is prohibitive. Increasingly, however, when the alternative exists, we should be obtaining electronic versions of these texts. Some potentially important fiction, for example, does not exist—at least in its first iteration—in print. Hypertext fiction, for example, either exists on CD-ROMs or on World Wide Web sites. Although the format is still so new that it is very difficult to determine which of these new works of hypertext fiction may be written well enough to be valuable to posterity, academic libraries probably need to be acquiring *some* of this fiction before it takes on the cyber equivalent of being out of print.

WHAT IS A LITERARY TEXT?

On the other hand, if we take seriously the argument raised by some postmodernist and deconstructionist literary critics, it is very short-sighted to view a literary text as a fixed object. According to many of these theorists, *any* written text—let alone one with literary staying power—is malleable. A text ex-

ists only when it is interpreted, these critics insist. Every time I read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* the meaning changes a bit. My interpretation of the book the first time I read it in high school differs considerably from my understanding of it a few years later in college. Those readings, in turn, were quite unsophisticated compared to the way I read the book a number of years later when I taught it in college. Now suppose that I am the noted literary scholar Harold Bloom and assume also, that I have written notes to myself documenting each of these interpretations of Twain's novel. A deconstructionist would argue that each of these interpretations is valuable and that a collection of the works by a critic of Bloom's stature would not be complete without these manuscript notes (or facsimiles of them) as well. But why should we restrict our collections only to literary critics with established reputations? Why not also include the hitherto unrecognized insights of a Humanities Librarian?

When I was an undergraduate in the early 1960s we were cautioned to avoid the intentional fallacy. That simply meant that whatever we knew about the author's intentions in writing the literary work, we were to evaluate the book on our sense of its results, not the author's hopes for his book. But many of today's readers take an even more skeptical view of reading. They live in a far more tentative and relative world than I am comfortable with. Many of today's English majors are taught that there can be no fixed meaning to *any* text because any interpretation is always subject to re-interpretation.

SHOULD WE COLLECT HYPERTEXT FICTION?

If book selectors like me take the arguments of these critics seriously we should be collecting a lot more secondary works than most budgets would warrant. Let us consider seriously the case of hypertext fiction and poetry. Much hypertext fiction contains hot links leading readers to narrative developments that branch out from the main story line. Each time the reader chooses a forking path in the narrative she necessarily loses the thread—at least for the moment—of an alternate path. There are so many branches to choose from in some hyper-texts that the possible plot outcomes and character developments seem infinite. To further complicate matters, some hypertext fiction is collaboratively written, so that no one author is responsible for creating the text. And some of this fiction is in a constant state of flux—one hesitates to say in a state of progress—especially if the text exists online. I wonder if a hypertext that is fixed in a CD-ROM format actually qualifies as a real hypertext? However numerous the narrative trails may be, the text on CD-ROM is fixed, whereas an on-line version can be constantly revised. Until and unless the author or authors declare the work finished it can always change.

If the act of reading is as complex as some of the deconstructionists claim, then the “text” is always a nexus between what the author has written and what readers *think* the text means. The implications for building a literary collection of these materials in libraries are daunting. If it is true that a text can’t exist without a network of interpretations, many of which, or most of which, will exist in what some still regard as the ephemeral medium of cyberspace, how does a library collect and preserve this record? Librarians surely can’t, and shouldn’t, buy all of the available hypertext fiction any more than they can or should buy all the fiction in print. The literature selector has an especially wearisome task now, however, because there are so many potential versions of these texts. Do various early online drafts of texts become as important as the later versions? Even if the author declares that a work is in its final form, is it really finished if it exists “only” in the online environment? If a reader can open an electronic version of a hypertext he may be able to alter that text by adding or deleting words, pictures, audio-cards, hotlinks to other texts, etc. What part of this complex bibliographic record should a library acquire? How is it to be cataloged? Can there be one legitimate authority record for such a complex and fluid text? How is it to be retrieved? Should it be linked to other texts the library owns? If so, who is qualified to choose or create those links? What’s a primary and what’s a secondary text in the constantly changing environment of hypertext fiction?

These questions remind me of the surrealistic library Juan Luis Borges created in his short story “The Library of Babel” (“La biblioteca de Babel”),⁶ an ideal library which houses not only every book that has ever existed but all the books that can be imagined to exist, and a library in which there is a perfect catalog (Borges was himself a librarian for awhile) listing all these books. This is the ultimate dream of perfect bibliographic control. But if everything that has ever been published or could be published exists in one giant library there can be nothing new, nothing to discover or create. Borges’ tale is an ironic commentary on man’s hopeless dream of apprehending a perfectly reasonable design and meaning in the universe. Borges seems to anticipate the World Wide Web. But, alas, like the Library of Babel, the Web is a mirage—it only provides the illusion of completeness.

WHAT IF A LIBRARY WERE LIKE A MUSEUM?

In reality, a literary selector like me has to be content with hoping he makes some judicious selections from an increasingly bewildering array of print and electronic resources. We need some general recreational non-literary fiction in the general collection for an audience that includes many students and faculty

who are not English majors. We need a thorough and comprehensive collection of canonical works for undergraduate study. We need a deeper collection of these works for the more advanced research of faculty and graduate students. But we also must be open to collecting many non-traditional and quite possibly ephemeral publication formats not hitherto acquired in academic libraries if we hope to build a dynamic collection of popular as well as classic texts. We have an obligation, I think, to build a truly representative collection not only of the established literary authors but at least some of those we think may be part of the literary canon of the future. We need to collect not only books, small magazines and journals, but also audiotapes of poets reading their work, videotapes and DVDs of important motion picture adaptations of fiction and dramatic works—and even some ephemeral material that might enhance the appreciation of literature. In some respects, I think academic libraries could take some cues about collecting from sister institutions with similar responsibilities for preserving the historical record—museums and archives. Imagine how a library collection of Emily Dickinson poetry would be enhanced if it owned one of her gloves, or how fascinating it would be to see Henry James's walking stick in a library display case! Perhaps I should be thankful I don't have the dilemma of choosing between acquiring Emily Dickinson's glove and a new edition of her works. The choices I've just described between print and electronic and canonical and non-canonical texts are agonizing enough to keep me busy for years.

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Selection of Music Materials

Stephen Luttmann

SUMMARY. The conscientious selection of music materials requires an understanding of the needs of the public being served at least as much as it requires subject competence on the part of the selector. Online and print resources are available to aid in the selection of music materials in all formats, the most important of which are books, scores, audio and video recordings. The usefulness of such tools is evaluated, distinguishing, where appropriate, between tools identifying core collections and those that aid in maintaining currency. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2004 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

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MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE

The music selector is not entirely alone in dealing with a profusion of different kinds of materials, although the challenge of dealing with those requiring

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specialized training in order to interpret at even a rudimentary level (i.e., scores) may well be daunting to the nonspecialist selector. Obviously a trained music specialist is better capable of managing the development of a music collection of any consequence, all other factors being equal, but this is not to say that it is impossible for the nonspecialist to perform such duties with reasonable effectiveness. (No doubt the nonspecialists in music—and the specialists who are new to the mechanics of music selection—are better served by an essay such as this than are the seasoned music collection development librarians.) When considering and using various kinds of selection tools, however, all music selectors, regardless of background or training, are best served by an ability to make decisions according to established policies and meaningful principles.

It is difficult to imagine a selector operating confidently and effectively without some kind of collection development policy. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the formulation of policies in detail, certain characteristics demand consideration. It goes without saying that such a policy should mediate between firm principles and flexible application, and that it should be reevaluated periodically. Implicit in the notion of a useful policy is, above all, an understanding of the needs and desires of the institution and/or body of patrons served by the music collection. This sounds much easier than it is, especially in an age of increasingly limited budgets.

The selector for a public library may have a relatively simple time of identifying materials that will circulate (Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Top 40, etc.), but a more difficult time of identifying the musical interest demographics of the community in order to know whether materials likely to circulate most are being acquired. Then, too, the selector may still need to resolve the matter of whether it is the public library's duty to select exclusively according to the principle of giving 'em what they want.

The academic music selector should have less difficulty identifying the community being served—it is usually a music department or school, with curricular support paramount, and some additional consideration sometimes given to the music-related needs of other departments as well (e.g., materials on rap or country music, which tend to be of more interest in social sciences curricula than in the music schools themselves). In any case, the music selector should take care to ensure that all curricular interests are accounted for and represented. Certainly the music library that serves primarily the interests of a minority of its faculty—usually the musicologists—is in little position to complain about a lack of support from the faculty as a whole when it seeks support against budget cuts. It is understandable that an academic library should strive to acquire exemplary and usually expensive critical editions of major composers' works for study purposes. However, this should not occur to the exclusion of scores that can be used for performance (e.g., a piano score with solo part for

a violin-and-piano sonata)—especially because the vast majority of worthwhile composers have not had the fortune to be sufficiently canonical or sufficiently dead to warrant a *kritische Gesamtausgabe* of their works. Nor are all aspects of music learned primarily from scores: a jazz program of any consequence must be supported by a respectable and comprehensive collection of recordings; any study of performance practice in classical music demands a collection of different performances—and different kinds of performance—of the same work. Finally, while guidelines regarding the relative size of the book, score, and recordings collections (or dollar figures spent on them) are of some usefulness, more important is the recognition that it is the scholarship that serves the music, and not vice-versa. The collection boasting more biographies of Havergal Brian than scores or recordings of his music seems to reflect misplaced priorities, or at least a lost opportunity.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Internet Tools

A number of Web sites indexing vendors, publishers, and organizations related to music are available to the selector. The most notable of these is probably “Music Selection Resources on the WWW,” maintained by Anna Seaberg (King County Library System, Washington State) at <http://www.halcyon.com/aseaberg/>; it also provides links to other such sites. Also invaluable is access to MLA-L, a listserv serving the Music Library Association; roughly 1,000 music librarians and other interested parties subscribe, asking and answering questions touching all areas of music librarianship, including selection and collection development. Subscription instructions are available at http://www.music.indiana.edu/tech_s/mla/mla-l.wel; archives of previous postings are available at <http://listserv.indiana.edu/archives/mla-l.html>.

Vendors: Approval and Notification Services

Recommending or rating individual vendors according to the quality of their service is outside the purpose of this essay, and individual vendors are discussed only in the context of the (sometimes unique) selection tools they offer. Requests for vendor recommendations, as well as responses, appear from time to time on MLA-L—another indication of that tool’s value. It should also be noted at the outset that vendors with the greatest Web presence (and thus offering some of the most useful selection tools) aim for sales to the general public and as a rule do not accept purchase orders.

Approval services for books require no introduction here. Most music selectors, as members of institutions that serve a broad range of subjects, will no doubt find it easiest to use the institution's approval vendor. This is not the case for scores and recordings, but there are numerous major music vendors that provide services for these material types. Due to the highly diverse nature of much score publishing (constant reprints of public-domain materials, new works by "classical" composers that are frequently esoteric and usually expensive, and the continued deluge of choral octavos and other more popular formats), score approval profiles should be constructed with at least as much care as the book profile. The same is true with regard to CDs, because of the sheer quantity of new releases, rereleases, and (in the case of classical music) alternate performances of standard repertoire. Selectors should also err on the side of caution in establishing profiles for scores and CDs, or in deciding whether to enter into such arrangements at all, when they are less than certain that their collection is already reasonably balanced with regard to patron demand and, when applicable, curricular requirements.

Most major library vendors of books, scores, and sound recordings provide their customers with notification of new releases, usually in the form of printed slips or booklets, although online notification, .pdf lists and the like are becoming standard as well.

OCLC WorldCat

While not intended as such, the OCLC WorldCat database possesses considerable value as a selection tool. The availability of bibliographic records in the database for desired items may, depending on local procedures, assist in the entry of order records in the local ILS, and in the verification by acquisitions staff upon the items' arrival that the correct ones were supplied. In libraries where cataloging resources are limited, verification of available WorldCat copy before ordering could make all the difference between easily-processed acquisitions and the accrual of a backlog of items requiring original cataloging.

BOOKS

Because the book is a format hardly unique to music, selection of books is to a certain degree the easiest of the music selector's tasks. For notification of new publications and convenient ordering of backlisted titles, most music selectors can use the same approval and firm-order vendors as do the selectors in other disciplines; availability status can be determined by consulting Bowker's

Books in Print (available online to institutions by subscription) or the inventories of major online vendors such as Amazon (whose listings are often more reliable than those in *Books in Print*, but this will be surprising to few).

In the absence of a new-title notification service from the institution's primary vendor, the "Books Recently Published" column in *Notes*, the quarterly journal of the Music Library Association, is worth consulting. Because this column is compiled on the basis of Library of Congress cataloging, however, it is less than all-inclusive, particularly with regard to more obscure foreign titles that may be out of print by the time they are listed. The problem of ordering foreign titles is best solved by means of a good working relationship with a major music vendor that also handles books on music; firms such as Theodore Front (<http://www.tfront.com>) and Otto Harrassowitz (<http://www.harrassowitz.com>) are expert at providing approval plans, notification services, and backlisted titles.

Book reviews offer limited assistance in deciding which books to buy. While most *Choice* reviews appear before a title's initial (and often only) press run has been exhausted, the same cannot be said for reviews in many scholarly publications. Where intimate subject expertise fails to suffice, a good approval plan can reliably fill the gap, and probably more so than is the case for scores and other formats.

The major vendor of books in online format for library collections is netLibrary (<http://www.netlibrary.com>). netLibrary's ability to contract with major vendors for significant titles has increased somewhat since its acquisition by OCLC, but coverage of music titles is still uneven, limited (495 titles as of the end of 2002), and includes relatively few titles of appreciable reference value (only 16, all in the ML128s). The bulk of available items consists of fairly new titles (2000-02: 147 titles; 1995-1999: 218; 1990-1994: 92; <1990: 47)—a mixed blessing for academic libraries, and probably more useful for public libraries that may benefit from the large number of mass-market-oriented titles in the collection. Ultimately the decision of whether to select netLibrary titles depends on one's perception of whether patrons are likely to use online books in the first place.

SCORES

Online Listings of Available Titles

As of this writing, no comprehensive and entirely satisfactory music-in-print service exists online, although various online vendors and services are useful. Two are worthy of special mention, and are listed here in alphabetical order. The Pepper Music Network database (<http://www.jwpepper.com>)