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# MONEY FOR THE ASKING FUNDRAISING IN MUSIC LIBRARIES

by

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## *Chapter One*

# GETTING STARTED WITH FUNDRAISING

### INITIAL STEPS

With shrinking budgets and dwindling resources, not many libraries have the luxury of ignoring fundraising. Academic libraries, in particular, have put increasing emphasis on fundraising in recent years to supplement their regular operating budgets and to support special projects. A survey of the Association of Research Libraries member libraries in 2006 indicated that 92 percent of those libraries responding had a formal library development program.<sup>1</sup> Music librarians may find that their annual budgets are insufficient and that obtaining external funding is the only way to accomplish their goals. In challenging economic times, supplemental income through donations helps to buffer a library from budgetary reductions. Yet the percentage of music librarians who actively conduct fundraising work appears to be relatively small. The *MLA Survey of Personnel Characteristics, 2009 Report and Statistical Summary* asked music librarians about the broader category of “Marketing/Sales/Fundraising” in their jobs. Of the 264 Music Library Association (MLA) members responding to this question, 30 members list this area as a primary responsibility, 56 members regard it as a secondary area, and 178 members have no responsibility in this kind of work.<sup>2</sup> Those music libraries with fundraising initiatives already in place are probably benefiting from their efforts. Other music libraries, however, may participate only peripherally in institutional fundraising or development activities.<sup>3</sup> The music library staff may hear about major donations bestowed upon other libraries within their university and at music libraries around the country. They wonder if their music library should attempt to enter this enticing world of fundraising, but where to begin?

Fundraising is not a course taught frequently in library school.<sup>4</sup> It is a subject that librarians—especially administrators—often learn on the job out of necessity. Fundraising is commonly considered to be an art because it requires not only a practical knowledge of the field but also a keen intuition about human nature along with the ability to respond properly in delicate situations. The current scholarly literature contains a wide array of books and articles on library fundraising, although few resources specifically target music libraries.<sup>5</sup> In addition, increasing numbers of resources on the internet discuss general library fundraising.<sup>6</sup> With demanding workloads, however, most music librarians lack the time to dig through these materials. Fundraising is one discipline that is easy to postpone. This book aims to assist those music librarians who find themselves in this position. The perspective of this book is that of a music librarian rather than a professional fundraiser. The academic music library is the primary audience but public library fundraising activities will also be described along the way. Chapters will cover some of the basic concepts of fundraising, offer practical advice, and point out situations specific to music libraries.<sup>7</sup>

## FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

The first step to getting started with fundraising is to survey the financial landscape of your library. Here are a few questions to consider:

- Does the music library receive the funding it needs for materials and operational expenses?
- Is the library's physical space in a condition that properly serves its users?
- Does the collection sufficiently support the music curriculum and the needs of the university community?
- Is there enough staffing to accomplish the work?
- Are there special projects that need funding?

Some might question why librarians would contemplate raising money, especially in support of essential services. After all, institutional and library administrators should provide the necessary funding for a library. It is their job to obtain this money.<sup>8</sup> By all means, investigate these channels first. Fundraising may not be necessary if you receive a sufficient budget to accomplish your library's needs. However, if you are like most music librarians, adequate funding is not always available to your library, and fundraising is an option at least to consider.

## INITIATION OF FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

The next task in the preparation for fundraising is to determine if initiating fundraising activities is a possibility for the music library. Examine the organizational structure of the development office at your institution, keeping in mind that fundraising is a team effort that requires cooperation among many workers and departments. Do not be timid and give up before you ask, assuming that the answer will be negative. This could be a sensitive area and you might be told to shy away, especially if the music library is not a high priority in the university's fundraising mission. On the other hand, your supervisor may be open to your request, especially if you bring forward a specific project with a budget, tangible benefits, and possible donors. Such a proposal will generate more consideration than a vague notion about adding money to a library budget. With a realistic project, your participation in fundraising could be greeted with enthusiasm by the library's upper administration and the development office, both of which might welcome your assistance in their common quest to raise funds for the library. If you are told that librarians do not conduct fundraising work, ask if the development staff could raise the money for you, or perhaps, allow you to assist in the work. Of course, every music librarian's situation will be different, but a well-considered and assertive request could yield a positive response.

## POLITICAL AWARENESS

As you move forward with your initial development efforts, be cautious about the politics involved with fundraising at your institution. Any time there are people fighting over money—with their jobs depending upon the outcome—the inner politics and competition can be in-

tense. The development field has even been compared to a poorly functioning work family: “Whether management is centralized, decentralized, or a hybrid model, all of these structures have a human element, so by their very nature they are at least somewhat dysfunctional.”<sup>9</sup> Be forewarned, and always make sure to go through the proper channels within the university’s organizational structure. Keep in mind that fundraising in many academic institutions is set up as a remarkably hierarchical system. For example, an individual with a vast giving potential becomes the “property” of a development office prospect manager. Only that manager has the right to approach the donor. If you wish to contact this potential donor, you must receive clearance first from that person’s prospect manager. Such stringent rules exist for a reason. The institution must present a united and coordinated front when approaching donors. When in doubt, send any fundraising questions to your supervisor or development representative. Do not walk naively into a situation that could be potentially damaging to you and your library. Anyone who wants to play the fundraising game must follow the proper channels of authority. The development world is sometimes unfamiliar to those of us in the library profession, so proceed with caution if you are allowed to continue at all.

#### **ROLE OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

The ultimate direction in library fundraising for most music libraries will likely be provided by the library director (or dean), who establishes the library mission and sets fundraising goals.<sup>10</sup> The library director has a broad perspective of fundraising possibilities and participates in the larger fundraising efforts on campus that the institution is undertaking or planning. As Samuel T. Huang, associate dean for external relations at the University of Arizona Libraries, points out, “The library dean plays a crucial leadership role in library development and fundraising. It is the dean’s responsibility to be an advocate for the library at the deans’ level and to convince the president and provost, the central gifts office and key volunteers to redirect or expand their interest. Nothing is as detrimental to library development as having key university administrators who are indifferent to the library’s role and students’ needs.”<sup>11</sup> The library director also approves specific fundraising activities within the library system. One hopes that the library mission statement will encourage librarians to play an active part in development work and that job descriptions reflect this time commitment. The library administration should recognize the vital contribution that librarians’ subject expertise plays in fundraising and communicate any development initiatives that might have an impact upon library staff.<sup>12</sup>

### **WORKING WITH A DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AND MUSIC DEPARTMENT**

#### **DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS**

Most likely, an academic institution will have a development staff member whose responsibilities include the music library. This person may be on the university library staff, a member of an institution’s central development office, or a combination of both. Your connection with this

individual will be crucial to the success of your fundraising efforts. You will want to form a robust symbiotic relationship. The librarian needs donors to fund new projects while the development person looks for endeavors to fund and the subject expertise to support them. In an ideal situation, development staff and music librarians form strong professional and personal bonds as they work toward a common goal. Often this is the case, but there also exist inherent differences between these two job positions. Music librarians are responsible for providing and making accessible music appropriate to their music department and the institution's community. Those librarians in public services work closely with faculty and students. Music librarians possess a master's degree in library science, and they usually have one or more degrees in music. Raising money is not ordinarily in their job descriptions and it is often the last thing on their minds. Library development officers, on the other hand, rarely have a library science degree.<sup>13</sup> They normally possess an undergraduate or graduate degree. Area of study varies widely among development professionals, ranging from science and engineering to the arts and humanities. Many people come from sales and marketing, customer service, or other outreach-focused backgrounds to perform frontline development work. Development personnel that work in the area of planned giving often have legal backgrounds. Some development staff obtain certification after five years of professional fundraising experience through CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive) but this credential is not a requirement in the field.<sup>14</sup> Newly hired library development staff may lack in-depth knowledge of libraries and will depend upon library staff to learn subtleties of the library profession. Because they work in administrative positions, development staff members tend to have much less contact with students and faculty than library staff.

Because of these differences, there can be misunderstandings and even resentment between the two professions. Some librarians feel that any degree of perceived salesmanship on their part is repugnant to their training as librarians. They may prefer to ignore fundraising altogether. Librarians may wonder why the university administration cannot find funding for the library so that they can be left alone to conduct their librarian responsibilities. They may also resent the higher salary that development officers often earn. Development staff members, on the other hand, can become frustrated with librarians who hesitate or refuse to help them. They ask how library fundraising can take place effectively without assistance from the library staff. Development staff may also feel misunderstood by some librarians who fail to appreciate the high level of skills required for professional development work.

In spite of these inherent disparities and potential conflicts, library development professionals actually share many of the traits found in librarians. Both employees are service-oriented individuals who want to improve peoples' lives through their work. Some of them land their jobs after studying initially for another career path. On-the-job training is how both professionals often fine-tune their crafts. Development officers and music librarians belong to professional organizations through which members stay in close touch with each other.<sup>15</sup> Development officers in academic libraries can join the Academic Library Advancement and Development Network (ALADN), while academic development professionals often join the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) or the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

For music librarians, the Music Library Association (MLA) is their primary organization. They may also participate in the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML) as well as other organizations, such as the American Library Association (ALA), Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC), and other music-related and library associations. Music librarians should recognize the similarities they share with their development colleagues and view them as allies with whom they can combine forces. Victoria Steele, as the head of the Department of Special Collections at the University of Southern California Libraries, summarizes this connection:

The key to a successful library fundraising program is a synergistic relationship between development professionals and librarians. Development staff cannot succeed without the creative input of librarians, and librarians cannot achieve their vision without the practical assistance of talented fundraisers. When either side of the partnership is weak, results are mediocre, and the program can actually *lose* money. Though some workplace relationships can survive imbalances, development is not one of them.<sup>16</sup>

Development officers are usually glad to find a librarian who understands the development field and who is willing to identify potential donors, write clear proposals, and work to bring money into the library. After all, the librarian will be helping the development staff do its job. When both parties trust each other and understand their roles, this partnership can form a potent combination and result in successful fundraising that will benefit the library. The music librarian should continually educate the development staff about the library, its needs, and how it serves its constituency. When development representatives talk to potential donors, they should be able to speak intelligently about the music library and be cognizant of the ways in which a donor's interests could match those of the library. Unfortunately, development workers tend to be fairly mobile and they move frequently from job to job. Staff turnover in the development office makes it challenging for the music librarian who must establish working relationships all over again with each newly hired person.

#### **MUSIC DEPARTMENT**

Once your institution gives you the go-ahead to begin fundraising and you recognize the complexity of fundraising politics within your institution, you are ready for the next challenge: working with the music department and their development personnel. The political minefields can be even more precarious and explosive in this environment. What could be at stake here is the music librarian's relationship with the music department, an affiliation that is critical for the proper functioning of a music library. After all, the primary mission of an academic music library is to support the curriculum and needs of the university's music department. The music librarian must stay in close touch with the current and future directions of the department. Under the right conditions, music departments view the music library staff as "one of their own" in a camaraderie that reflects their common knowledge and love of music. There is no stronger ally on campus for a music library than its music department.