Keeping Scores: Music Preservation at the University of Oregon Library — by Normandy Helmer

Music, though it may have charms to soothe a savage beast, is guaranteed to provide headaches for the preservation staff in libraries. Regardless of format, when materials are added to a research collection, they are expected to be used and remain useful for decades: durability and utility are essential. The preservation of recordings — whether 78-rpm disks, wax cylinders, reel-to-reel tapes, or compact disks — is an enormous challenge and a field unto itself. Transcribed music, although it does not require elaborate or expensive equipment for use, still affords considerable challenges to those charged with ensuring it a long and serviceable life.

The preservation of scores, whether new acquisitions needing binding or existing materials needing repair, provides daily challenges to the Preservation Department at the University of Oregon Library. Founded in 1887, the University’s School of Music is one of the oldest in the west and is highly regarded for its music education program. Performance is an important activity at the school, which also provides the venue for the annual Bach Festival. In support of the school, the Music Services Department of the University Library maintains a collection including thousands of scores, reference materials, and commercial and original recordings in media ranging from Edison cylinders to CDs. Each month, over a hundred new scores are added to the collection, and approximately 20 items from the collection are refurbished. This represents about five percent of the items treated by preservation staff, but it occupies 15% of their time. What makes music scores problematic?

Because scores are used in performance, musicians must be able to read the text while playing an instrument. Scores for ensembles, such as a quartet, have subsidiary parts for each instrument, which need to be restored with the score but then distributed for performance; loss of any part renders the entire score unplayable. Scores are frequently printed on low quality paper with insufficient margin on unusual page sizes and formats and bound in cheap comb-style bindings that tend to break and fray the paper.

A music score is like a cookbook: it provides the instructions that enable a musician to recreate a composition. And, like a cookbook, a score is most Music Score Preservation — continued on page 2
useful when its pages remain flat and readable while it is sitting open. (Think of a cellist, holding a bow in one hand, fingering the strings with the other, and relying on the music to sit obediently open on the music stand.) Openability seems a simple concern. There are several flat-opening binding methods, including wire spirals and plastic combs, which are inexpensive and widely available through printers and quick-copy shops. This is a great method for publishers, as it is fast, cheap, and works just fine for personal use. For libraries, it’s an abomination. The binding mechanism seldom survives use by more than a few readers, and to replace it, the perforations must be eliminated to establish a paper edge strong enough to support a replacement binding. The holes quickly become tattered, and without sufficient margin, the pages have to be reformatted on a photocopier before they can be rebound, or a replacement has to be purchased. (And, of course, the replacement will also be spiral-bound.) Music publishers seldom provide an inner margin wide enough to withstand trimming.

Paper quality is another concern. Librarians know that traditional methods employed by commercial paper mills since the 1870s leave acidic residue within the paper, which causes it to lose resiliency, and eventually turn brown and crumble away. Librarians know this because they have had to tackle the problem of having a hundred years of historical record rot before their eyes. They have lobbied hard to ensure that alkaline paper is available, and to educate publishers to choose permanent paper and “publish for the ages.” Yet music publishers, particular European publishing houses, continue to use poor quality paper with a short life expectancy.

Finally, the advent of the photocopier and the word-processor have inspired and enabled many composers to self-publish. While these publications are often creative and offer access to compositions that would once have gone unnoticed, the ingenuity of the publication design deters normal treatment. In a personal collection, inexpensive or unusual publishing methods are not a problem. But for a research collection, where materials are heavily used and are intended to be kept for decades if not centuries, these problems can be enormous. The problems detailed above provide plenty of complications for the preservation of newly published scores.

For old scores at UO, add a century of heavy-handed repairs using damaging adhesive tapes, old acidic bindings which further embrittle their contents, and patrons who really use the materials they borrow and annotate them freely to assist in performance. Keeping a score collection alive in a research library is no simple matter.

Over the last few years the UO Library Preservation Department has adopted score treatment methods that are efficient, economical and effective. Binding, photocopying and pocket construction are performed by student assistants. Repairs and treatment evaluations are performed by staff. The head technician consults frequently with the music librarian, who selects materials for repair and makes decisions on the cost-efficiency of replacement versus repair. With these procedures in place, Preservation is able to keep current with binding of newly purchased scores, reducing a long-held backlog of unbound gift scores, and making slow headway through renovation of the existing collection. These are the basic binding techniques:

1. The Library purchases prefabricated pamphlet binders in sizes selected according to music publishers’ apparent preferences. One style has a crease through which single-signature items can be stapled. The other style comes with cloth wings attached to a rigid spine, and is used for perfect-bound scores and those with multiple signatures. The wings are glued onto the covers of the scores.
2. Spiral and comb bindings are removed. The text is
Archival Products Offers Alternatives to Traditional Binders — by Janice Comer

In 1986, Archival Products designed and patented a binder for the prevention of damage to pamphlets and music.

Traditional binders offered by library suppliers at that time contained a pre-gummed cloth flange that put the encased materials in direct contact with the adhesive. The cloth flange created fracture points, discoloration and caused restricted opening.

Archival Products designed a pamphlet binder to prevent contact of the adhesive and pamphlet, and incorporated a flexible, soft scored spine to enable sewing and stapling through the fold.

A pressure sensitive cloth strip was added to the exterior. The strip wraps around the spine to conceal and retain the sewing and stapling giving an aesthetically pleasing appearance to volumes on the shelf.

Since the conception and fruition of the original patented spine wrap (SW) pamphlet/music binder, Archival Products has added additional styles to meet the diverse needs of our customers. The quick-bind (QB) pamphlet/music binder designed as an alternative structure retains the strength and durability of our original SW pamphlet binder and the same quality materials but omits the more expensive pressure-sensitive spine wrap. Both the SW and QB pamphlet binders are constructed of C-1 grade book cloth, acid-neutral polyvinyl acetate adhesives and .050 high-density acrylic-coated board which guards against moisture, abrasion and soiling.

A third affordable alternative is the archival folder constructed of acrylic-coated .058 grey and white board with a grey C-cloth spine. The design is the same as the QB pamphlet binder. The difference is the use of a less dense board and C-grade book cloth.

The SW pamphlet/music binder, the QB pamphlet/music binder and the archival folder are available with an optional .020 clear polyester front at the same price as the board front. All Archival Products preservation enclosures are hand assembled using our custom-made gauges for accuracy of size. The gauges can accommodate almost all custom-size orders.

Come see us at the
ACRL 7th National Conference
March 29 - April 1, 1995
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Archival Products — Booth #57
Pamphlet Binding At Idaho State Library — by Julia Franklin

The Idaho State Library recently began using Archival Products’ Pamphlet Binders with the clear fronts. Having the pamphlet covers visible makes it easier for patrons to find them on the shelves, and eliminates the need to put a title label on the binder. To secure a pamphlet, I sew it into the binder using a double figure eight. The binder’s pre-glued spine wrap covers the knot and the string preventing the loosening of the stitching by use and reshelving.

As a Technical Services worker at Idaho State Library, my responsibilities include the processing of books, audio cassettes, pamphlets and other media going out to the main circulation desk. I introduced the double figure eight method of stitching to the Idaho State Library, after a training session at Boise State University Library, Technical Services Department. The double figure eight securely holds the pamphlet in place in the binder and requires only one knot.

The procedure for sewing pamphlets into the binders is as follows:

Materials: 1 darning needle, 1 piece of four cord binder’s thread, 5 times the length of the pamphlet, an Archival Products’ Pamphlet Binder with a clear front which is large enough to fit without exposing any of the pamphlet.

Procedure: Thread the needle, match the ends, and tie a knot. Leave approximately 2 inches on the end of the thread, below the knot to tie off the stitching. Place the binder flat on the work surface with the spine wrap on the outside folding it back out of the way of the needle. Open the pamphlet to its center. Lay the pamphlet flat on the cover, so the front cover of the pamphlet is visible through the clear board of the pamphlet binder. Draw the threaded needle from the outside of the pamphlet binder, at the center A of the white panel on the cover, (see drawing below, left) through the center of the pamphlet, to the inside.

Push the needle down at point B from the inside of the pamphlet to the outside of the binder. Remove the staple on the top half of the pamphlet. (This keeps the pages secure and aligned until you absolutely have to remove the top staple.) Draw the needle from the outside of the binder at point C to the inside of the pamphlet. Check for any loose threads. When the thread is doubled the threads can be pulled unevenly which can cause a loop to stick up in the middle of the pamphlet. By tightening both threads and checking for loops, this problem can be eliminated.

Push the needle back through the hole at point B. Draw the needle from the outside to the inside of the binder at point D. Remove the bottom staple. Push the needle down at point E, taking the stitch from the inside to the outside of the pamphlet. Check again for any looped threads and pull them into place. Then draw the needle back inside at point D. Take the last stitch to the outside at point A. Check one last time for any looped or loose threads, making sure all threads are tight. Turn the binder over so that the white panel is facing up. Tie the thread ends together in a hard knot. Remove the paper backing from the spine wrap exposing the sticky adhesive. Press it over the stitches and knot. The pamphlet is now ready for any remaining processing.

Since starting at Idaho State Library two years ago, I have been using this method for all of the pamphlet binding. While I have seen some of the old binders come back for rebinding, I have not seen any of the double figure eights come back for mending. Perhaps this is because they are fairly new, but having the stitches and knots hidden and unavailable for untanging is one main reason for their reliability. If you have questions or problems when trying this technique, please contact me.

Julia Franklin, Technical Services Department, Idaho State Library, 325 W State St, Boise, ID 83702, Internet Address: Jfrank@ISL.ID.State.US
Music Score Preservation — continued from page 2

carefully reproduced on a photocopier which allows replacement of the damaged margin and the opportunity to create signatures from single sheets when the single page measures 8 1/2 x 11 inches or less. To prevent copyright infringement, the original text is promptly destroyed. Photocopy reformatting has the added benefit of ensuring adequate paper quality. If the text is very thick, the comb binding may be retained and reinforced. A cloth spine is adhered to the front and back covers. A laminate cover is applied to front and back covers, lapped over the edges of the cloth. The protection of the cloth covering and the distribution of stress beyond the perforations extend the life of the comb binding. (This method is also used for computer manuals which are expected to be heavily photocopied but rapidly superseded.)

3. Parts are housed in pockets crafted from cut-down Tyvek™ envelopes. The envelopes are cut in half across the short axis, providing two pockets per envelope. One side is slit, tucked behind to snugly fit the thickness of the parts, and then glued down.

What is the key to successful preservation of music scores? In an ideal world, publishers would design and produce materials with inherent longevity (see instructions below). In the real world, the most important tools are an understanding of and respect for the way they will be used. A preservation technician with a music education or performance experience can be a real asset to a collection, as can a music librarian with an appreciation for preservation issues. But the greatest asset is the sound of music, pouring across campus from the open windows of the School of Music, refreshing the souls of weary preservation technicians. Much can be forgiven, then.

Publishing for Permanence: Desiderata for Music Publishers; or, How To Make Life Easier for Preservationists

1. Provide ample margins, 7/8 of an inch minimum.
2. Use permanent paper, of sufficient strength to support staples and sewing.
3. Use standard page sizes.
4. Use standard leaf attachments, preferring signatures that can be attached through the fold.
5. Avoid comb-style bindings like the plague.

Footnotes
1. For an introduction to preservation issues affecting the full range of music media, see the papers presented at a program of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, compiled by Mark Roosa and Jane Gottlieb and published as Knowing the Score: Preserving Collections of Music, MLA Technical Report No. 23. Canton, Mass.: Music Library Association, Inc., 1994. Included are a useful bibliography and a list of suppliers.

2. Loss of any part usually renders the entire score unplayable. The UO Library has developed the following tracking method: All parts are listed in the bibliographic record and on a label on the pocket holding the parts. The OPAC record is coded to prompt circulation clerks to verify all parts are present at check-in and check-out. Since the OPAC, an INNOPAC system, retains the identification of the previous borrower, it is a simple albeit time-consuming matter to notify the guilty borrower that they will be billed for the cost of materials not returned. The incidence of missing parts has declined. Borrowers are also billed for annotation of materials; another category of damage which affects music out of proportion to the rest of the collection.

3. Some instruments, primarily percussion, require single loose sheets or accordion-folds. Such formats can be housed in a pocket for shelving, but must be removable for performance.

Normandy Holmer, Head of the Preservation & Binding Department, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR 97403
For nearly nine years, the University Bindery has been successfully providing pamphlet binding service to our customers at the University of Minnesota Libraries. The Libraries have come to depend on this style of binding for most of their binding needs under 1/8" in spine thickness. A fast turnaround time for pamphlet binding has been easy to maintain as installation of the materials into the binder is a quick procedure. An ample supply of all available sizes of pamphlet binders is always kept on hand.

Before we built the shelving unit, the pamphlet binders were stored in open cardboard boxes beneath tables in the pamphlet department. Occasionally, we would find a size had been depleted or misplaced. To solve this problem of knowing exactly what we had on hand, we designed the shelving unit and custom-built it to accommodate a good supply of all sizes of pamphlet binders within easy reach, increasing the efficiency of our process.

The durable frame of our shelving unit is constructed of heavy-duty, rust-resistant, baked-enamel steel shelf bracing to provide secure rigid support. The 1/4" particle board shelving adequately holds the weight of the binders without sagging. Shelf dividers of 1/4" round metal rods are inserted through holes drilled in the particle board to conform to our storage requirements. We applied self-adhesive labels to identify each section by size and each divider is then labeled to specify the size of the pamphlet binders. The shelving unit provides neat, secure, and adequate pamphlet binder storage giving us very simple access to inventory.

It is difficult to quantify increased production and improved inventory management achieved by the installation of the pamphlet binder shelving unit.

However, we know we have experienced an overall greater convenience in processing orders, material handling and inventory control.

The custom-built shelving unit increases the efficiency of our pamphlet binding process.

Marc Flechsig, Director, University Bindery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55414

For University of Minnesota Bindery Installs Shelving Unit to Accommodate Archival Pamphlet Binders — by Marc Flechsig

Products List:

Music Binders
Pamphlet Binders
Manuscript Folder
Four-Flap Enclosure
Custom Four-Flap
Enclosure
Hinged Board Cover
Brittle Book
Replacement Service

Academy Folder
Archival Folder
Archival Album
Archival Boards
Archival File Folders
Drop-Spine Box
Compact Disk Holder

If you do not have an Archival Products catalog of Quality Preservation Products & Services please call, fax, or e-mail your request to us.