Results of the MLA Task Force

New Feature: Get to Know Your Membership
On July 1 the operations of IAML-US and MLA were combined. The most immediately visible signs of this are changes to the MLA Web site and the opportunity to join IAML when renewing your MLA membership. As President of MLA, I attended the IAML conference in Dublin, Ireland and represented MLA as the United States branch of IAML at the Council and General Assembly meetings for the first time. The news of the merger of IAML-US and MLA was warmly received by the officers of IAML and the other representatives of the national branches. There were about 330 music librarians in attendance from every continent in the world. We have interesting things to learn from our international colleagues, but in many ways they look to the United States for innovative ideas and leadership in many areas. The full merger of IAML-US and MLA now allows us to represent the full spectrum of music librarianship in the United States and to participate as partners and equals with the other national branches of IAML.

The annual budget for MLA was set at the last Board meeting in early June. The Board usually sets the operating budget in June and the convention budget in September after the convention program proposals have been made. This year we decided to set the entire budget in June as an attempt to control costs and for more effective conference planning. After several years of deficit operating budgets, we are pleased to have a balanced budget for 2011–2012. This did not come without costs. There are few areas of the budget that can now be reduced without negatively affecting MLA programs. In the end we voted for a slight increase in the dues for most membership categories combined with a reduction in honoraria for special officers and editors. These decisions were not made lightly. Three special officers closely associated with the Board offered to reduce their honoraria by 50 percent in the interest of MLA and to reduce the impact on the honoraria for other positions. We are especially grateful to these individuals and to all of the special officers and editors for the extraordinary work that they do on behalf of the members of MLA and for helping the association in these difficult financial times.

Planning the MLA convention is increasingly complicated, and the growth of the programs of the association has made hotel negotiation ever more critical. The Board met with two convention management companies and is pleased to report that the convention managers will be working with Helms Briscoe on hotel negotiations for the 2014 convention. Also, there will be discounts on plane fares for the Dallas meeting through ATC, and we encourage you to use this service in the coming year. More information will be available along with information for the Dallas meeting.

The Board acted on a number of issues at its meeting which you can read about in the minutes on the Web site, but there is one matter of special interest. The Legislation Committee requested the Board to consider supporting an amicus brief with the Conductors’ Guild in Golan vs. Holder, a case to appear before the Supreme Court this fall. The Committee worked with Steven Hirsch of Keker and Van Nest, who provided pro bono services to us in this important copyright case. You will hear more about this as the case makes its way through the court. This is only one example of the many ways that MLA is becoming more visible in representing the interests of MLA on a national level.

Best wishes,
Jerry L. McBride
Features

Results of the MLA Task Force on Conferences Survey

Beth Christensen,
St. Olaf College

Perhaps you remember opening your email in mid-April 2010 to discover a link to a lengthy survey about MLA conferences. If you were one of the 488 people who took the time to respond, thank you! This survey, the brainchild of the June 2009 MLA Board meeting, provided valuable information about multiple aspects of our conference structure. It gathered opinions about meeting cost, duration, timing, programming, and location, as well as feedback about technological and “green” meeting elements, hotel accommodations, and informational and promotional materials.

What did the survey reveal?

First, the survey reinforced the fact that the Music Library Association is doing most things right. Our membership loves the organization, described by one respondent as “the envy of my colleagues,” and it is reluctant to make major changes to the current conference structure. Yet valuable ideas for innovation were also offered. Results from the questionnaire are summarized below.

Demographics, Attendance, and Cost: Most people answering the survey held the status of individual member, and 79% of them were employed at colleges, universities, or conservatories of music. Similarly, 81% of the respondents were music librarians, split almost evenly among public services, technical services, and music library administration. The total number of meetings members had attended was fairly evenly distributed. There was a marked division between members whose institutions provided no funding to attend (31%) and those who received support for 76–100% of their expenses (26%). Reasons for lack of institutional support included the weak economy (26%), high transportation costs (35%), and hotel costs (35%). Almost one-third of respondents reported that they had attended MLA in previous years but could not do so in 2010.

Duration & Timing: Reactions to the option of either lengthening or shortening the duration of conferences met with little enthusiasm—it seems as if we’ve got this one right! Members favored keeping the meeting contained within the workweek if possible, a schedule especially important to church musicians. Eighty-one percent of respondents were willing to restrict committee business meetings to the beginning or the end of the day, reserving the middle of the day for program sessions. (The time-consuming work of BCC was brought up as a possible conflict with this schedule.) Others favored having an entire day set aside for committee meetings, which would allow members not involved with committee work the option of spending one less day at the conference. Ideas for lengthening the day were not restricted to committee meetings: members also suggested limiting the time and space needed for round tables and chapter gatherings. Many respondents would like to see smaller, simpler conferences with fewer conflicting program sessions and a clear lunch break.

Timing & Location: The membership strongly disagreed with the concept of meeting every other year and did not want to alternate national meetings with chapter meetings. Consistency in the timing of MLA meetings was crucial: a fairly regular meeting time was important as members plan for expenses within a fiscal year. This was also a consideration when coordinating attendance at more than one national meeting. Early fall and late spring were universally difficult times for our membership. Respondents were surprisingly amenable to staying in dormitories during summer months, although concerns about air conditioning, local restaurants, convenient gathering places, and venues for exhibitors surfaced. Joint meetings were favored by some, but many members worried that regular joint meetings with organizations such as ALA or ACRL would either overshadow our identity (ALA) or disenfranchise those music librarians not associated with academic libraries (ACRL). The organizations most frequently mentioned as partners for joint meetings were SAM (124), AMS (120), and ARSC (48). While these might be attractive arrangements on an occasional basis, there was no overwhelming sentiment that consistent joint meetings would be beneficial. Although members enjoy rotating locations in U.S. regions each year, they were just as enthused about having a central location every other year (alternating East/West in the off years). Yet weather was also a consistent concern.

Meeting Elements: The response to our query about overarching themes for meetings was tepid: most respondents were neutral, and, of those with opinions, most were against the idea. The meeting elements most appreciated by the membership were program sessions on

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Results of the MLA Task Force on Conferences Survey continued . . .

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Results of the MLA Task Force on Conferences Survey continued . . .

Features

Results of the MLA Task Force on Conferences Survey continued . . .

virtual meetings were viewed favorably as an enhancement to in-person meetings, especially for those people with schedule conflicts during the meeting or as a way to extend the reach of MLA to those who could not otherwise attend. Our meetings are dependent upon a wide variety of technology, and past requests seem to be both reasonable and well utilized.

Hotels: Most attendees make an effort to stay at the conference hotel (77% reported that they usually or always stay there). Respondents listed the three most important hotel attributes as convenience, cost, and location. Members prefer hotels in central locations within easy walking distance to inexpensive meals (nearby restaurants and grocery stores, with refrigerators in rooms a plus) and other cultural centers. Higher-priced hotels may be a worthwhile trade-off when meeting in cities with convenient “hub” transportation options (e.g. Chicago). Respondents were not strongly attached to many hotel amenities, although access to the Internet (preferably free) was considered “essential” to more than one-third of our members. Members appreciate the ability to stop by one’s room in order to drop things off or take a quick break. Respondents had mixed but surprisingly positive opinions about staying in dormitories: they were enthused about lower cost but also concerned about the loss of amenities such as air conditioning or bathroom privacy. Respondents were also amenable to finding their own meeting space for small committee or roundtable meetings (33% “definitely” and 49% “maybe”) but noted that scheduled meeting times would need to be posted.

Conference Information and Promotional Materials: Printed programs were the most appreciated paper resource—52% thought programs should be available free of charge—whereas totebags and folders were considered unimportant by more than half of those answering. The tote bag section elicited 72 comments and is obviously an area about which people have opinions they wish to share! Free tote bags provided by sponsors were favored by 54% of members.

General Comments: The survey concluded with an invitation for general comments, and these unsolicited responses provided a telling gauge of our membership. Among the most consistent themes (by number of mentions) were support for 1) using a central location such as Chicago every other year, 2) eliminating the banquet, 3) including short breaks (e.g. 10 minutes) between meeting sessions, 4) being “green,” 5) having a central lobby/bar/meeting place to gather and see one another, 6) having a variety of restaurants and grocery stores nearby, and 7) meeting in smaller cities.

Conclusion

The information gathered in the 2010 survey was used to inform several changes at the 2011 MLA conference. As the MLA leadership strives to provide us all with the best conference experience possible in these changing times, the rich collection of information gathered in 2010 will undoubtedly continue to inform their decisions. We are indeed fortunate to be a part of an organization that is committed and responsive to its members. Please look for new opportunities to provide feedback on an annual basis!

Members of the MLA Task Force on Conferences included Veronica Alzalde Wells, Bonna Boettcher, Beth Christensen (chair), Elizabeth Edminster, Morris Levy, and Tina Murdoch.

“The least popular activities were Big Band rehearsals (60%) and chapter-based activities (43%).”
MLA Works to Federalize Copyright in Pre-1972 Sound Recordings

Eric Harbeson, Chair, Legislation Committee

The MLA Legislation Committee has been working hard to advocate MLA’s interests in the question of copyright in pre-1972 sound recordings. In January, in response to a call for comments from the United States Copyright Office (USCO), the committee drafted a 16-page document explaining our position and asking the USCO to recommend that Congress bring consistency to the law by including pre-1972 sound recordings in federal law. In April, the committee filed further comments in response to an opposing position taken by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and American Association for Independent Music (A2IM). In June, committee chair Eric Harbeson participated in two days of hearings hosted by the USCO and newly-appointed Register of Copyrights, Maria Pallante.

As many MLA members are aware, recordings are unique in U.S. copyright law in that an enormous number of recordings are subject to state, rather than federal copyright laws. When Congress passed federal protection of sound recordings in 1972, it declined to make that protection retroactive, leaving the earlier recordings subject to state law. In the Copyright Act of 1976, Congress moved to preempt all state copyright laws; however, Congress was concerned that preemption of state record piracy laws would remove all protection from pre-1972 sound recordings—effectively placing them in the public domain. This notion turned out to be mistaken—it simply would have moved protection from

...nearly every recording ever made is under some form of copyright.

state to federal law—but the concern was sufficient for Congress to carve out an exception to the law, leaving pre-1972 sound recordings under state jurisdiction until 2067, when all such recordings will become subject to federal law and enter the public domain.

Because common laws in the states are perpetual and many states do not incorporate term limits, nearly every recording ever made is under some form of copyright. In addition, the exceptions to the law—especially the fair use doctrine and Section 108 exemptions—do not apply uniformly at the state level. Some states have enacted provisions for libraries, but many have not. As a result, the ability of libraries to preserve and provide access to these recordings, even wax cylinders from the 1890s, is badly limited. In addition, because common law protection can reside in any of several places in a given state’s laws, it is difficult for librarians even to know when a use is legal or not. These concerns led Tim Brooks and the Association of Recorded Sound Collections, in partnership with MLA and the Society of American Music, to seek legislative change. In 2009, as a direct result of these efforts and a host of studies showing how precarious the state of recorded sound collections is, president Obama signed legislation which directs the Copyright Office to study “the desirability and means of bringing sound recordings fixed before February 15, 1972, under federal jurisdiction.”

MLA’s position is that there is nothing special about sound recordings that should cause them to receive special treatment and perpetual copyright terms. Every other form of copyrightable work—movies, maps, musical works, books, paintings, etc.—is subject to

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Sam Brylawski, Peggy Bulger (American Folklife Center), Tim Brooks, Eric Harbeson at the hearings. Taken by Andy Moyer.
MLA Works to Federalize Copyright continued . . .

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Copyright only for limited terms. For works made before 1978 that term is limited to a maximum of 95 years from the date of creation, and for works made since 1978 it is 70 years after the death of the author (95 years from the creation date for works of corporate authorship). Works published prior to 1923 have entered the public domain.

MLA’s position is that sound recordings should be no different, with one exception. An existing exception in the law gives libraries additional rights to reproduce, distribute, perform, and display works when they are in the last 20 years of their copyright term and not being commercially exploited. MLA is advocating that this be extended to the last 45 years of the copyright term for sound recordings. This is partly because of the accelerated rate in which sound recordings formats deteriorate, and partly in order to harmonize U.S. law with the “neighboring rights” laws in other countries which give sound recordings copyright terms which are shorter than those for other works. In Europe, the neighboring rights terms last 50 years; similarly, the MLA proposal would give libraries extra flexibility in use of unexploited recordings beginning 50 years after the recordings have been fixed.

The hearings at the Copyright Office were thought-provoking and at times animated. Many MLA members may have followed the Twitter stream posted by K. Matthew Dames (“@copycense”). Along with MLA, the majority of those testifying supported federalization in some form. Among those speaking in favor were Sam Brylawski (representing SAM) and Tim Brooks (ARSC) who gave enlightening testimony on many questions posed by the USCO staff, including the history of sound recordings and the degree to which they are commercially available. Copyright scholars Tomas Lipinski, Dwayne Buttler, and Elizabeth Townsend Gard also advocated for federalization.

Eric Schwartz and Steve Marks, two attorneys representing the RIAA, recognized the preservation problems encountered by libraries, but advocated strongly for a solution which preserves state law jurisdiction. Brandon Butler, from the Association of Research Libraries, also advocated a state-based solution, arguing that federal law might create a chilling effect for libraries by introducing statutory damages (up to $30,000 per infringement). MLA’s position in response is that there are many parts of the law which need updating to help libraries, but that the state law regime currently governing sound recordings already creates a chilling effect, and federal law already gives libraries powerful tools to avoid statutory damages, so federalization would be a net benefit to libraries even if it isn’t a perfect solution.

The Copyright Office is expected to release its report and recommendations by the end of this year, after which it will be up to Congress to make any changes. More information about the process, including links to the comments filed and hearing transcripts, may be found on the MLA’s Web site, Copyright for Music Librarians (copyright.musiclibraryassoc.org).

New Members
We welcome the following new or returning MLA members!

Idalia Avezuela
Barbara Barnett-Stewart
Anya Brodrick
Tony Brooke
Sean Patrick Carey
Nicola Cavalli
Vandy Renee Dubre, The University of Texas at Tyler
Dylan Russell Flesch
Lindsay Gillis
Taylor Jonathon Greene
Darrell Grant Hankins
Megan Blauvelt Heuer
Vanessa Lynn Hoogeboom
Kathryn Kalmanson
Nelson Lui
Frederick Joseph Maroth
Sweeney Michael-Thomas
Melissa Moll
Ivan Raul Moreno, Forest Park Public Library
Nazareth Anthony Pantaloni
Jennifer Ranney
Matt Ransom
Jennifer Ann Seidman
Saesha Mary Senger
Elizabeth Shoemaker
Julia Shulman
Hannah Spence
Amy Swartz
David Martin Tenenholtz
Wexi Wei
Rachel E. Weiss
John Peter White
In this issue, we get to know Sue Stancu, Sound Recordings Cataloger at Indiana University.

**Can you describe what you do at IU’s William & Gayle Cook Music Library?**

I came to work in the Cataloging Section of the Music Library at IU in March 1979. My title is Sound Recordings Cataloger, but over the years I think I’ve cataloged in every format that the library collects. My primary responsibility is for sound recordings, including the IU Jacobs School of Music performances and other audio-visual materials. I also supervise one paraprofessional staff colleague and a couple of student assistants who also catalog sound recordings.

**What about music librarianship makes you feel good—that it’s all “worth it?”**

I’m a music cataloger. I knew before I began library school that music cataloging was the only thing I wanted to do, and I was fortunate to be able to study cataloging with Dr. Margaret F. Maxwell, a Margaret Mann Citation winner, and to get some experience in teaching the basic cataloging course at the same time. I love the detective work involved in establishing name and uniform title access points for music materials. That work gives the music cataloger a really good knowledge of the library’s collection. I think that our music library users don’t really think much about how the catalog records come to be when they’re using the Libraries’ catalog. I still have my badge that OCLC distributed years ago that reads: “Cataloging Is a Public Service.” I love my job though and wouldn’t want to be doing anything else.

**You take an active role in mentoring library students. Can you describe how mentoring is important to you?**

When I first began my job at IU, the Music Librarianship Specialization was only a year old. My colleague, Ralph Papakhian, and I tried to teach music cataloging during two or three sessions of the Seminar in Music Librarianship. That was a miserable failure. We came up with the idea of creating semester-long internships in music cataloging. Students had an option of studying book and score cataloging with Ralph, or sound recording cataloging with me. Some students chose to complete both internships in cataloging. I’m still teaching the cataloging internship and enjoy working one on one with the student in a real work-like situation. I’ve heard from so many former students that the cataloging internship was probably the most valuable experience of their time in library school. It’s fun to come to meetings and see my former interns and how they’re progressing in their various careers. Most of them have stayed in touch with me over the years. During our recent MLA meeting in Philadelphia, a former student of the Music Librarianship program told me that on his first day of a new job as music cataloger, he sat down at his desk and he knew exactly what he was supposed to do. I can’t think of a more rewarding compliment.

**What is your favorite part of being a member of MLA?**

Of course, it’s the people involved in our organization. I think the openness and support that we give each other is almost unparalleled in a professional organization. When I talk with my colleagues here at IU who attend ALA meetings, Association of Law Librarians meetings, etc., they are constantly surprised to hear how quickly we’re able to get help with music cataloging or reference questions and how we manage to know nearly everyone who is currently working as a music librarian on a first name basis. Some of my dearest friends are those colleagues that I’ve met through MLA and its Midwest Chapter, even though I see them only once or twice a year.
Laurie J. Sampsel,
MLA 2011 Program Chair

Having a program theme, Born Digital: A New Frontier for Music Libraries, for the 2011 MLA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, was a new initiative—an experiment of sorts. Because of that, I asked the MLA board’s permission to survey the attendees to get reactions, both positive and negative. Thanks very much to everyone who took the time to share your opinions, comments, and suggestions! The response rate was good; 226 conference attendees took the survey and there were few skipped questions. A total of 474 people registered for the meeting, so that means about 48% responded.

Before I share some specific numbers and responses, I’d like to thank everyone who submitted a program proposal last year. The Program Committee received 52 program proposals, and the acceptance rate was 63.5%. This is significantly more proposals than were submitted for the San Diego meeting, which had 37 total program proposals. Of course the higher number of proposals isn’t necessarily because of the theme, but it does mean that the acceptance rate for Philadelphia had to be lower than San Diego.

Relevance to the program theme was only one of the criteria the Program Committee used when selecting programs, but we also strove for balance and recognized the need to include MLA “standards” like Hot Topics and Best of Chapters. Our main goal, of course, was to offer a high quality program.

So what did you think about having a program theme? The responses indicate overall support for themed programs and the desire to have themes every two to three years. Key statistics include the following: 72.9% attended four or more theme program sessions; 76.6% agreed or strongly agreed that the theme was relevant to them; and 92.3% said they would like to see program themes at least occasionally in the future.

One area with conflicting results was reaction to the local music programs. 71.7% of respondents did not attend either of the two Philly music sessions, but 58% “agree” or “strongly agree” sessions on the local music scene are of interest to them. Responses did not indicate that the theme influenced members’ decision to attend the meeting or their ability to get institutional funding to attend.

To be sure, some members really hate the idea of program themes. Comments included “I was bored digital,” and concerns were expressed that submitted programs were rejected simply because they were “off theme.” Positive comments included, “Thanks for trying this. It was the best MLA program in several years!” and “This particular theme was of great interest to me!”

When asked to suggest possible themes for future conferences, a lot of you made great suggestions. Some of the most common were: collection development, music library as place, managing blended format collections (print, analog, digital, etc.), marketing, know your patron, assessment, and born digital again after a few years have passed. Keeping any conference themes broad and practical was the overall sentiment.

What are a few key things for future program chairs to consider? One survey respondent said, “Theme or no theme, the program quality MUST be higher.” Having themed programs from time to time may be one way to help achieve that goal. One thing that would really help is to announce the theme earlier, a constructive comment made by several respondents. Overall, however, the survey results indicate support for program themes among the membership.

In Recognition
These are the current Corporate Members and Corporate Patrons of MLA. We appreciate their support of MLA!

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The end of a peaceful summer is the heralding call of returning students that shocks us back into reality. Of course, no matter how peaceful or chaotic, development efforts on behalf of the association continue on. Let me first express my sincere gratitude to all of you who gave so generously at our annual meeting in Philadelphia, as well as during the dues renewal cycle this summer. Your continued support of MLA has given us the opportunity to do great things.

Chief among the MLA development projects was the recent announcement that the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has awarded a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to fund a new partnership with the Music Library Association (MLA). The ARL/MLA Diversity and Inclusion Initiative (ARL/MLA DII) seeks to address the need for professional staff in music and performing arts libraries to better reflect evolving demographics of students and faculty in music and performing arts higher education.

Academic research libraries are in need of trained professionals from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups who have the experience and skills to work with music and performing arts collections and scholars. The ARL/MLA DII will provide financial support for master of library and information science education, paid memberships in the American Library Association (ALA) and MLA, mentoring by a music library/information professional from a partner library, paid internships at partner institutions, career skills workshops, and career placement services for the students. The goal of the program is to help create a diverse, well-qualified cadre of new LIS professionals who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address the transformative professional roles in music and performing arts libraries in the 21st century.

This is an important step forward in MLA’s development agenda and fits into an important goal and objective in the association’s strategic planning efforts. The hard work of Mark Puente, ARL’s Director of Diversity Programs, and the five partner institutions that will benefit from this grant—the University at Buffalo, the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, the University of North Texas, the University of California-Los Angeles, and the University of Pittsburgh—to assemble the grant application for submission was a prime example of collaborative work between academic institutions and library organizations.

At this historic moment when MLA has become the U.S. branch of IAML, the attainment of these funds will provide a global experience for recipients of this grant. Pending the implementation of the initiative, the respective boards of ARL and MLA will initiate discussions on how to sustain the program after the three-year grant period has ended.

In other development news, at its September 2011 meeting, the MLA Board had in-depth discussions relating to the new Strategic Plan, how...
Please send citations for items published or premiered in the past calendar year to the column editor, Mac Nelson, via e-mail or USPS mail at the address below. Please follow the citation style employed below. You must be a current MLA member to submit citations.

Mac Nelson
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Books
Huismann, Mary (University of Minnesota)

Moore, Tom, translator (Durham, North Carolina)
http://www.musicwordmedia.net/

Articles
Moore, Tom (Durham, North Carolina)
“Conversation with Rami Levin.” Sonograma 12.

Ochs, Michael (New York)

Ostrove, Geraldine (Library of Congress)

Calendar

14–15 October 2011
Chapter Meetings: Atlantic, NEMLA, NYSO

20–22 October 2011
SEMLA Chapter Meeting

27–30 October 2011
Midwest Chapter Meeting

4 November 2011
Northern California Chapter Meeting

Developing Trends continued . . .

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implementation will be handled and what priorities will be set for the various goals and objectives. Development is crucial to the success of many of the goals in the plan, and in future columns I will outline what we need and what we can do development-wise to sustain not only the plan, but the association as well.

If any member has a question or concern about MLA development initiatives, please do not hesitate to contact me. Now on to fundraising for the annual meeting in Dallas!