

***Shelflisting Music: Guidelines for Use with the Library of Congress Classification, M.* By Richard P. Smiraglia. 2nd ed. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press and Music Library Association, 2008. x, 37 p. \$15.00 US. ISBN: 978-0-8108-5418-5¹**

In the “Foreword to the Second Edition” with which this pamphlet begins, the author Richard Smiraglia admits he can hardly remember its origins. Was it first constructed as a guide for cataloguers in the University of Illinois Music Library, where he worked from 1974-1986—or did he perhaps compile it for his own guidance? At any rate, now that it is newly reissued, it is certain to replace the dog-eared copies of the first edition (1981), not to mention the tattered home-made cheat sheets, found in music cataloguing departments everywhere.

Shelflisting Music is published as No. 30 in the Music Library Association Technical Reports Series. As one might surmise from the series title, there is nothing here of an abstract or speculative nature. This is not, in other words, Smiraglia writing in his recent expansive and theoretical vein about the nature and epistemology of “The Work” and its place in the bibliographic universe. Rather, it is a how-to manual whose only aim is to provide cataloguers with a carefully distilled summary of the various instructions for creating music score call numbers that are scattered throughout the LC classification M schedule and the LC Shelflisting Manual. In this it succeeds admirably—providing that novices do not succumb to a panic attack after reading on page 1 that “the complexity of the shelflisting process in class M [means that] a single call number can require as many as forty-six separate decisions and operations.”

That there are so many ways to shelflist music scores when compared to books stems largely from the fact the principal arrangement is by instrumental medium, form and genre, and secondarily by composer and work. (For example, all piano sonatas, string quartets, symphonies or operas are classed together, sub-arranged by composer, in turn sub-arranged by work.) This is the exact opposite of the arrangement in the LC classes for literature, where the primary sorting is by author, sub-arranged by form and/or title. So, while there is a single basic cutter number for Shakespeare, there are potentially dozens and dozens of different cutters for Beethoven in a music library; it all depends what other composers whose names begin with B are represented in any given class. There also is the problem of creating a second cutter to represent the work, when so many of them have generic titles such as trio and concerto. And what about vocal works published in different languages, when it may be desirable to put the original texts first, followed by the translations? And so on.

However, Smiraglia goes on to demonstrate that the process is less daunting than he makes it sound in his preliminary remarks. The core of the booklet is a series of flowcharts that break the

© 2008 The author and the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation
Centres/L’auteur et l’Association canadienne des bibliothèques, archives et centres de documentation
musicaux.

process down into simple yes-or-no questions. The explanatory text that makes up booklet's first part refers repeatedly to these last seven pages of diagrams. I imagine many cataloguers will find it useful to continue referring to the flowcharts for some time after they have outgrown the need to consult the preliminary lucid and helpful explanations.

I expect this publication will remain in print for some time. But why run the risk? If you have not already acquired a copy, order it now. If there is even a remote chance that you will have to train a new music cataloguer in your library, at least one part of the training will be made a lot easier.

Alastair Boyd
University of Toronto