

In preparation for a presentation I will make at the 2011 IAML conference in Dublin, I posted the following query to IAML-L and MLA-L (4 February 2011). I received a number of positive and informative responses that are summarized below the original query.

Original Query

Dear colleagues,

I am currently conducting research in preparation for a conference presentation scheduled for IAML at Dublin this July 24-29. My topic deals with the use of music special collections in higher education (university schools of music and conservatories). I will argue that engaging students in original critical inquiry with distinctive primary sources is an advantageous future for music librarianship in an environment that increasingly challenges our relevancy. My paper will, in part, build on similar arguments presented at the 2009 joint ARL CNI conference titled "An Age of Discovery: Distinctive Collections in the Digital Age." As part of my presentation I am interested in highlighting successful examples of curriculum-based use of music special collections. I am specifically looking for examples that reach beyond simple exhibit of rare or archival materials to activities that require some form of critical examination on the part of the students. I am currently developing the concept in at least five categories:

1. Course integrated instruction that requires examination of rare editions and/or manuscript scores.
2. Incorporating local special collections into topic options for seminar papers.
3. Course development around a major special collection or body of related primary sources.
4. Mentoring environment opportunities supported by grants or other programs.
5. Apprenticeship models for student employees.

For my presentation, I am very interested to acknowledge any successes you are experiencing in these areas and willing to share. Of course, if you are developing a different approach I would also be happy to report on your experiences.

Please feel free to respond offline if you prefer. My email is david_day@byu.edu

Also, please feel free to corner me at MLA if you would like to chat.

David Day

Response from Reed David

Five years ago, when I was a doctoral student in musicology at the University of Kentucky, I was a student in a class that was focused around an item in a special collection. Specifically, we spent the semester identifying the songs in a volume of 17th- and 18th-century English songs that the professor had come across in the university's special collections library. The professor, Dr. Jonathan Glixon (jonathan.glixon@uky.edu), could probably tell you more about it. I hope this helps.

Sincerely,

Reed David

Master's Student in Library Science, University of North Texas

Response from Pam Thompson

I don't just think that this sort of work is advantageous for the future of music librarianship. I think that it should be fundamental in the training of performers.

I should start by saying that we are, of course, very fortunate in having so much source material to use on site, but there is no reason why what I outline below could not be done with reproductions, facsimiles, etc. It's not quite so exciting, but still, I think, very important.

For many years I have provided an hour-long session for students in their second undergraduate year, showing them some of the most important source material we have (both manuscript and early printed) and outlining the use of such materials in the preparation of editions, what difficulties arise, how and why editions may differ, etc. This is very hands-on, i.e. with the materials there on the table so that pages can be turned and the work considered as a whole. We limit groups to about 10, so that all can see clearly. It could be done to large groups with Powerpoint, but it just wouldn't be the same as seeing a manuscript a few inches away. So, I may have to do the session about 10 times each year - time-consuming but very rewarding.

Then we began sessions for Masters students in their first term, along the same lines, but covering "objects" in the Library, Museum of Instruments and Department of Portraits and Performance History. They had an hour-long session with each department, which was compulsory, and students had to select one item to write about. It was very well received. After some programme restructuring this has changed to a more voluntary process, but is still worthwhile.

In parallel, we have also offered "Explore-a-Score" sessions along similar lines to members of the public or to visiting groups.

Perhaps the best development has been the introduction of an optional course module "Repertoire Project", initially for 3rd/4th-year undergraduates but now also offered to postgraduates. In the first year I had just one undergraduate who selected this, in the second year I had five and this

year have eight undergraduates and eight postgraduates. Basically the credit-bearing course requires students to study the history of a work they intend to perform. They have to look at the manuscript or a reproduction of that in some form if it exists, consider early editions, and how they developed into modern editions, then examine which editions are currently in print, choose which they will use for performance and analyse why. They also have to select a number of recordings of the work and say which they prefer and why. Students get four hours supervision from me (in practice it's often more!). They also have to provide a bibliography and discography and outline all the sources they have used.

The module has had overall very good results. If students get a first-class result, I put their paper in the library collection for others to see and benefit from. Initially, we expected a wholly historical approach, using old sources, but, in fact this year I've had a student who chose Steve Reich's "Music for Eighteen Musicians" and traced the whole history of its development through performance, tracking down really obscure literature and relating it all to performances in which he had been involved. Best of all, students who have really engaged with the project say that they will continue to explore in this way works they perform in the future. Surely this is really important if students are to engage wholly with the works they perform.

Perhaps just as important is the fact that I have an incredibly steep learning curve with each student and the selected work or group of works. I've learned so much about so many works. I am convinced that it works best if supervised by a librarian rather than a professor, as we know how to tell them how to track down the sources, literature, recordings they need. I should stress that this is now rarely confined to material in our own collections. It may take a world-wide search!

Of course, having written this, I now wish that I was giving a paper on it in Dublin! I feel quite passionate about it. Perhaps I could chip in?

Best wishes,

Pam
Royal College of Music, London

Response from Drew Beisswenger

Much of my music graduate education was in ethnomusicology, and like many ethnomusicologists I used special collections often in my research. You might want to post your query to SEM-L, although you might be swamped.

Drew Beisswenger, Ph.D., Head of Music and Media Collections
Meyer Library, Missouri State University

Response from John Vallier

I like the sound of your arguments. I have an example that may be useful for you. A class this quarter at the Univ. of Washington is making a unique popular music collection the focus of a class on "DIY" culture. Anyway, if you are interested in details, let's talk at MLA.

John Vallier

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/media/>

Response from Linda Fairtile

A couple of years ago at MLA I presented on my "Documents of Music History" course at the University of Richmond. It is a semester-long course with four units that introduce undergraduate music majors to 1. music manuscripts (through facsimiles and a field trip to the Library of Congress), 2. the history of music printing and publishing, 3. composers' letters, and 4. concert reviews. I've taught this course twice so far. I'd be happy to send you a copy of the syllabus, if you're interested.

Linda

Response from Brad Short

We've had some success in using manuscripts to teach archival techniques and approaches in the basic graduate level research methods class. We've done a couple different things to get the students using the collections.

Over the years I've worked with Craig Monson and now mostly with Peter Schmelz. While I don't teach the methods and materials course, I do usually go to the class 4 or 5 times and usually take most of those class times.

One year we had the students look at a 18th century Mexican choir book (<http://catalog.wustl.edu:80/record=b3140590~S2>) but told them nothing about it and their project was a kind of "score identification" exercise. Mark Scharff suppressed the bibliographic record from our online catalog so that they weren't able to get information from the catalog. Most of them had never seen velum and had no way of knowing if it was authentic or not. Most had not had enough medieval music history to know how choir books were used in the monasteries so they couldn't figure out why it was so large. The lettering is stenciled and the notes are by hand (on red line staves) and that seemed to throw them. Once they figured out that it was a choir book and in Latin they wanted to place it in Italy and got thrown off by some of the Spanish abbreviations. So, it got them looking at one of our manuscripts and thinking critically about what they were looking at. We've also used our Bach manuscript (<http://catalog.wustl.edu:80/record=b2678248~S2>) and our MacDowell manuscript (<http://catalog.wustl.edu:81/search~S0?%2FXmacdowell+and+garden&SORT=D&SUBKEY=macd>

[owell+and+garden%2F1%2C2%2C2%2CB%2Fframeset&FF=Xmacdowell+and+garden&2%2C2%2C](http://www.library.wustl.edu/units/music/spec/blumenfeld.html)

We've also done a kind of variation on this same theme by giving student some manuscripts from one of our local composers and then asked them to prepare a antiquarian catalog enter as if we were going to sell the manuscripts. This made them look at the various web sites and catalogs to understand how manuscripts were described and valued. We've done it both telling the student whose manuscripts they were looking at and not telling them and had them guess as to who wrote the piece based on style, etc. We've used opera manuscripts of Harold Blumenfeld - a student of Hindemith (<http://library.wustl.edu/units/music/spec/blumenfeld.html>) and songs from Paul Pisk - a student of Schoenberg (<http://library.wustl.edu/units/music/spec/pisk.html>) and movie music from Ron Stein (<http://library.wustl.edu/units/music/spec/stein.html>).

We also talk about archive etiquette and make them "practice" (clearing a space on a clean table, only pencils, etc. - But, I don't make them use gloves because I've read that gloves make people more likely to tear paper materials since they don't have the sense of touch.) whenever they use our archival collections.

In all, I think it is a pretty successful exercise and I think the students are excited about using "real" archival materials even though they may not have the value of manuscript collections in major libraries.

I know that a few students have done projects later in their programs based on what we started back in the research methods classes but I don't know if anyone has really considered doing a dissertation on say, Harold Blumenfeld. Who knows, maybe someone will.

Brad

Response from Bob Kosovsky

I don't know of this consistently being done in music, but two years ago, I saw a very good talk at the RBMS preconference by Pablo Alvarez who spoke on his experience integrating Special Collections into a student curriculum - his own, and that of other faculty in his institution. (Note that his position is called "Outreach librarian.") I would think it would be worth contacting him:

His faculty page: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/users/pabloalv>

and the press release announcing his appointment at U of Michigan:

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/special-collections-library/news/new-outreach-librariancurator-special-collections>

Bob Kosovsky, Ph.D., Curator, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Music Division -- The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Response from Yi Hong

I am a current student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an alum of the Oberlin College and Conservatory. I have been interested in special collections for a long time and would like to suggest a few directions for you to look in based upon the topics you listed!

For topics 1, 2 and 3: I remember taking courses as an undergraduate at Oberlin with early music professor Steven Plank, where we made field trips over to the campus art museum to speak with the curators about some music manuscripts in their holdings. I would guess that Prof. Plank is still doing this. I also know that Kathy Abromeit of the Conservatory Library has taught workshops in the past that involved special collections (I helped her teach one a few summers ago to the summer Baroque Institute participants), and I believe the Con Library has been pretty active in general with their special collections. Also, Ed Vermue at the Oberlin College Library Special Collections has been extremely successful for the past several years in promoting the Special Collections materials in all three ways you described. His focus has generally not been music-related (most of the music special collections are in the Con Library or art museum, though he has a couple impressive-looking psalters), but he is very active in book history and print culture and the College's interest in the special collections department has grown to the point where Ed has started teaching a 1-month winter term intensive in letterpress printing.

For topics 4 and 5, I would like to invite you to attend my portion of the program titled "Born-Digital Librarians: Research and Reflections from a New Generation" at MLA on Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm, in Washington A if you will be at the conference! My segment will likely be from about 11:15 to 11:30. I will be talking about how I conceived a digital library class project to also be a permanent online teaching exhibit of the Mills Music Library at UW-Madison, and my presentation will touch on archival research, the "embedded student" initiative of the UW Digital Collections Center, and the purpose of a digital library.

Good luck with your project!

Cheers,

Yi Hong

Yi Hong Sim

Chair, Music Library Student Group (MLSG)

Coordinator, UW-Madison Graduate Student Collaborative (GSC)

University of Wisconsin-Madison '11

Oberlin College and Conservatory '06

Response from Ludwig Sugiri

After reading your email, I find that your research summary very interesting and potentially useful, especially for the music library to understand the potential of its unique collection, and how it supports teaching and learning, as well as research.

Sydney Conservatorium Library has a rare music collection.

It is not a big collection and it gets used infrequently.

At the moment we don't have a formal document about the collection on the website.

The future development and promotion of this collection has been discussed but it is under consideration.

I would like to share my experience and hopefully this will enrich / contribute to your research.

Hopefully in return, we could read and study your paper which could be a useful literature to improve our understanding of rare collection and its fate in digital age.

1. Traditional example

In the past years (2009-2010) Musicology unit has visited the collection, as part of their study.

During the visit, they will attend a short presentation of the rare collection and study some examples that I prepared – this is under supervision of the lecturer.

The students will discuss and ask questions.

Rare music is also used as material for Undergraduate student's assignment.

The interested Musicology student(s) will choose a score to conduct close study and produce a report and historical findings to the lecturer.

2. Digital example

In 2010 a group of students of another university who was doing Information course used our collection as sample of digital music project.

Exciting, but unfortunately I can't tell you more on this, as we haven't seen the final product of this 'digital collection'

I believe this digital collection is a pilot project using Greenstone, <http://www.greenstone.org/>

Interest with our collection is not great and we have limited staff and more other immediate

priorities, but nevertheless, I hope this short story could be useful for your research.

Best regards,

Ludwig

Ludwig Sugiri | Music Cataloguer & Liaison Librarian
Conservatorium Library | University Library

Response from Greg MacAyeal

I have an example of a recent use of special collections materials. While I lucked into this, more or less, it still demonstrates point number 2 from your list.

I'm attaching a short text I composed for an upcoming publication, and it summaries the use fairly well. If you would like more information, I'll be happy to talk. Are you heading to MLA? We can meet there if you like.

Greg MacAyeal
*Assistant Head
Northwestern University Music Library*

Response from Steven K. Gerber

What an excellent topic- I wish I could be in Dublin to hear it. This is the future of libraries. If you have not already heard from Bonna Boetcher, you may be interested in the course she coteaches which requires student engagement with a special hip-hop-history collection:

<http://cybertower.cornell.edu/lodetails.cfm?id=601>

Steven K. Gerber
Performing Arts Librarian & Adjunct Professor of Music
227 Johnson Center Library, MS 1A6, George Mason University

Response from Dan Zager

I think I can provide you with some examples, perhaps especially for your no. 2 below. Let's talk at Philadelphia and I can tell you about some of the special collections items I incorporate into my teaching here; then you can tell me what specific information I might be able to provide for your Dublin presentation. I spoke on this topic at the 2002 IAML in Berkeley, and I'll bring a copy of that handout as a case in point.

Dan

Response from Richard Boursy

Greetings from Yale! This sounds like a great topic, and it's certainly an important part of what we do here. We've had a number of courses where our special collections have played an integral role. Here are some examples.

James Hepokoski teaches a course on the unusual combination of Charles Ives, the blues, and Cole Porter. (I think it's called "American Music Genres in the Twentieth Century," or something like that. It's not offered this year, so unfortunately I don't have a course description at my fingertips.) The papers of Ives and Porter are here at Yale, and for the blues unit, they do their research in our Historical Sound Recordings collection. For Porter, they use both his papers and HSR recordings. All of the students write papers and give presentations based on their research with primary sources. Jim has taught this course three times so far—twice as a graduate seminar and once as a senior seminar.

This semester Tiffany Kuo is teaching a manuscript studies course. Here's what the course catalogue says about it:

MUS 654 01 (20068)
Nineteenth-Century Music Manuscript Studies at the Yale Libraries
Tiffany Kuo
W 1.00-3.00 SML ML106
Spring 2011

4 credits. NP. Performers today are constantly faced with myriad editions of the vast classical music repertoire of the nineteenth century. Utilizing the music manuscript collections available on campus—both at the Gilmore Music Library and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library—students examine in depth the composition and publishing processes through comparative studies of manuscripts and editions. Focusing on solo and chamber music repertoire of the nineteenth century, instrumental as well as vocal, the course introduces students to basic bibliographic resources such as thematic catalogues, collected works, and facsimile editions; addresses problems of authenticity, chronology, and style; encourages performances of the various versions in class; and anticipates the preparation of an edition. Compositions to be studied include, but are not limited to, works by Brahms, Chopin, Fauré, Liszt, Massenet, Mendelssohn, Rossini, and Schumann.

It's not really limited to the 19th century; last week I brought the Wickhambrook lute manuscript (written in the 1590s) to class, and they studied watermarks, handwriting, etc. This is the first time Tiffany has taught this course, so I'll be interested to see how it develops; that will depend in part on the topics that students choose for their projects.

Markus Rathey's Bach course has also included the study of some of our rare manuscripts, although they are not the focal point of the course as a whole.

There have been many courses that make extensive use of rare published books and scores, such

as Ellen Rosand's courses on Handel and on the Italian madrigal, or Patrick McCreless's course on theory and aesthetics in the 19th century. We eventually scanned some of the books Pat uses, to cut down on the wear and tear:

http://digitalbkp.library.yale.edu/cdm2/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2F1027_3. (There have also been many courses where we've done a show and tell session, to try to make students more aware of what our special collections have to offer. Sometimes this has an effect, and somebody chooses a paper topic that uses our special collections.)

Typically, the faculty members first decide that they want to offer a certain course that will use special collections material, and then they consult with us about the details of its content and organization. Sometimes we go to class at the beginning of the semester to explain our policies, how to find things, and so on. We also attend whenever manuscripts are brought into the classroom. On some of these occasions, we may participate in or even lead the discussion, while on other occasions we're there merely for security reasons and don't say very much.

These courses do present practical challenges for us: ensuring the safety of the materials, assisting students (which can sometimes be quite time-consuming, depending in part on how many of them there are), and so on. Nonetheless, integrating special collections into courses is a very good thing. The students are usually excited by the opportunity to work with these remarkable materials, and to do a kind of research that goes beyond what they find in most of their other classes. When something really captures their imagination, they become more interested and engaged, and they learn more. I wish I had had this kind of opportunity as a student. Especially when I was an undergrad, whenever I came across special collections items in the card catalogue (as it was in those days), I just passed over them—I had a vague sense that these things were for faculty, or maybe grad students, but definitely not for me. That was not true, but many students today have that same idea, so I hope to disabuse them of it whenever I can.

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to ask. I won't be attending MLA this year, but you can contact me by E-mail or phone, or you can talk with Suzanne Eggleston Lovejoy in Philadelphia.

Cordially,

Richard

Response from Jean Morrow

We've been using our primary source materials to support instruction in our undergrad and grad classes for years. I can't think of any better reason to justify the overhead involved in housing them.

Jean Morrow
Jean.Morrow@NECMUSIC.edu
Director of Libraries
New England Conservatory of Music