
CAREERS IN MUSIC LIBRARIES IV

Edited by

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And, finally, to you, our readers, thank you for all the ways you have inspired us to undertake an update that reflects the vibrancy of our profession. We hope you find value in these reflections and that they help you craft your career in a meaningful and gratifying way.

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INTRODUCTION

MISTI SHAW

For the past thirty years, volumes of MLA's *Careers in Music Librarianship* have provided invaluable tools for current and future music librarians to evaluate professional choices and plan their careers. In the previous volume of 2013, *Reality and Reinvention*, Joe Clark and Susannah Cleveland aimed to provide specific advice and guidance, what they referred to as a "self-help of music librarianship," while also retaining the valuable foundational information provided in earlier editions (Tatian, 1990; Elliot and Blair, 2004). And—because work on the volume occurred during a severe economic downturn—Clark and Cleveland encouraged their contributors to be honest about the issues they were addressing, and to paint a realistic (and nevertheless vibrant) picture of music librarianship.

Because much of that practical content from 2013 remains applicable today, Susannah and I were keen to oversee an update to the volume, asking those contributors to revisit their essays and revise and retool them for today's readers, something that makes this volume different than earlier installments that were each completely new. And yet we considered how those who work in music libraries continue to see an ever-changing landscape of opportunities and challenges; we quickly concluded that we needed to solicit new content as well, including tools and advice to help library workers tackle today's challenges. For example, many in music libraries increasingly find themselves wearing more hats than ever before, with responsibilities in multiple subject areas outside of music. The global pandemic's uncertain effect on the economy and hiring market have many of us—from students and emerging professionals to mid-career and beyond—thinking creatively about learning new skills or applying existing skills in a new environment. Most notably, the music library profession has grappled with the increasingly urgent imperative to be more inclusive. Fortunately, our contributors were up to the task.

In this volume, it comes as no surprise that flexibility and adaptability continue to be themes, reminding us that a willingness to innovate can help ensure a relevant and exciting career. Another theme we see is the continued importance of the Music Library Association (MLA) in the career trajectory, nourishment, and support of those who work in music libraries. MLA has value to its members, as evidenced by its frequent mentions in this volume about how members of MLA collectively aide and guide many a professional through difficult stages on the career path.

Most of all, it is inclusivity that thematically weaves its way throughout the volume. Notably, the title has changed to *Careers in Music Libraries*, as its content covers far more than traditional professional librarianship. Our contributors touch upon a wide array of satisfying and fulfilling music library work, expanding beyond the profile of librarians to include paraprofessional and support staff, archivists, musicians looking to apply their skills in the library field, and liaisons whose disciplines go beyond the confines of music. Students and emerging professionals receive even more guidance about how to network in music library settings, seek a mentor, and participate in conferences. Contributors also give advice on how we can be more inclusive in our work, both in recruitment and hiring of people from underrepresented backgrounds, as well as leading change for improvements in universal design and public service offerings. We are thrilled with the welcoming tone our contributors have fostered, and we hope their passion for music library work inspires you.

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MUSIC LIBRARY ENVIRONMENTS AND POSITIONS TYPES

MISTI SHAW

WHAT MUSIC LIBRARY WORK ENTAILS

Within academic institutions, public libraries, and archives, music library workers tackle a diverse range of responsibilities. These workers have varying titles and classifications—librarians, paraprofessionals, staff, specialists—but they all tackle music-specific work in library settings. For anyone planning to pursue a career in music libraries, it can be difficult to determine what personal attributes and traits best correspond with a particular facet of music library work. Often, students enrolled in library-degree programs are urged to decide what their area of specialty will be, which can be especially intimidating in the early stages of a library training program when there is still much to be learned. Musicians seeking to supplement their income with library work might wonder about which library jobs they will find most rewarding. Understanding the variety of work responsibilities and contributions of those who work in music libraries, coupled with recommendations from music librarians about the personal attributes that flourish in each field of librarianship, can help those new to the profession make choices about education and employment that will result in a situation that will resonate with them personally.

MUSIC LIBRARY SETTINGS

Music library work takes place in a variety of settings. Many public libraries—especially those in populous cities—contain collections of music in various formats. The music collections of public libraries vary widely and depend on a variety of factors, most often the unique needs of the surrounding community. But what all public music libraries have in common is that their patron base is diverse, comprised of people who come from a variety of cultural, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Academic music libraries may be found in colleges, universities, and conservatories. Most music librarians work in academic institutions of higher education; in the 2016 MLA Personnel Characteristics survey, eighty-five percent of respondents reported working in academic or conservatory settings.¹ In university settings, some music collections are integrated within a larger collection of a main campus library. In these environments, music collections might be housed in disparate locations; music books might be shelved along with the other books in the library, the sound recordings and DVDs might be housed in a general media collection, and the scores might be shelved in their own area. Some academic libraries have all performing arts resources located in one area, including music, dance, and theatre. Often, a music and performing arts librarian oversees these materials and provides reference services for them.

1. Jonathan Saucedo and Joe Clark, “MLA Personnel Characteristics 2016: Continuity, Change, and Concerns,” *Notes* 74, no. 3 (March 2018): 363.

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SELECTED RESOURCES

LISA SHIOTA

This annotated list of books, articles, and web pages provides practical resources for current and future music library specialists. Entries include works on music librarianship, the education of music library specialists, and job duties. Where applicable, resources that supply information in a broader context outside of music have been included. This list was compiled from searching Library Literature, Music Index, Music Periodicals Database, and OCLC's WorldCat, and includes resources created by the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, and the Music Library Association. For the sake of currency, only resources published since 2009 are included. Exceptions include seminal works in the field and topics on which no further writing has since been published.

GENERAL RESOURCES ON MUSIC LIBRARIANSHIP

Bonjack, Stephanie. "Music Librarianship." In *Mastering Subject Specialties: Practical Advice from the Field*, Karen Sobel, ed., 49–55. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2016.

A concise summary of the profession and general descriptions of requirements, work-places, career paths, and resources.

Bradley, Carol June. *American Music Librarianship: A Research and Information Guide*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

The definitive resource for writings that chronicle the history of music librarianship in the United States. Significant sections on music libraries and librarians.

Bryant, E.T., and Guy A. Marco. *Music Librarianship: A Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1985.

Ground-breaking for its time. A comprehensive study on music librarianship. Dated, but still worth reading, especially for the section on administering a library.

Clark, Joe C. "Job Trends in Music Librarianship: A Nine-Year Analysis of the Music Library Association's Job List." *Notes* 69, no. 1 (September 2012): 44–58.

A study of professional and non-professional job postings on the Music Library Association Job Placement Service Job Openings page (<https://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/networking/>).

———. "What Employers Want: Entry-Level Qualifications for Music Librarians." *Notes* 69, no. 3 (March 2013): 472–493.

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