2018 CONFERENCE BREAKOUT SESSION REVIEW: STRATEGIES FOR “GOING IT ALONE” AS THE ONLY FULL-TIME LIBRARIAN IN YOUR ORCHESTRA
Johanna Groh, The Colburn School

Session Presenters:
Chris Blackmon, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg
Kim Hartquist, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra
Sarah Bowman Peterson, Grand Rapids Symphony

At some point in your career as a performance librarian, you have most likely worked solo. Maybe your second librarian has accepted another position and you are in the hiring process, maybe you hire assistants or student workers only when needed or maybe you are simply a complete rock star and hold down the fort as the only librarian for your organization. Whatever the case, you’re doing it on your own and everything needs to get done. How do you, as one person, do it all? In a discussion led by Chris Blackmon, Kim Hartquist and Sarah Bowman Peterson, this question was addressed and the session covered, but was not limited to, hiring assistants, budgeting and wearing many, many hats.

The discussion began with each panelist giving some background on their library’s setup and describing how they manage their work alone. Sarah told the group about her tiered system of prioritizing work and the frustrations of being limited by time. As a solo librarian, the nitty-gritty of a piece of music cannot always be attended to: errata have to go unfixed and poorly printed parts must go undarkened, but because we care about the smoothness of any given performance (and are all slightly neurotic), parts prepared to the best of our abilities will always be on the stand. The three panelists agreed that their saving grace is the availability of assistance, whether in the form of orchestra members acting as part-markers or having the ability to hire assistance when needed. It can’t be stressed enough that this assistance must be advocated and budgeted for by the librarian. The conversation concerning assistance digressed into details of the hiring process, primarily what to look for in a trustworthy assistant. Assistance can look different for each library. In the case of Chris’ library, the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg is willing to hire assistance in the form of musicians who are unable to play, but due to contractual obligations cannot be let go from the ensemble. Kim has members from each string section who are paid a salary to mark parts. Sarah has a part-time library assistant for ten hours a week. The availability of assistance, however, adds to your workload the task of determining which assignments are appropriate for each worker, and sometimes reassessing work completed by the assistant.

Kim broached the topic of librarians becoming victims of their own industriousness, which resonated strongly with everyone in the crowd. As organizations grow and programming and projects are expanded, managements often expect the library to keep up with the growing workload, sometimes without considering additional assistance. As professional helpers, we have a tendency to say yes without a second thought, only later realizing the consequences of agreeing to the added responsibilities. Having agreed to and completed the task, we don’t give ourselves credit where credit is due and then say yes to the next request, continuing the cycle. The expectation moving forward, then, is that, solo or not, you and your library can make anything happen. While we usually can, it’s important to remember that you are only one person and can’t sustain that pace of work indefinitely.

Sarah explained that she documents her work in great detail (date, start and end times, project description, task list, etc.), so that she can show her administration what it actually takes to make a performance or requested assignment happen. Unfortunately, this step takes additional time, but is very beneficial to breaking down tasks into an understandable language for non-library personnel. (“What do you mean you can’t program based on a YouTube link? What do you mean you can’t find the sheet music? Who knew there was more to the process?” Your librarian, that’s who knew, because we are wizards!) Along similar lines, Chris will hire coverage when he will be away from the library, such as for a MOLA conference. The requests that come in during his leave can wait (really, they can!), but this in turn means additional work has piled up once he returns to the office. Aside from allowing you to take leave as needed, hiring coverage shows your administration that a constant presence in the library is necessary, solidifying the importance of the position within any ensemble or institution.

Organizations can be resistant to change, including changes in staffing, new delivery methods of materials, and changes in protocol from librarian to librarian. Working in a solo library often means having to be the most flexible member of the organization, rolling with the punches, never finishing your daily to-do list and constant education of patrons, all while maintaining your professional integrity and your own sense of self. At the end of the day, you are the only librarian, and you’re the boss.

If you have any questions or would like further advice from any of the panelists, feel free to contact them directly or email the MOLA Administrator, who can put you in touch with them.

A REFLECTION ON LIBRARIANSHIP AT THE FLORIDA ORCHESTRA
Adam Berkowitz, Intern, The Florida Orchestra

As a Master of Library and Information Sciences (MLIS) student at the University of South Florida, I have actively pursued opportunities for learning and networking in the field of music librarianship. My first exposure to music librarianship was at Florida Atlantic University, where I managed the choral music library. Since graduating with my Master of Arts in music history and literature, I have been exposed to music collections and resources in academic libraries, performance
libraries, archives and museums. I completed a summer fellowship at the Rutgers University Libraries Institute of Jazz Studies, after which I contacted Ella Fredrickson, principal librarian of The Florida Orchestra, in order to learn more about the field of performance librarianship. As a result of this meeting, it was agreed that I would be allowed to work in the music library as an unpaid intern. The following is a reflection of my experience at a performance library from the point of view of an MLIS student and serves as a comparison of academic and performance music librarianship.

Shelving units housing the permanent collection in TFO’s library.

One of the first lessons I learned while working in The Florida Orchestra’s library was the importance of information organization. The library’s collection of sheet music is divided into three categories, each organized differently: Western art concert sheet music, popular concert sheet music and Western art concert scores. The Western art concert sheet music is arranged alphabetically by the composer’s last name, and within that, by the selection’s title. Each piece of music is also given a catalog number, which is labeled on the container to make it easily identifiable on the shelf. The popular concert sheet music, on the other hand, is arranged in alphabetical order by the title of the work. Although this collection of sheet music is stored in the same housing as the Western art concert sheet music, the pieces of music are not given catalog numbers. This collection is stored separately from the Western art concert sheet music which makes it more easily distinguishable. Finally, the Western art concert scores are arranged in alphabetical order by the selection’s last name, and then by the title of the selection. The scores are not stored in any sort of housing and do not have assigned catalog numbers.

A primary concern for any library is tracking and maintaining its inventory. At TFO, the parts for a piece of music are numbered in score order. Parts are then distributed in a number of ways including by mail, in person at the library and in person at the rehearsal venue. All music removed from the library must be returned following the concerts at which the music is performed. Selections with an incomplete collection of parts are not returned to the shelves until the missing parts are returned. Only then can the piece be reintegrated into the library.

Much of the organization methodology employed by TFO music library has a great deal in common with the practices employed in academic music libraries, such as assigning collections based on content, utilizing a system of access codes to assist in search and retrieval, employing strict collection development and circulation policies and organizing the collections in alphabetical order. The main difference between the two types of libraries is the audience for whom the collections are organized. An academic music library’s patrons are typically the university’s students, faculty and any researchers who want to use the library’s resources. Conversely, a performance library’s patrons are the musicians who perform in the ensembles served by the library. As such, the nature of how information is accessed is different. In many academic libraries, any patron may search the library’s catalog of resources, and through the use of a system of call numbers (i.e. Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress), the patron may immediately access the needed resource. However, in a performance library, access to the resources is limited to the librarian. A performance library’s system of organization is set up to provide the most convenient level of access to the librarian and does not prioritize access for the musicians. This is because the performance library’s purpose is not education and research. It is meant to serve as a repository of materials to be used in a performance, which requires that access be restricted to the librarians who are responsible for ensuring that the music is properly prepared, delivered to the correct musicians and then promptly returned to the library. The academic music librarian serves as a guide, while the performance music librarian acts as a gatekeeper.

The requirements for the preparation of music are different for each concert. The primary factors are the preferences of the conductor and concertmaster and the nature of the performance and venue. Even if the sheet music remains the same, it may need to be edited or markings may need to be changed. For example, bowings must be decided upon and then written into the music. Sections of music may be cut from, or added to, the performance. In some cases, the distribution of music may depend on the specific musician listed on the personnel roster. In order to accommodate these unique specifications, a great deal of time and effort is focused on the preparation of the parts.
process, prior to distributing the parts to the musicians. Such a system would not be conducive to an environment in which musicians may come to the library and retrieve music at their leisure. Musicians would be at risk of taking music which has not been properly prepared, or may not be the appropriate part for that particular performance. However, most performance libraries allow musicians to submit a written request to the library for their music to be prepared and completed in advance, or for photocopies to be made for practice purposes.

Another difference between performance libraries and academic libraries is the manner in which music is cataloged. An academic library must strictly adhere to standardized rules for procuring, recording and rendering metadata. These rules are outlined by a number of different cataloging standards, such as OCLC, DACS, EAD, RDA and others. The standards make it so that a patron who located a resource at one library can go to another library, utilize the same search methods and still access the same resource. It also allows for copy cataloging, a method of cataloging a new item by copying the metadata already recorded for that item by another library. This practice keeps the metadata for a specific item consistent, while expeditig the cataloging process. More importantly, though, these cataloging standards use controlled vocabularies and access points to ensure that information retrieval is intuitive, quick and convenient for anyone who enters the library.

The cataloging methods employed in a performance library, on the other hand, do not require the same level of scrutiny. A performance library's catalog is geared towards the needs of the librarian as opposed to patrons, and as such, is not concerned with controlled vocabularies and access points. A performance librarian primarily focuses on the names of the composers, arrangers, orchestrators, compositions and publishers, along with instrumentation, date of publication and whether an errata list is available. Academic libraries include details which would be unnecessary in performance libraries, such as the number of pages, the size of the sheet music, alternate titles, language, media format, OCLC number, ISBN number and Library of Congress call number, among other pieces of metadata. Furthermore, because the performance library's catalog is meant mainly for the use of the few librarians employed by the library, formats for rendering metadata such as MARC and Dublin Core are unnecessary during the cataloging process.

Another concern for TFO music library is that of materials preservation. The primary method for preserving materials is limiting the number of alterations done to the music during the preparation process. Bowings and other markings are written into the parts, but sometimes may be removed later, due to various circumstances. Extraneous markings must also be erased after music is returned. Additionally, musicians will write and erase as needed over the course of rehearsing and performing. Each of these physical alterations degrades the materials. The physical handling of the sheet music also slowly damages the materials. The causes of this damage can include bodily oils transferring from a person's hands to the sheet music, light damage occurring from making photocopies and accidental rips or tears, which can occur at any point from when the music is removed from the shelves to when the music is replaced. Furthermore, the materials used to house the sheet music need to be taken into consideration. At TFO music library, large envelopes are used to contain each set of parts. The envelopes provide an inexpensive and somewhat effective means for storing the collections of sheet music; however, from an archival standpoint, they are far from ideal. Ultimately, a performance library must operate within its budget, and the materials gathered for library use must remain cost effective.

In an academic library, acid-free boxes would be used for storing sheet music for extended periods of time, as sheet music in an academic library is most often utilized for research, as opposed to performance. Damage incurred as a result of physical handling is assessed periodically, and the librarian in charge of collection development determines whether or not it is feasible to replace anything that can no longer be used. As such, the obstacles for materials preservation are more numerous in a performance library than in an academic music library, especially when considering the differences in budgetary needs and resources.

Without this experience at TFO music library, I would have been ill-prepared to attempt to serve as a professional performance librarian. While the skills gained in academic and performance music libraries are transferable, the institutions themselves are not by any means the same. Therefore, as a final note, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation for the experience, imparted wisdom, advice and newly-developed skills as a result of the careful guidance I received from the librarians of The Florida Orchestra.

TRANSITIONS
Melissa Robason, The Metropolitan Opera

The Lexington Philharmonic welcomes Chase Miller as their new librarian. Chase grew up in Stanford, Kentucky, and was first introduced to music when he began piano lessons at the age of three. When he was young he wanted to be a marine biologist, but once he started playing the clarinet at the age of six, he knew that was what he wanted to do with his life. Chase received his bachelor's degree in clarinet performance from the University of Kentucky and his master's degree in clarinet performance from the University of Arizona. Chase is a Teaching Artist for the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra and also serves as the Education Coordinator for the Lexington Philharmonic. He was a band librarian throughout college and was offered the position of librarian at the Lexington Philharmonic based on this experience. Best of luck with your new duties, Chase, and welcome to MOLA!