Message from the Chair

Three years ago, when the Covid closures and other mayhem were just getting started we decided to go ahead with our MPMLA Annual Meeting virtually. We had planned for that meeting to be held in Norman, OK (home of the University of Oklahoma). In 2021 and 2022 we closed our virtual meetings with, “Next year Norman!” Finally, it is on! Please see the announcement in this issue of Conventional Title. Special thanks to our Program Committee, Woody Colahan, Janice Bunker, and Margaret Corby as well as our man on the ground in Norman, Matt Stock. If you can make it in person or virtually, we would love to see you!

For the past two years I have been part of the MPMLA Membership Committee. We (committee Chair Maria Soliotis, Laura Jacyna, and Woody Colahan) have been contacting music (or music supporting) libraries throughout our region as part of an outreach to see if there may be librarians or other music educators out there who might benefit from joining our chapter or attending our meetings. We are also very interested in learning if there may be some way(s) we may serve them. As I spent time visiting websites and making calls to learn who the library music contact person might be I was amazed how many colleges out there are supporting some kind of musical pursuits. In MLA and even in our chapter we come from a range of budgets, resources, staffing issues, and many other variables to navigate. I sometimes fall into thinking of my home library in terms of what we do not have instead of all we do have. This experience has made me more grateful for our collections but also eager to learn how we might use those resources to serve more people.

Table of Contents

Chapter News.................................2
MPMLA CFP.................................8
Did you know?...............................8
MLA 2022....................................9
MPMLA 2022.................................9
While living in Portland, Oregon, I sang with the ensemble Cantores in Ecclesia for three glorious years. The Conductor and Director was Dean Applegate. I remember when I first began singing with the group we rehearsed and sang weekly Latin services at St. Patrick’s Church in Northwest Portland. When I told him that I lived nearby he said, “Ah, you’re in our parish!” Well, I told him I wasn’t Catholic but that didn’t faze him. He shrugged, “you’re in our neighborhood, our parish.” How delightful! As I think of all the libraries in all the places in our region where people are making music, studying, teaching, and learning music, writing about it, listening to it, podcasting about it, I wonder how we might support, enhance, cause such enterprises to flourish? I hope that we can find ways to let them know that they are in “our parish.”

Organizations like ours have constitutions or bylaws or other official statements clarifying what we do, why we do it, our ideals. So many of the people and groups that are highly effective seem to regularly engage in assessing, rethinking, reimagining their values, mission, and purpose. I want to express my gratitude to our Past Chair, Woody Colahan, for initiating the restarting of our Membership Committee. This experience has changed how I think about so much that I do as a Librarian, Educator, and member of the Mountain-Plains Chapter of MLA.

Lisa Chaufty — University of Utah

Hello from Salt Lake City!

We are approaching the end of the semester and heading into a summer that will include a major collection shift as we turn one of our spaces into a seminar teaching space. Joy!

The space is currently holding part of our MLs, and all of our MTs. Let the shift begin! (After graduation on May 5.)

In other news, the School of Music will be hosting the International Trombone Festival this summer. Thousands of trombonists will converge here from July 12-15, for an exciting four days!

What do you call a documentary about trombone players?

A slide show.
Maria Souliotis – Northeastern State University (OK)

Earlier this semester, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to travel and perform with the Northeastern State University/Community Chorus on our performance tour to Estonia and Latvia. The Choral Program strives to take an international tour every four years or so, and this was my first time touring with the ensemble since I started working here in 2021. It was also my first time traveling abroad, period, so I was super excited to be a part of this touring group!

Our trip aligned with the university’s Spring Break, and we spent two days in Estonia and three days in Latvia. We had a total of 23 travelers, which included some family members of some of the singers. Unfortunately, as everyone had to pay their own way, not all of the students in our choirs were able to travel with us. Yet we still had a good-sized choir to be able to perform all the pieces we had prepared and deliver a program of “Music from the Americas” for our international audiences.

We chose to travel to Estonia and Latvia because these countries have a rich choral culture that is centuries old. We even programmed two pieces by Estonian composer Urmas Sisask, who passed away in December. In Estonia, we visited the Song Festival Grounds in the capital city of Tallinn.

The Estonian Song Festival, which dates back to 1869, takes place here every five years, with the next event scheduled for Summer 2024. The Festival is dedicated to choral music, and choirs from all over the country compete to participate in the festival choir, which can number around 10,000-20,000 singers. About 75,000-100,000 people attend the festival. The stage itself looks like a typical concert bowl from afar, but is actually an amphitheater that houses the festival choir.

While in Tallinn, we performed at the House of the Blackheads, a civic hall that was the home of a guild of craftsmen in the Medieval era. Our audience was modest (about 45 attendees) but among them were the members of a local choir. We held a meet-and-greet with them afterwards, took a group photo, and went to dinner at a local restaurant. A few of the Estonian choristers have participated in the concert choir at past song festivals.
In Latvia we visited Turaida Castle before journeying on to the capital city of Riga.

Here we took in the *art nouveau* architecture (which is everywhere!)

and the Riga Opera House

before our performance at St. John’s Lutheran Cathedral.

We performed to a full house of about 300 attendees in a sacred space with near-perfect acoustics. It truly was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Of course, as a librarian, no trip abroad would be complete without getting to experience local libraries. My first stop in the Tallinn Old Town was the Estonian Children’s Literature Center, which houses a museum, a lending library, and a community center for children and their families.

I enjoyed getting to see children’s books from the past century, along with original art by Edgar Valter, the Estonian Dr. Seuss.
We weren't able to visit the National Library in Latvia, but I got some pictures of it from across the Daugava River.

As this was my first trip abroad, I absolutely loved getting to experience a new culture and meet new people who lead very different lives from my own, but who share the same hopes for living a good life. I was so happy to see the students who traveled in our group have similar experiences and watch their worldview broaden in real time.

Watch clips of our performance at St. John’s on YouTube:

*Gloria Patri: “Surrexit Christus” & “Omnis una” (Urmas Sisask)*
*“Sure On This Shining Night” (Morten Lauridsen)*
*“Come Sunday” (Duke Ellington)*

**Joshua Henry – University of Oklahoma**

On the evening of Friday, April 7, the University of Oklahoma Police Department sent out multiple active shooter notifications to the university community. Thankfully, the incident was a false alarm, meaning no one was physically harmed. Unfortunately, to be more accurate, the incident was an instance of swatting, i.e., a hoax meant to dispatch emergency services to a certain location. Active shooter swatting occurrences in the United States have increased in the last several weeks according to an article from Time Magazine (https://time.com/6269622/hoax-active-shooter-swatting-calls/) So even though no one was physically injured, it was still a traumatic experience for those who had to shelter in place, who at the time did not know it was a hoax. Those of us who were not on campus Friday evening went through a less stressful evening but stressful, nonetheless.

The OU Police Department conducted a thorough search of the section of campus where the shooter was reported to be active. This search took just over an hour, and the area of campus included OU’s main library. As the search was underway, information sent out to the public was sparse, which unfortunately led to the spread of rumors. At one point, false reports were made of a student being shot in the leg while in the library. OU Libraries utilizes
Slack as a form of informal, quick communication. This came in handy during the incident, as various supervisors were able to communicate to all library staff that they had verified the safety of students and staff who worked in the library and closed the library on schedule just before the hoax occurred.

Although I am extremely grateful that OU did not experience a real shooting, I am frustrated and disheartened that active shooter swatting incidents have now become prolific in the United States. Due to the high volume of real shootings in the US, our country has now become a prime target for such hoaxes. I fear this will continue to numb us to the reality of gun violence in the United States, meaning soon enough we might have a “boy who cried wolf” incident(s).

Janice Bunker – Brigham Young University

Hello, friends!

Good News the First: I have been hired to fill Janet Bradford’s vacant position at Brigham Young University Library as a Music and Dance Catalog Librarian, yay! My husband asked whether I really wanted the job since my interviews were on Friday the 13th (of January) and my official start date was April Fools Day. The answer: Yes, I do!

Good News the Second: I will be graduating on May 5 with my Bachelor’s of Music degree in Organ Performance from the University of Utah!

Good News the Third: My house remodel is finished! I have a working kitchen, gorgeous stairs, a lovely living room, and a spankin’ new bathroom.

--Janice Bunker, Library Goddess

Anita Breckbill – University of Nebraska Lincoln

News from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. The Music Library here is in the midst of a temporary move that will give our collections space for the next two years as a new music building is being erected. Our hope was to remain in place and move only once, but the new building, being built immediately to the west of the current building, requires digging underground to put in systems—sewer, HVAC, etc. This digging needs to happen right under what was once the Music Library. So it’s been pretty fun here—figuring out where the collection will go on campus, hiring the moving company, informing the students and faculty that the Music Library must be closed mid-semester, preparing the collections for moving, etc.

No chairs or tables? O.K. with me.

M 2s and M 3s in process.
Laurie Sampsel – University of Colorado Boulder

I worked with American Music Research Center (AMRC) Assistant Director Jessie de la Cruz on an exhibit about Colorado’s State Songs.

In conjunction with that, I wrote a blog post about the songs: “Did you know that Colorado has not one, but two state songs? ‘Where the Columbines Grow’ became the first in 1915, while ‘Rocky Mountain High’ was named the second in 2007. Both have been criticized—primarily due to their lyrics—but each has strengths that deserve a deeper look.”

Take that deeper look by clicking this link: https://www.colorado.edu/amrc/2022/10/17/colorados-state-songs-share-message-still-resonates-today-0

Kristi Austin – formerly Head of Reference and Bibliography, Idaho State University

In early November, 2019, I resigned from my beloved position as music bibliographer, etc., at Idaho State University, to begin a new career as Technical Writer/Editor for the Idaho Cleanup Project, Idaho National Laboratory. I retired from this fairly dismal position on March 16, 2023. I am a very happy camper indeed, and am looking forward to getting reacquainted with my old friends in MPMLA and my old love, music research, though it may take me some time to recover from my previous position. Free time is a luxury I haven’t experienced for many years!

Why did I leave the library? I wanted a job that didn’t require the 100-mile daily commute from Idaho Falls to Pocatello. But I sure have missed my connections with performing artists and librarianship!

Hope to see you all (perhaps virtually) at upcoming MPMLA events.
Who wants to be the next editor of Conventional Title?

Last issue I posed this question, and shockingly, I did not have people clamoring to take on this role! It is a fulfilling gig, so if you want it, please email me myrna_layton@byu.edu of your interest to take on this responsibility!! Thank you!!

MPMLA 2023 CFP

Next year in Norman! (This year!)
May 2023!
May 19/20

Greetings, esteemed humans of MPMLA (and Matt Stock's cats)!


The annual meeting will be May 19-20 (Thursday and Friday) and will take place online. The theme of this year’s meeting is "Next Year in Norman." The website includes a link to register for the meeting, a page with the call for proposals and a link to a submission form, and a page listing the officers we will elect this year with a link to a form to submit nominations.

Please note that meeting proposals should be submitted by April 17, which is also the deadline for officer nominations. We will need to elect a Vice-Chair / Chair-Elect, a Secretary-Treasurer, and a Member-at-Large. Please consider nominating yourself for an office if you would like to become more involved in MPMLA.

We welcome program submissions on musicology, librarianship, or pretty much anything touching on either. Presenters are not required to be MPMLA members, although they must be members to be considered for the "Best of Chapters" nomination. Quality proposals from students are encouraged, as always. The Program Committee will judiciously weigh and consider proposals and announce a program by May 2, which will then be added to the website.

Ellwood Colahan, M.A., M.L.I.S. (he, his) ellwood.colahan@du.edu

Did you know?

About Daft Punk's Thomas Bangalter scoring the music for a ballet? by Myrna Layton

“Mythologies” with choreography by Angelin Preljocaj, premiered in Bordeaux in July 2022, Bangalter’s first major solo effort since Daft Punk disbanded. Bangalter grew up in Paris, where his mother was a ballet dancer and his father was a songwriter and producer.

The soundtrack is available on LP, CD or Digital formats.
https://www.warnerclassics.com/release/mythologies Read more about it (and see video) at: https://www.npr.org/2023/04/07/1167777429/from-daft-punk-to-ballet-thomas-bangalter-makes-full-swing-to-classical
Mountain-Plains chapter does St. Louis by Thomas Bell

For the first time since 2020 the Music Library Association held our annual meeting in person! It was so refreshing to see so many of you. More of our chapter members also attended virtually. Those of us who were there in person had dinner together on the Thursday evening of the conference. In a trattoria that was not a sports bar (rare in the Busch Stadium neighborhood) we enjoyed catching up and relaxing for a spell. Among MPMLA members who were on the program were Woody Colahan (a Tech Hub session on Twine), Myrna Layton (a Poster Session, Forgotten Voices: The Clinger Sisters), and Stephanie Bonjack, Theatre Library Association Lightning Talks: Innovation in Theatre Librarianship. In this joint meeting with the Theatre Library Association it was a special treat to meet and learn from and with our colleagues in this closely related field. We are already looking forward to MLA 2024!

The best place for news about MPMLA 2023 is the website: https://sites.google.com/view/mpmla-2023

Accommodations for this year’s Annual Meeting are at the National Center for Employee Development Conference Center and Hotel in the heart of Norman, OK. NCED operates a transportation shuttle from Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City, and also runs a shuttle to the University of Oklahoma Campus.

A block of rooms at the nightly rate of $129 has been set aside for MPMLA members until April 20.

Dinner Thursday: Join us at 7pm on Thursday, May 18, for dinner at Gabarino’s Homestyle Italian Restaurant. Check out the menu here: https://www.gaberinos.com.

Dinner Friday: Join us on Friday, May 19, for dinner at The Winston. Check out the menu here: https://thewinston.com/

Conference venue: Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma, a National Historic Monument

Friday afternoon we’ll have a demonstration of the Mighty Moller theatre organ.

See you THIS YEAR in Norman!!

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