KEEPING TIME
AN INTRODUCTION TO ARCHIVAL BEST PRACTICES FOR MUSIC LIBRARIANS

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Chapter One

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHIVES, ARCHIVAL PRACTICE, AND ARCHIVAL THEORY

Although records of the first music libraries did not appear until the mid-eighteenth century in France, this manual begins with a broad overview of the history of archives in order to provide insight into the development of archival practice and theory over time. These practices and principles form the basis for the handling of archival material in music libraries or music archives, as described in the ensuing chapters.

ANTIQUITY

The practice of record keeping dates back to antiquity. Archeological discoveries in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Far East have uncovered rooms in administrative buildings containing significant numbers of clay tablets. It has been suggested that these repository-like rooms are evidence that these civilizations preserved records for long-term access and use.[1] Archeologists have also found what appear to be archival documents recorded on papyrus, leather, and wooden writing boards in Egypt as well as archival documents in China recorded on bones and tortoise shells. As in modern times, the types of records typically created and preserved by these ancient civilizations included laws, records of administrative actions, financial records, land surveys, tax records, military records, and "notarial" records or documentation between businesses and individuals. Although there have been clear indications that organized music existed during ancient civilizations in the Middle East and Egypt, no written music has survived from this period.[2]

The concept of archives that we know today began in a rather different form with the Greeks nearly twenty-five centuries ago. The word **archive** derives from the Greek word "*archeion* and denoted a building or place occupied by a city's magistracies (*archai*); later it and its plural *archeia* (**archives**) came to apply not only to particular buildings but also to the objects, including documents, housed within those buildings."[3] In AD 405, the Greeks built the Matroon, one of the first buildings designed specifically to hold public records, such as laws and decrees, created by the Boule, or governing council, which would be accessible to public officials. This structure, which ultimately became a centralized location for housing records, and the need to provide access to these records led to the creation of an early system of records management. The use and management of a centrally located records repository was unique for its time, as record-keeping practices and archives outside of Greece remained largely decentralized.

In Rome, "properly functioning archival establishments" may have appeared in the fifth and sixth centuries with the implementation of a code of laws that required bureaucratic administrations to invoke the laws.[4] Around this period the Catholic Church also emerged as a leading

figure for archival practices. The church collected and preserved daybooks, correspondence, minutes of synods (or church council meetings), and memoranda documenting its religious activities.[5] During the early stages of the Middle Ages, larger archives disappeared, primarily because of the decrease of written documentation. Small household archives started to reappear around the eighth century as the amount of documentation increased, and by the twelfth century, churches preserved documents that accounted for property rights.[6]

MIDDLE AGES

The birth of modern archival practices first appeared in England at the end of the twelfth century when Archbishop Hubert Walter, chief justicier of Richard I (1157–99), determined the different types of records to be used by the king's court.[7] Even with this formalization of document types and uses, the potential value of documents was not immediately recognized by the aristocracy and tradesmen accustomed to the oral tradition of spoken agreement, ritual, or the symbolic exchange of gifts and artifacts. Records created within this oral climate were often stored in chests located throughout the kingdom with little, if any, means of retrieval. Alphabetical indexes, which facilitated retrieval, began to emerge only by the end of Edward I's reign (1272–1307). Archival practices continued to be confined to legal and administrative functions for the next three hundred years and only began permeating the cultural sphere during the second half of the seventeenth century.

FRENCH REVOLUTION

As archives were becoming culturally and symbolically important during the decades leading up to the mid-eighteenth century, lending libraries also began to appear throughout Europe and the United States. Early lending libraries included one in Edinburgh (established 1725), the Philadelphia Library Company (established 1731), and the lending library in Paris (established 1761). About the same time, a small number of music lending libraries also began to appear in France. Like the general lending libraries, these music lending libraries charged a nominal subscription fee for which subscribers could borrow a work from a catalog for a specified period of time.[8] The appearance of these music lending libraries have been credited with helping to disseminate major works that were published in small numbers.[9]

The French Revolution (1789–93) is widely recognized as the event that initiated the adoption of centralized and publicly accessible archives. Shortly following the outset of the Revolution in 1789, the revolutionaries destroyed a significant number of historical documents of the ancien régime. While largely regarded as a symbolic act, the destruction of the ancien régime's private archive, supporting only the privileged classes, gave rise to the people's archive. Quick to recognize the power of archives to protect the rights and responsibilities of individuals, the National Assembly founded the Archives Nationales, or the French National Archives, in

1789. In 1794, the Legislative Assembly issued a decree (7 Messidor II) that officially centralized the archives in France, placing them under the authority of the Archives Nationales.[10] In an effort to increase government transparency, subsequent decrees and laws would legally require archives to hold, preserve, and allow public access to government records.

The core principles of archival science emerged in the wake of the French Revolution. The principles of provenance and original order were passed into law in Naples, Prussia, Holland, and France. While subtle differences in the understanding of provenance appear between North American and some European archives, the principle of provenance holds that the records of one person or organization are kept together and maintained as a discreet collection within the archive. The collective entity of these records is sometimes referred to as the *fonds*, a term that continues to be widely used throughout Europe, Australia, and Canada, though archivists in the United States give preference to the word `collection`. Through the early twentieth century, the archival profession's understanding of the *fonds* gave rise to the phrase *respect des fonds*, which refers to the principle of original order. This principle states that the order in which materials arrive at the archives is the order in which they should be maintained. This principle replaced the arbitrary system of `arrangement` by subject. The principles of `provenance` and `original order` would become entrenched in the archival profession following the 1898 publication of *Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven (Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives)* by Samuel Muller, Johan Adriaan Feith, and Robert Fruin.[11] These Dutch archivists used these principles as the building blocks for their theory of archival arrangement and description, which quickly gained wide acceptance across the European archival community.

Sir Hilary Jenkinson (1882–1961), the deputy keeper of the Public Records Office in England, was one of the strongest proponents of the *Manual.* Like Muller, Feith, and Fruin, Jenkinson believed that the archivist served as a "keeper" of archives and should strive to preserve and store documents in the exact order in which the archives received them. For Jenkinson, the arrangement and appraisal (or removal) of records destroyed the inherent authority, or `evidential value`, of the collection ascribed to them by the records' creator and their provenance. In his writings, Jenkinson was referring to the methods used in archives dealing primarily in collections received from business, industry, and government agencies. In these instances, the principles of provenance and original order would have been a logical extension of the organizations' pre-existing recordkeeping structures.

Not everyone agreed with these ideas. Following World War I, Swedish archivist Carl Weibull (1881–1962) and German archivist Adolf Brenneke (1875–1946) questioned the practicality of the principle of provenance, arguing it may hinder access to records rather than improve it.[12] With his *Management of Archives* (1965), Theodore R. Schellenberg (1903–1970) advocated the research use of archives, a use whose needs contradicted the profession's founding principles.[13]

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Schellenberg's views heavily influenced the founding values of the US National Archives, which were developed through the archival profession's close relationship to the history profession and, to a lesser extent, the American Library Association. Compared to other countries, the founding of the US National Archives occurred quite late. In England, the Public Records Act (1838) led to the creation of the Public Records Office in the 1850s, while in Canada, the Public Archives of Canada was established in 1872 (although the archives would not have its own building until 1906 nor any power granted by official archival legislation until 1912).

It was roughly during this same period, at the end of the nineteenth century, that music libraries began to appear in the United States.[14] In 1870, the Widener Library at Harvard University began collecting music materials. This was soon followed by the Harvard Music Department collection, which began in 1898. Despite these early collection activities, the two collections would not be combined until the founding of the Loeb Music Library in 1956.[15] Meanwhile, in 1888, the New York Public Library (then known as the Lenox Library) acquired the private music library collection of Joseph Drexel;[16] the Newberry Library in Chicago initiated its music collection with the purchase of the private music library of Pio Resse in 1889;[17] the Boston Public Library started its music collection with the acquisition of the Allen A. Brown Collection in 1894; and the Library of Congress established its music division in 1897.

In the United States, archives were not considered a national priority during the country's first 150 years; as a result—and unlike its European contemporaries—the United States had no centralized location to store and manage archival materials. Throughout the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, public records and private papers were collected and managed primarily by collectors and, eventually, local historical societies, libraries, and even churches. The National Archives was finally formed in 1934 when Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the National Archives Act. This legislation made the National Archives an independent government body in the executive branch, giving it full control and supervision of "all archives or records belonging to the Government of the United States (legislative, executive, judicial, and other)."[18] Roosevelt appointed Robert D. W. Connor as the first national archivist responsible for the duties and development of the National Archives.

The complex structure of the US government coupled with the sudden influx of documents created by the two world wars led the National Archives to develop the "record group" concept, distinct from the European *fonds*. A group of prominent archivists from the National Archives defined the "record group" as "a major archival unit established somewhat arbitrarily with due regard to the principle of provenance and to the desirability of making the unit of convenient size and character for the work of arrangement and description and for the publication of inventories."[19] This concept allowed the archives a degree of flexibility in organizing records of the supervising department and all its requisite subunits as distinct record groups. For example, the Department of the Interior consists of several different units, one of which is the

Office of Indian Affairs. According to the European *fonds*, all the records of the Department of Interior would constitute a single *fonds* and would have to be managed together, as a single entity. By using the concept of a "record group," the National Archives could acquire the records of the Office of Indian Affairs separate from the other offices and without having to manage the entire Department's body of records as one large collection.[20] By using the "records group" concept, the National Archives justified its collection of the records of the offices and units as they became available.

The massive influx of records produced from the world wars also resulted in the emergence of unique archival practices in the United States. In order to be able to store and manage all the records, Schellenberg questioned the practice advocated by Jenkinson of retaining every document created in the process of doing business or conducting government affairs. Schellenberg also believed that some collections have no perceptible order when they arrive at the archives (a common characteristic of **personal collections** or cultural archival collections) and that a greater degree of accessibility could be achieved through careful arrangement and description after the records arrived at the archives.

The information boom of the 1950s and the 1960s also resulted in music libraries expanding their collections by acquiring more books, scores, and other materials of research and cultural value.[21] While there is little unified documentation regarding the history of archives within music libraries, it is also about this time that some music libraries, such as those at Yale and Harvard, formally established an archives directly associated with the music library.[22] By the 1970s and early 1980s, the growth of academic and music libraries stalled because of economic hardships, leading many institutions to reassess their collections and collection policies. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, music libraries began again to experience a substantial amount of collection growth, with many institutions building new facilities for their music library.[23]

Since the 1980s, archivists have devoted a considerable amount of attention to the creation of archival standards for arranging and describing collections. The work previously done in this area occurred in archival silos across the globe. In the United States, archival description was rooted in the *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules* (AACR) and its subsequent edition, AACR2. AACR and AACR2, however, focus on bibliographic descriptive elements and are limited in their ability to adequately represent the descriptive elements of archival objects. In part due to this deficiency, archivists in Great Britain created the *Manual for Archival Description* (MAD), and Canadian archivists developed the *Rules of Archival Description* (RAD). Unlike AACR2, these two documents offered a better means of standardizing the data elements used to describe archival materials. American archivists later developed *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts* (APPM). By the mid-1990s, however, the profession realized this manual needed to be revised to accommodate the emergence of *Encoded Archival Description* (EAD), a machine-readable encoding standard for finding aids, which helped further standardize description across Europe and Canada. To meet this new need, archivists in the United States developed *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS). Although DACS continues to receive