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Getting Creative with Collection Development

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Music Library Association Midwest Chapter Meeting 2015
Louisville, Kentucky
Saturday, October 17th
The Brown Hotel Gallery Ballroom

“Getting Creative with Collection Development”

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“Coming Full Circle ... And Then Some!”

Or ...

Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose!

I began working as Assistant Music & Fine Arts Librarian at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana in September 1976. The Library, which served the Jordan College of Music and Fine Arts, occupied a single classroom space on the lower level of Lilly Hall, the College of Music & Fine Arts building. The College itself at that time served students in the disciplines of Dance, Music, Theatre, and Radio-Television.

At that time, the budget was embarrassingly low. The collection, which was semi-respectable from a content standpoint, contained rather old and worn volumes, many of which had been received as donations or inherited from the merging of the **Metropolitan School of Music** (1895) and the **Indiana College of Music and Fine Arts** (1907 = College of Musical Art; 1918 = Indiana College of Music and Fine Arts) which formed the **Arthur Jordan Conservatory of Music** (an independent institution) in 1928. The merge with Butler took place in August 1951. Phyllis Schoonover, the Head Music Librarian when I was hired, and I did what we could to update the collection with the budget we were given and continued to rely rather heavily on donations.

The **NASM report of 1980** stated that the budget for all purchases of the Music & Fine Arts Library for the academic year **1978-79 was \$7,000, of which \$4,500** was used for purchases **in music**. The review of holdings showed “many fine publications but that large gaps in certain areas have made the total collection uneven and in many ways less than adequate.”

Fast-forward to the Library’s **NASM self-study report of 1999**, in which it was stated that during the **1997-98 academic year, a total of \$30,475 was spent on music**, including books, scores, recordings, periodicals, continuations, and electronic databases. The final NASM report included the statements: “...the Library and operations appear to be sound.” The music holdings of the Library support the music curriculum quite well ...There is a great need for an increased budget for compact disc acquisitions.”

The **2009 NASM Self-Study reported that \$65,438 was budgeted for music acquisitions for the 2009-2010 academic year**. (\$63,443.50 had been spent the previous year.) Interestingly, the final report said, “Holdings in music appear to be adequate to support the size and scope of the existing programs and those for which the [music] unit seeks plan approval.” And under “Finances” was the statement: “The budget for the collection is modest but appears to meet the current needs of the unit.”

The increases alluded to above were the results of the efforts of a Library Dean who felt collections were critical both to the success of the libraries and the students and a President who held like values and was supportive.

To be fair, these were different times that reflect a very different era in the history of libraries. In the **summer of 2012, a new Dean of Libraries was appointed.** (The former Dean retired at the end of May 2012.) In **August 2013, a new Collection Development Policy was adopted.** The new policy reflects a very different attitude toward collection development, one that I suspect reflects that of many contemporary libraries facing the brave new world of resource sharing and electronic access.

The **Statement of Purpose** includes the following:

The two main objectives of library collection development are: first, to provide access to an active, useful collection that reflects the curricular, research and cultural needs of the students, faculty, and staff of the university; and second to distribute and promote the intellectual output, special collections, and history of the university.”

And here are a few key statements from our policy’s “Guiding Principles:”

- Building a collections policy for a 21st century library requires us to be open to new ways of fulfilling the mission of an academic library.
- Information discovery is no longer tied to local collections.
- The main purpose of the library’s collections is to support students engaged in Butler’s curriculum.
- As stewards of university resources, we will take a standards-based approach to the maintenance of collections (tangible and digital) based on relevance to the curriculum, and discipline-based evaluation criteria (e.g., usage, currency and life expectancy, accreditation standards, [and] core bibliographies).
- Tangible gifts and donations from individuals are not a sustainable strategy to build non-archival collections. If an item is identified as essential to supporting the curriculum, we will find the means to provide access to it.
- We will preserve and promote the history and intellectual output of the university through digitization and publishing.

As I know many of you are aware, there is an increased emphasis on providing “soft spaces” to facilitate collaborative learning. The Butler Libraries’ 2013-2018 Strategic Plan reflects the commitment “to redevelop learning spaces and realign resources, affecting both the management of our existing collections as well as the provision of future collections.” With that in mind, we were charged with weeding 20,000 volumes from the total holdings of the main “Irwin” Library. The remaining books were collapsed to free up space on the third floor to accommodate the anticipated move of the Center for Academic Technology into Irwin Library and a new instruction room. On the main floor, we merged the circulation and reference desks to form a single “Information Commons” desk staffed with specially-trained student workers. To accomplish this, the music reference collection was weeded and moved to the front of the music quadrant on the second floor. In addition, the CD jewel cases, which had been on movable shelving behind the old circulation desk, were also moved upstairs into the music quadrant. (I should add that they are in accession number order, but that’s another story!) The actual CDs are kept in notebooks behind the Information Commons Desk. These changes have considerably shrunk the

growth space for new music materials. Likewise, the budget for Music books is currently (approximately) **\$5,500**, the score budget is **\$3,500**, the CD budget is **3,5,000** and the DVD budget is **\$500**. These numbers reflect a modest decrease from last year due to a University budget shortfall this year. We also expect to spend approximately **\$8,600** on print continuations and **\$2,500** on print periodical subscriptions. Also, we do continue to subscribe to the streaming sources **Naxos Music Online, VAST, Met Opera on Demand, and Films on Demand**. We also subscribe to A-R Editions' **Online Music Anthology, Cambridge Companions to Music (online), Grove Music Online, IPA Source, JSTOR, Music Index Online, Oxford Music Online, RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, RIPM** (not the full-text version), **CREDO Reference Music, International index to Music Periodicals, ProjectMUSE, and New York Times (Historical)**. Thus, there is excellent online resource support for music. My belief is that while there has been a significant decrease in the overall music budget (the grand total spent for music last year was \$48,804.36 vs. \$65,438 in 2009-2010 – a **decrease of \$16,634 or 25%**), the budgets have remained relatively strong for music because the usage of music materials is the highest of any in the library. In fact, a ten-year study covering usage statistics from 2002 to 2012, revealed that 47% of the music books and scores and 71% of the CDs had circulated during that period.

All this said, there have been certain **trends/shifts** that should be noted:

The Butler student demographic has changed. Our student body has become quite affluent over the past fifteen years. In 2000, the undergraduate tuition was \$8,590 (or \$720 per u.g. credit) and graduate tuition was \$230/credit-hour; in 2015, the undergraduate tuition is \$18,025 per semester (or \$1,502 per u.g. credit = an **increase of almost 209%**) and graduate tuition is \$520/credit-hour (a **226% increase**). Several faculty have commented to me that today's students simply buy their own scores for whatever they are assigned. This HAS led to some concerns: they sometimes purchase the wrong scores (either the wrong key or the wrong edition) and they don't expose themselves to music for their instruments that has not specifically been assigned to them. I have attempted to address this in my instruction sessions this year! (Along with the importance of listening to as many difference performances as possible and of acquainting themselves with the "great" masters of their instruments. In fact, encouraging these two activities has been a major theme in my presentation this Fall, especially those I have made to studio classes.

The **number of Butler students majoring in music has decreased.** For many years, after I came, we averaged between 225 and 250. The majority of our music majors are undergraduates but we have always had a "respectable" number of master's degree students. In the 2000 NASM self-study, we indicated that we had 224 undergraduate students and 30 graduate students. This Fall (2015), we are reporting 165 undergraduate students and 37 graduate students. The drop in enrollment has been fairly gradual and there have been some "up and down" years, but the changes in the two years cited reflect a total drop of 52 students or 20.5%.

A movement to "right-size" the collection – I have interpreted this to mean focusing on the creation of a collection that is "lean and mean" and high quality – with items users can't get from IMSLP and/or Spotify or YouTube. I do focus on undergraduate needs and literature, all the while trying to acquire high quality editions that reflect recent scholarship. I am aware that I have LESS space than a year or so ago and most likely will not get any additional shelves in the Irwin Library. There are **no (foreseeable) plans for any kind of physical expansion or storage for the Libraries.**

A philosophy of **"just in time" rather than "just in case" collection development** – this is a philosophy with greater reliance on interlibrary loan and one which looks toward "patron driven acquisitions."

Increased student demand for "soft space" – study space/collaborative learning space.

"The Libraries main collection activities concern subscribing to online resources" and later in the Collection Development Policy under the heading of "Serials," **"the bulk of the collections budget is used for serial subscriptions."**

Regarding gifts: (From "Guiding Principles"): "Tangible gifts and donations from individuals are not a sustainable strategy to build non-archival collections."

From "Gift Policy:" "Materials accepted for the Archives and Special Collections will be processed and made available for use through that department as well as through Digital collections platforms if possible. The Library does not otherwise accept gifts of books, journals, magazines, or other physical materials, and does not accept unsolicited or anonymous gifts of any kind."

Regarding reference materials: "We will maintain electronic access to general and subject reference books, but will not be buying new paper reference books unless requested by faculty."

So, then, what do I feel is important during this period of rather drastic change/transition?

Faculty relationships: knowing my faculty, knowing their expertise and interests and the courses they teach, pushing items of potential interest out to them.

Student relationships: emphasizing to the students that I am here for them, encouraging questions, learning about their research interests, attending their research presentations (and questioning them about their use of sources!).

Keeping current (to the extent that I can) via reviews in *NOTES*, *Library Journal* (which is no longer routed), *CHOICE*, publisher blurbs, Yankee Book Peddler *GOBI alerts*, *Gramophone*, attending concerts, asking for current rep for the major performing ensembles, etc.

Weeding:

Through a grant from the Lilly Foundation secured by the Academic Libraries of Indiana consortium (ALI) Butler was given access in 2013 to Sustainable Collection Services' ***GreenGlass*** which "provides collection visualization tools with optional data overlays to give you new insights." (The last have of that sentence is from their website!) The data in the reports contains:

- Library's bibliographic and item level data with live links to the OPAC
- Library's usage data – including circulation, re-shelving counts, reading room loans, etc.
- WorldCat holdings data – for peer libraries, your state, your country, the world
- CHOICE Review and CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title flags
- Customized title protection rules.

So, for Butler, this included:

- LC Classes and sub-classes
- No. of uses/check-outs since _____ (Date)
- Last charge date

- Publication year
- Holdings comparison (US, Indiana, CIC – 15 Midwest research libraries, IU/Purdue/Notre Dame, ALI (Academic Libraries of Indiana) Project Group)
- No. of holdings
- Hathi Trust availability

I found this useful in the area of THEATRE – because I had a faculty member who is nearing retirement and has taught theatre history for many years and could tell me about nearly every book on the list!

In the area of DANCE, this was more problematic: I actually began pulling some of the dance books on my own when I realized that books I thought should be easily expendable had actually checked out in the past couple of years (?!). Likewise, newer books containing more up-to-date information had not been checked out (?!). So, again, one of my dear colleagues in the Dance Department spent several hours (over a period of days) reviewing all the dance books with me. We put together a few carts of books we felt could be withdrawn without affecting the integrity of the collection. I was later informed by the “checkers” in the collection management area that many of the books we had selected were “rarely held” and should not be withdrawn. I was pretty firm in my statement that if I was to be limited to a smaller area for the Jordan College of the Arts collections, I certainly did not want it to be populated with materials that might get used once in a millennium!

Fortunately, I have had numerous faculty come and assist me with weeding various areas of the music collection. In the last two years, we have deselected about 2,741 items. It’s been great fun, I get faculty buy-in to the process, and I learn a great deal from my colleagues!

So what is my advice during these challenging times for music library collection development: the same as it would have been when I first started out as an assistant music librarian almost forty years ago:

- GET TO KNOW YOUR FACULTY ... BECOME CLOSE FRIENDS WITH THEM ... THEY ARE YOUR STRONGEST ALLIES AND SURE DEFENSE IN GOOD TIMES AND IN BAD!
- STAY CURRENT WITH YOUR DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL’S CURRICULUM and the RESEARCH INTERESTS OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- IMPRESS UPON YOUR STUDENTS THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY CURIOSITY ABOUT THEIR INSTRUMENTS AND THE REPERTOIRE, PEDAGOGY, AND GREAT PERFORMERS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM!
- ALWAYS TRY TO PRESENT YOUR LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION’S POINT OF VIEW (in as positive a light as possible) TO YOUR FACULTY. A SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE (for the greater good) IS OFTEN MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN ONE OF “MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY” – remember that WE SHOULD ALL BE PLAYING ON THE SAME TEAM!

Thank you!

