Abstract: After 11 years of preparation, the first installment of the 4th edition of the Basic Music Library: Essential Scores and Sound Recordings, covering jazz and popular music, was published (Chicago: American Library Association, 2017). The volume’s editor, Edward Komara, will begin his talk by starting with the previous three editions, the preliminary work for the fourth edition by Daniel Boomhower, and the recruitment of the editorial team in late 2005. Drawing from his working files, Komara will convey the principles for the fourth edition, show the design of the spreadsheet of the data that served as the source of citations, convey the working relationship with the publisher the American Library Association, and call for recognition of the chapter contributors (including several members of NYSO).

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[Slide 1]

Good afternoon! This talk is in part to celebrate the publication of a first part of a new edition of a key library resource, in part (for new members) what it is, and in part (for long-active) member what changes and updates have been made to it.

What I am talking about, of course is:

[Slide 2]

The Basic Music Library, published by the American Library Association. Since its first edition in 1978, it has been prepared by members of the Music Library Association, with editorships by MLA members Pauline Bayne (1978, and with R. Michael Fling in 1983) and Elizabeth Davis (1997). The purpose of the Basic Music Library has been to serve as “a selection and buying guide” for libraries - general and specialist, public and private - for setting priorities in the acquisition of music repertory. The first two editions listed scores and books about music, but the third edition dropped the citations for book, and added sound recordings for not only western classical music, but also for jazz, popular music, western folk music, and world music. (note: Daniel Zager served as chair of the MLA Resource Sharing and Collection Development Committee, which was charged with updating towards the third edition.)

[Slide 3]

Work on the fourth edition began in February 2006, at MLA Memphis, where the task force on Resources for Music Libraries (Daniel Boomhower, chair) delivered its final report regarding a possible fourth edition of A Basic Music Library (BML). At the same meeting, Boomhower
announced at a plenary session that contact has been made with ALA regarding such a new edition. He is also appointed editor of that work to come. That summer of 2006, Dan assembled his editorial team: Amanda Maple of Penn State for classical music, Liza Vick then of Harvard for world music, and me for popular music. We gathered first in Chicago in Fall 2006 to meet with ALA officers and to plan the plenary session on canonicity, which was held at the next MLA meeting, in 2007 in Pittsburgh.

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I should explain something about canonicity and why it seemed a topic of concern in 2006. Canonicity is the potential of a list of works for adoption as a required and regulatory for a group (whether culture or society). The 1992 Republican convention included canonicity as a part of the culture war it engendered. For that reason, canon and canonicity has acquired something of a bad reputation. Meanwhile, with the 2nd and especially 3rd editions of A Basic Music Library, those were used by some librarians (including me) to assess some or all of the library collections they supervise. So in that way, BML was taking on in part the function of a canon, although Elizabeth Davis in the third edition was very careful to say that “the concept of ‘basic’ does not imply a need to own all the works cited in this book.” At the plenary session, I spoke out in favor of canons, that each of them may reflect positively the values of a group or culture. However, at 10,000 items, the 3rd edition of the Basic Music Library was too large to be a manageable canon, and it was serving many different groups and cultures - and the 4th edition was going to be equal in size, if the coverage was going to redistributed among the 3 sections of music (classical, popular, and world).

Having addressed the principle of canon and canonicity for BML4, the editorial team could proceed with laying down guidelines, and preparing sample citations and entries.

Set up [Slide 5]

One set of guidelines was set down by Liza Vick and me in an email exchange on March 13, 2008:

1. Folk is a social music, vs. Popular is a commercial music
2. Folk: ceremonial music, vs Popular: theatrical music
3. Folk: unnamed informal groups, vs. Popular: named formal groups
4. Folk: documented in field recordings (often live) for study by non-interventionist producer, vs. Popular: documented in recordings (often studio) for sale by a creator-producer

And as an impish fifth point:
5. Folk: disregarded by the Grammys for selling too few records, vs. Popular: disregarded by the American Folklife Center (Library of Congress) for selling too many records! (Someone like Ralph Stanley of the Stanley Brothers, who received awards from both, was an exception)
During several talks and email threads in 2007, the editorial board determined as the chief differences from the third edition:

1. In the third edition, scores and recordings were listed in separate chapters. In the fourth edition, they were integrated so that recordings of a work were paired with the notated composition or, if popular music or world music, with the published notated transcription. (I’ll show an example of this a little later.)
2. Incorporation of audio-visual media, particularly DVDs, into the content.
3. Improved balance of coverage among the three types of music, and among the countries of origin.
4. Notably, for the Popular Music section, rap received its own chapter instead of being combined with R&B and Soul (in the third edition).

Into 2008, contributors were recruited and signed.

Here are the ones for the Popular music chapters

Music to 1900 - Mark McKnight
Blues - William Anderson, Edward Komara
Jazz - William Anderson, Richard McRae, Anders Griffen
Mainstream Popular and New Age - Grover Baker, Susannah Cleveland
Country and Western - Gary Boye
Rock - Thomas Bell, Joe C. Clark
Rhythm and Blues and Soul - Terry Simpkins and Jeffrey Wanser
Rap and Hip-Hop - Andrew Leach
Gospel Music - Brenda Nelson-Strauss
Children’s Music - Susannah Cleveland
Holidays etc - Edward Komara

Bill Anderson and Mark McKnight were retained from the third edition. Big shout-out to Rick McRae for contributing to the jazz chapter. Anders Griffen was a cataloger in Manhattan at the time, although he has since gone free-lance. Mainstream Pop was handled jointly by Grover Baker and Susannah Cleveland, and Susannah really helped me by volunteering to take on the Children’s Music chapter, too. (An inspired choice, as through this project she was the one who got me hooked on the Rockabye series of lullaby treatments of rock songs: the Ramones volume is a guilty pleasure of mine.) Two other chapters were handled jointly: Thomas Bell and Joe C. Clark for rock, and Terry Simpkins and Jeffrey Wanser for R&B and Soul. Andy Leach was still at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College, Chicago, and had just published an article on rap for Notes, so he was a logical choice for the rap chapter. Brenda
Nelson-Strauss was one of the last recruits I made, heading the Archives of African American Music and Culture, who accepted the invitation to compile the Gospel chapter.

During the spring and summer of 2008, Bill Anderson generously provided the citations for popular music and world music that were used in BML3 and updated since. Doing so reduced the amount of time to prepare the data for BML4, and enabled a submission deadline for all three sections to ALA in September 2009 (about 18 months).

Remembering back to the editorial board’s meeting with ALA in Chicago in the fall of 2006, the BML4 was planned as a single volume, and this is important - the manuscript was to be delivered not in the form of finished pages or even of edited citation, but rather as field data on spreadsheets, from which ALA would derive the citations. This is what one of the spreadsheets looked like:

The first three columns were for section, chapter, and sub-heading. The citations proper began with the fourth column, with various or single performer, dates of performer, item title and publication, years of creation and year of publication, and additional performers (in the case of anthologies). The last four columns were optional: the one for ratings was included in print, the other three were not.

The advantages would be a reduction of preparation time by contributors and editors, and the spreadsheets would be retained as legacy data for future editions. When the editorial team met with ALA for its second time, during MLA Chicago in February 2008, ALA officers were confident that the citations could and would be derived from the data it had received from us 5 months previously. The disadvantage was that the software was not fully tested to derive citations, especially for those for CDs and other digital media.

Which I suspect is what happened to ALA, and so what brought about the delays that prevented the whole work from appearing in late 2010 or early 2011, and instead allowed only one part of
three to appear in early 2017. During 2010, ALA tried a first attempt at creating citations from the data by using EndNote. That, as I recall, resulted in citations that were, let’s put it lightly, wrong for all three sections. A second attempt was done in 2011, this time to better results. By this time, two whole years had gone by, and so Dan Boomhower arranged some time for the contributors to add new data to keep the contents up-to-date; my contributos and I worked on this update from fall 2011 through winter 2012. A year passed, and while I was spending the spring semester of 2013 on sabbatical, I received, checked and returned the first set of galley proofs for the Popular Music section. By the way, the plan was still for BML4 to be one volume, and so the galley proofs for Liza Vick was sent in Spring 2014, which she checked and returned that summer. Only portions of the classical citations were given over to Amanda Maple for evaluation in 2015.

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Owing to these difficulties and to the long delay, the decision was made by the Spring of 2016 to publish BML4 in three volumes, starting first with the Popular Music that I had had ready in 2013.

So, I received a second set of proofs in August/September 2016. By this point in time, it had been 3.5 years since the first set of galley proofs, and 7 years since the first submission of data, and 10 since the inception of the editorial board. So I realized that new entries were going to have to added for these artists who since 2007 have emerged as superstars (but who were under the radar for my contributors and me through the beginning of 2013: Beyonce as a solo artists (2 CDs as of 2007), Adele (0 in 2007), Justin Timberlake (2 CDs in 2007), Taylor Swift (0 as of 2007), Amy Winehouse (not yet deceased and legendary), Justin Bieber (not yet active in 2007), and the White Stripes (all CDs released, but had stayed under the radar). So I consulted my contributors, and added these superstars to the last submission. Also overlooked, oddly, were the humorists, especially Tom Lehrer, and the team Flanders and Swann, Grover Baker, Susannah Cleveland and I added them to the Mainstream Pop section.

[Slide 12]

How long has this volume been delayed: there have been 4 promotions (Mark McKnight, Edward Komara, Susannah Cleveland, Joe C. Clark), 6 job changes (Anders Griffen, Grover Baker, Daniel Boomhower (twice), Joe C. Clark, Andrew Leach, Liza Vick), 1 retirement/death (William Anderson).
Indexing was done in fall 2016, and also some consolidation of some duplicate entries, such as:

p. 103 – Dion and Dion and the Belmonts may be consolidated into one headword for Dion and the Belmonts
p.125 – Flatt and Scruggs and Flatt, Lester may be consolidated into one headword for Flatt, Lester, and Scruggs, Earl
p.144 – Graves, Blind Roosevelt and Graves, Roosevelt may be consolidated into one headword for Graves, Blind Roosevelt
p.150 – Hammer, M.C. and Hammer, MC may be consolidated into one headword for Hammer, M.C. [MC]

Finally the Popular Music volume of BML4 appeared on February 27 (although an advance copy was seen floating about the exhibit hall at MLA Orlando).

All right! Let’s look at some pages.


Yes, there really is a CD with this title. The citation format for sound recordings is that as that followed for the third edition.

210. The Bessie Smith entry


This is an example that contains official releases, top-notch collector’s, and cheap boxes, with songbooks. Bessie Smith recorded exclusively for Columbia Records, which during the LP and CD eras has re-released her performances from the surviving sources and collector’s copies. However, the Sony/Columbia series is marred with some shrillness. Some collectors prefer the
independent collected reissue mastered by John R.T. Davies and released on Frog Records. As for JSP Records, I have found with its other releases that it is indiscriminate in what it has lifted from other labels (Document, among others) - for that reason, I haven't liked JSP Records. Bill Anderson, on the other hand, as the chief co-compiler of the jazz and blues chapters, loved citing those boxes from JSP and Proper, despite being aware of the ethics (or lack of them).

[Slide 16]

1044. - 1058. The Jazz and Film sub-section.

For this section, we tried pairing the soundtrack CD with the actual movie on DVD. I am particularly pleased with how this section turned out.

[Slide 17]

Country music entries starting with 1453. (Some entries in all of the jazz/pop chapters are going to be outdated or out of print, or fall out, then back, into print. Country music was one of those whose reissues were mostly out of print by the time the contributors began work in 2008 - big thanks to Gary Boye for carrying out this Country chapter unperturbed by the lack of availability of some artists’ best work.)

[Slide 18]

1802. Rolling Stones

Good example of one recording act's legacy broken up into several chapter sub-sections. This portion cites only the act’s years with Decca/London Records (1963-1970). For the rest of their output, one has to consult several other sections in the chronologically arranged chapter for Rock.

[closing Slide 19]

The Rest of BML4: Liza Vick has received the proofs for World Music, and diacritics threaten to push the publication date from Winter to Spring 2018. As for Classical Music, as of Winter 2015, “only a handful” of chapters were received, and the final push towards publication may occur only after the World Music book appears.

BML5: In February 2016, a Future of BML task force was formed (Liza Vick was/is a member).

End of talk
Slide one:


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Slide two:

Timeline:

2006 February - The task force on Resources for Music Libraries (Daniel Boomhower, chair) delivers its final report at MLA Memphis regarding a possible fourth edition of *A Basic Music Library* (BML). At the same meeting, Boomhower announces at a plenary session that contact has been made with ALA regarding such a new edition. He is also appointed editor of that work to come.

2006 Summer - Boomhower assembles the editorial team: Amanda Maple (Classical Music), Liza Vick (World Music) and Edward Komara (Jazz/Popular Music).

2006 October - Editorial team meets ALA in Chicago

2007 February - At MLA Pittsburgh, Boomhower moderates the plenary session on canonicity, at which Komara addresses the issue of relevance of canon to the Basic Music Library.

2007 - Laying of principles, infrastructure, and contributor guidelines
2008 Winter including MLA Chicago - recruitment of contributors; second meeting of editorial team with ALA

2008 March through 2009 September - contracts with contributors, provision of BML3 data (mostly from William Anderson) to contributors, updating and additions to data towards BML4

2009 September - original version of all three sections submitted to ALA

2010 - ALA tries its first attempt at formulating the citations from the submitted data by using EndNote

2011 October/November through 2012 Winter - Checking of the first set of citations, with updates allowed from contributors, towards what was a second version of all three sections

2013 February - first set of galley proofs for Popular Music section received, checked and returned

2014 Spring - first set of galley proofs for World Music section received, checked and returned in summer 2014

Circa 2016 Spring - Decision is made to split the single volume of BML4 into 3 separate publications per section

2016 August/September - second and final set of galley proofs for Popular Music section received, checked, updated sparingly, and returned

2016 November - Indexing


Slide three:

Contributors:
Music to 1900 - Mark McKnight
Blues - William Anderson, Edward Komara
Jazz - William Anderson, Richard McRae, Anders Griffen
Mainstream Popular and New Age - Grover Baker, Susannah Cleveland
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Gospel Music - Brenda Nelson-Strauss
Children’s Music - Susannah Cleveland
Holidays etc - Edward Komara
Slide 4: Transitions

4 promotions: Mark McKnight, Edward Komara, Susannah Cleveland, Joe C. Clark

6 job changes: Anders Griffen, Grover Baker, Daniel Boomhower (twice), Joe C. Clark, Andrew Leach, Liza Vick

1 retirement/death: William Anderson

Slide 5: What’s Next

The Rest of BML4: Liza Vick has received the proofs for World Music, and diacritics threaten to push the publication date from Winter to Spring 2018. As for Classical Music, as of Winter 2015, “only a handful” of chapters were received, and the final push towards publication may occur only after the World Music book appears.

BML5: In February 2016, a Future of BML task force was formed (Liza Vick was/is a member).

Slide 6: Last additions of 2017 superstars who were barely known in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status in 2007:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justin Bieber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adele</td>
<td>No CDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift</td>
<td>No CDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beyonce (as solo artist)</td>
<td>2 CDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Timberlake</td>
<td>2 CDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Winehouse</td>
<td>2 CDs, still alive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Stripes</td>
<td>All CDs released</td>
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