Message from the Chair

Members of our chapter were much engaged at the annual meeting this year. We carried on the tradition of our Chapter dinner at Nada, an eclectic and warmly atmospheric Mexican restaurant in downtown Cincinnati. It was a busy meeting otherwise for our chapter with many of our members presenting and serving our MLA colleagues in other activities. Stephanie Bonjack presented, Understanding, Incentivizing, and Supporting Openness in Music Librarianship on Challenges and opportunities related to Open Access (OA) and Open Educational Resources (OER) present great opportunities to music librarians and the communities they serve. Margaret Corby led the Alma Music Users Group. Margaret is the MOUG Continuing Education Coordinator (2022-2024) and is the current Coordinator of the Alma Music Users Group (2016-2024). Amy Jackson presented, Do Creative Practitioners and Researchers See Themselves in the Research Paradigm? Amy also served as Moderator for Tech Hub Sessions (Emerging Technologies Committee) which included lightning talks by Woody Colahan (AI for music) and Laura Jacyna, (Figma, xmlsitemaps, and other MLA website development tools). Woody and Laura also presented Information Architecture: Organizing Information in the Digital Landscape and Utilizing Users: An Interactive Card Sorting Session.

Thomas Bell – Kansas State University

MLA 2024 in Cincinnati

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Janice Bunker presented, De-Mystifying Cataloging for Public Service Librarians and Staff, led The MLA Organ Crawl (Cincinnati), and served as Coordinator for the Organ Music Interest Group. Joshua Henry coordinated the Film Music Interest Group and Laurie Sampsel, the American Music Interest Group. I had the pleasure of rehearsing nightly and performing as a backing vocalist with the MLA Rock Band (who have a different name each year). This year we called ourselves “the CinC5” after the legendary MC5 whose founder/guitarist Wayne Kramer had recently passed away.

Music Librarians Between Worlds

Much of our work as Music Librarians serves various kinds of music programs, students, musicians, and researchers. One theme that came up both in conference sessions and conversations was interest and engagement with music resources in libraries by non-music majors and members of the community who are simply interested in music. Is there an academic discipline or hobby or interest more beloved or enjoyed by more people than music? I can’t think of one. What an opportunity we have. Perhaps this is a placemaking moment in our libraries. Placemaking, very briefly, is a deliberate and collaborative approach to creating and cultivating spaces that people love and feel connected to and an environment that is conducive to belonging and well-being.

As technology grows increasingly ubiquitous in our culture(s) and daily lives, I am more intrigued by the notion of people from all walks of life engaging in creative activity, be it artistic, handicraft, or other artisanal enterprise conducive to slowing down and mindfulness. In his 2010 book, United States of Americana, Kurt Reighley explores an active rebirth among young urban Americans finding inspiration in the just such practices from cultural traditions of an earlier time that they are finding deeply rewarding. Over the past year I took a few sewing classes in the Maker Space of our innovation lab. Recently, I finished repairing a work shirt for a friend. It had belonged to his grandfather and was dear to him, but the elbows were destroyed. I have no idea what possessed me to take on this repair job. What I can say is that I enjoyed the learning and the stitch-by-stitch process of doing it. It was meditative and calming. Some of you are lifelong practitioners of things like this. I get it now, wow!
At MLA 2024 there were some wonderful sessions and conversations about AI and other emerging technologies. My library is talking about AI a lot along with The Carpentries and many STEM-related initiatives. As people who care about the Arts and Humanities it can be challenging to avoid feeling overshadowed and overwhelmed in the STEM dominant cultural moment we are in. Ted Gioia recently wrote about how the tech savvy crowd at SXSW Tech Industry Track (conference) in Austin, TX booed while hearing a Tech executive waxing about the future of AI. As the talk went on the crowd booed louder! He points out that these are people who love technology, who are the in-the-know, forward thinking types. Among other things he describes a growing fear and mistrust of technology and its purveyors. (Screen addiction anyone?)

While it is true that technologies can and will be used for ends both constructive and destructive it is difficult to be that circumspect about something with such inestimable potential power. This is important for us and our colleagues as we have opportunity to influence the development of these resources. It may be even more important for us as we interact with the people we serve. We are fortunate that our work engages resources from ancient to contemporary in many formats. We see inherent advantages in the medium related to the needs and objectives of the person using it because we live between the current STEM moment and, well, everything that happened before that. I am glad that libraries can be places for all kinds of people to engage in more varieties of learning, discovery, innovation - human thriving - than ever before. That’s enough for now, I’ve got another sewing project to work on!

Chapter News

Steve Luttman – University of Colorado (emeritus)

Jittapim (Nan) Yamprai, my Best Student Evaah, was recently appointed head of the music library at Northern Illinois University, and I braved the January snow to drive out and help her family make the move. She still teaches a hybrid course for my former university that has her flying to Greeley three times a semester, and guess what we do when she’s done teaching? Why, we sit around the dining room table and catalog scores, of course! This yields no end of comedic moments, because she’s never cataloged professionally, and I stopped in August 2019 upon retirement, thus ending my status as one of the last anti-RDA holdouts. But guess what we’ve learned? RDA proficiency can be faked – even when performing original
cataloging. At least we seem to have succeeded in hoodwinking her cataloging boss . . . here’s hoping our luck holds out on her next visit, when she brings along some NIU Marching Band CDs!

Otherwise I spend a lot of my available time volunteering for the local food bank. It’s a lot like the ill-fated post-retirement gig I had at a local supermarket for a while – filling up shopping carts, delivering to waiting vehicles – except that the bosses are a lot nicer and there’s no pay. Hmm, wonder if there’s a causal relationship there? Oh, and it’s great exercise too, which I really need now that I’m a stingy old man and want to continue to be able to fit into the clothing I already have.

Household news: Oak (the spousal unit) went to truck driving school, got a job with Swift, and quit after a week and a half, realizing that OTR truck driving (the necessary apprenticeship for virtually all 18-wheeler jobs) was just not for him. So he’s back to full-time Thai restaurant cooking and seems happy enough. As I type this, Dustin (the cat) is atop one of my bookshelves, looking out the window, both terrified of and furious with the neighborhood ferals who show up for the daily trash-talk session.

Christine Edwards – University of Central Oklahoma

The most exciting thing that is happening in my job right now is that we are finally pulling the LPs that we have decided to keep and storing them apart from the Gigantic Overwhelming Unwieldy LP Collection of Doom. Unfortunately for Myrna, this has involved many huge spreadsheets (she hates them). The second most exciting thing is that I have finally at long last been trained to withdraw things from our catalog, which is good because I’m going to have to withdraw all the remaining items from the Gigantic Overwhelming Unwieldy LP Collection of Doom. And pack them in many boxes and send them to the Internet Archive. Luckily I have two withdrawing helpers, but it’s still going to take time.

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Christine Edwards – University of Central Oklahoma

Janice Bunker – Brigham Young University

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Doom. Job security! And I really don’t mind, and the Doom isn’t really Doom. I would just like something to go smoothly once in a while.

The most exciting thing happening outside of work is that I have more time to quilt! Here are the two latest projects nearing completion.

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Wade Kotter – Weber State University

I have announced my retirement with my last day being June 30th, 2024. I have enjoyed my membership in MPMLA over the last few years and plan to continue my hymn research during my retirement as well as travel and volunteer work. Thanks to everyone for making me feel welcome.

Maria Souliotis, Vice-Chair – Northeastern State University

Hello MPMLA! I hope you have been having a great semester. If you attended MLA Annual in Cincinnati, I am sorry to have missed you. My institution has no faculty development funds for this year, so hard decisions had to be made.

This Fall, I helped to welcome three new faculty to the Music department. The new professors assumed the duties of teaching Music Appreciation, World Music, and Music History, which meant I had to heighten my outreach efforts to encourage buy-in to library services and instruction sessions. It felt like my first semester on the job all over again, but it turned out well and all three have been great to work with.

I am still involved with the NSU University Community Chorus. In December, we performed the Christmas portions of Handel’s Messiah and I was a featured Alto recitative soloist! In April, we will perform as the opera chorus for the Opera Workshop production of Dido & Aeneas. The Director has chosen a contemporary staging that, based on what I’ve seen so far, will involve flashlight, glow sticks, glow jewelry, and glow paint.
Two of my big projects are two original publications that will appear in Notes later this year! One is a book review and the other is an original article on information literacy for this year’s special issue. The writing process was tricky at times but I am proud of my work. I am grateful to the editors and peer reviewers at Notes for their helpful feedback.

My university is undergoing a lot of changes this year now that we have a new President and Provost. My immediate supervisor resigned for health reasons in December and our Executive Director is retiring in June, so there is a lot of change in leadership in the Library as well. Some of the changes are making my head spin but I am trying my best to help my colleagues adapt.

I am excited to attend our annual chapter meeting at the National Music Museum and I hope to see many of you there!

Myrna Layton – Brigham Young University

I had the opportunity to collaborate on an exhibit, which is presently on display in L. Tom Perry Special Collections in our library. The exhibit is called “Zitkala-Ša: Commemorating Her Art, Life, and Legacy.” Zitkala-Ša, also known as Gertrude Bonnin, was a Native American writer, activist and musician. Well, actually, she started out as a musician, playing the violin and piano as a student at the New England Conservatory, and teaching music at Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. As she grew older and more attuned to the biases she and other natives had to deal with, she became an activist and writer. Those two pursuits were closely related.

When her husband, Raymond, worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and was assigned to the Unitah-Ouray Reservation in Utah, Zitkala-Ša was able to collaborate with BYU music
professor William F. Hanson in writing The Sun Dance Opera. (See more information about this opera here: https://guides.lib.byu.edu/c.php?g=1378810&p=10253780) Zitkala-Ša wrote the libretto, and played native melodies on her violin which Hanson transcribed and developed into the opera’s music. The premiere took place in February 1913, at Orpheus Hall in Vernal, Utah, and the cast included native Utes to perform the dances. The opera was later performed several times at BYU. In 1938, there was a revival at the Broadway Theatre in New York City.

The exhibit was made to coincide with a class on campus that studies the writings of Zitkala-Ša, and also to display the Zitkala-Ša quarter that is a part of American Women’s Quarters released by the US Mint. (see US Mint here)

Lucinda Johnston – University of Alberta

There is not too much to report from the University of Alberta right now. Though I could note that the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (CAML for short!) is hosting a hybrid conference June 12-13 in Montreal as part of the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences' annual Congress. As CAML President, I’m looking forward to the conference and connecting with our members.

Anita Breckbill – University of Nebraska—Lincoln

I haven’t been shy about discussing my upcoming retirement, and I just made it official. My final day at work will be August 16.

I have been spending the past several years planning the move to a new music building, deciding what will be on-site—the “circulating collection”—and what will be stored offsite for
delivery—the “research collection.” The Music Library’s special collections are being transferred to Special Collections/Archives. I have mixed feelings about leaving before the library is installed in what looks to be a lovely place in the new music building, but time moves on and this seems to be a good breaking-off point.

I look back on my 30 or so years in MPMLA with pleasure and with acknowledgement of my fine colleagues, an enriching academic environment, and satisfying meetings. And it was all made more pleasant by working with you! I value what we do in MPMLA and the relationships we have had over the years. It’s a bit breathtaking to think of taking the plunge into retirement, and I’m looking forward to the next part of the adventure.

The next part will begin in September, as I fill a short-term, temporary job at the Boston University School of Theology Library cataloging hymnals in their marvelous hymnal collection. Thanks to MLA-L’s job listings! I’m looking forward to a partial-retirement time in Boston before moving back to Lincoln for a real retirement.

Laura Jacyna – Brandon University

This semester, our Music Library has been hosting a variety of events. In January, we programmed four screenings of orchestra, ballet, and opera performances using the medici.tv library database (the subscription includes public performance rights!). In February, we programmed three Black History Month themed jazz performance screenings, as well as a Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon to edit and improve black composer articles on Wikipedia. This month, we hosted a workshop on performance anxiety management strategies, with a vocal professor and counsellor therapist providing their expertise. We also organized and hosted a monthly Lunchtime Student Concert Series, which was very well attended.

Last semester we hosted an open study hall session at the end of the semester, when the Music Library usually has limited hours, with background music (courtesy of medici.tv) and treats! It was a success, and we are planning on doing another very soon as our semester comes to a close. A presentation about our events is in the works for IAML, and a version will hopefully be presented at our next Chapter Meeting in South Dakota!

Sadie Webster – Brigham Young University

Happy Spring!

I’ve been keeping busy performing with my local community band, Wasatch Winds. I’ve also been busy in the practice room! While I’ve spent most of my life in various jazz bands, my improvising skills are subpar. So I’ve taken up private lessons again with a favorite former professor and mentor. Right now, I’m working on patterns over bebop scales and not seeing notes on the page is making my brain sweat and
my heart race! Practicing improvising has exposed many of my weaknesses as a musician. At first this was discouraging, but of course with time I’m getting better. If anyone is interested, my instructor has many of his teaching methods included in his book, *The Real Jazz Pedagogy Book: How to Build a Superior Jazz Ensemble* by Ray Smith. The book is focused on ensembles, but there’s a fantastic section for improvising soloists. Ray also has accompanying YouTube videos on his channel that are supplemental material to his book [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ).

The music composition style of famous film-score composer, Hans Zimmer, has been described as “romantic post-minimalism” and “neoclassical post-minimalism,” and he has been heralded as “the heir to Philip Glass.” You can read more about Hans Zimmer and how he artfully weaves his minimalistic inspired music into audio-visual space in the hit movie, *Interstellar*, in this article by Laurentiu Beldean [here](https://www.bulletintransilvania.ro/2023/16/01/00076-bell.jpg).

https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pa.2023.16.65.1.1

**MPMLA 2024**

**Call for Papers**

Greetings, MPMLA-ers!

The annual meeting for the Mountain Plains Chapter will be May 17-18 (Friday and Saturday) and will take place in Vermillion, South Dakota.

This is your official Call for Papers!! The CFP deadline will be April 5.

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 April 16.

Papers can be 20 min. or 40 min. Please specify length on your proposal.

We are able to offer two first-time presenter travel grants, $250 each. If you would like to be considered for these grants, please provide a
statement of interest with your program proposal.

Send your paper proposals to:

Myrna Layton, M.A., M.L.I.S., D.Litt.& Phil (she, her) myrna_layton@byu.edu

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

For more information on lodging, transportation, and the conference, visit the website here:
https://sites.google.com/view/mpmla2024/home

MLA 2025 is a virtual conference. The 2025 dates for the conference have not been posted yet, but more information can be found on MLA’s website here:
https://conferences.wp.musiclibraryassoc.org/home/registration/

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