

New Music Library at McGill

By Cynthia Leive

Marvin Duchow Music Library, McGill University

The Marvin Duchow Music Library will move to its permanent home in the new Faculty of Music Building at the eastern end of the McGill University campus in 2005. The new Music Building, designed by Gilles Saucier (Saucier + Perotte, architects), will be an eight-story structure on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal. It will feature a multimedia performance studio, an opera rehearsal room, sound recording studios, a lecture recital hall, the Music Library, administrative and academic offices, and research space for the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music Media and Technology.

The new Music Library will be located in the middle three floors of the Music Building, between performance and recording venues below and academic and research facilities above. Because of the relatively narrow "footprint" of the building (approximately 11,000 square feet per floor), each floor will focus on a distinct part of the collection and services. (For the architectural drawings, see <http://www.music.library.mcgill.ca/newmdl.html>.)

Music Library staff had extensive input throughout the early design stages of the project. As a result, the new Library will have a number of qualitative upgrades including separate and appropriate temperature and humidity controls for the Rare Book and Special Collections Room and load-bearing floors appropriate for

music collections (particularly for historical sound recordings). Technological integration horizontally within the Library and vertically with the rest of the building will be achieved through the installation of a combination of wireless and hard-wired network connections. Special attention has been paid to access for people with disabilities. Staff areas will include improved coordination of teaching and reference services spaces combined with enhanced cataloguing and processing facilities.

Interior design will complement the contemporary exterior architecture. All floors are connected by a circular staircase and an interior elevator. The neutral black, white, and grey palette will be augmented by touches of olive green and aubergine. The floor coverings will be a mixture of white oak and black rubber. Furniture will include white and light oak table surfaces with chrome bases, Eames-style study chairs and Bauhaus-influenced black leather reading chairs.

A walking tour of the Music Library would begin on the third floor, which is designed to focus on the teaching and learning aspects of Music Library services and activities. Inside the front entrance, patrons may consult the print reference collection or search for electronic resources on computer workstations. The library staff will be located at circulation and reference points nearby. Patrons will also be able to

browse current periodicals at study tables or in comfortable seating facing downtown Montreal. The printed score collection is on the entrance floor in order to provide quick access and the best location for staff assistance with the monuments of music and composers' collected editions. The third floor is also the home of the Rare Books and Special Collections Room which will have separate entrances for the public and for Music Library staff.

Audio, video, and multimedia collections and related services are featured on the fourth floor. It provides listening and viewing capabilities in a number of different environments including audiovisual multimedia carrels, small-group listening tables, a home-theatre style video viewing room, and a large seminar room with a comprehensive range of equipment. The fourth floor houses the open-stack LP, compact disc, and video collections as well as the Handel, Mahler, and jazz ten-inch seventy-eights special collections.

The fifth floor will be the integrated home of the Performance Library, a score and parts collection of approximately 5,000 titles. The fifth floor will also house McGill's printed music book and bound

periodical collections and includes ample space for quiet study. The Music Student Computer Room will provide hardware with PC, Mac and Unix operating systems and software for advanced music production and research. The two large seminar rooms on this floor complete the set of three spaces for teaching and performance within the Music Library milieu.

For a good part of the second half of the twentieth century, the Music Library at McGill moved from "temporary" home to "temporary" home. Old-timers tell stories of the collection housed in Marvin Duchow's garage or in the showers of the old Peel Street Faculty of Music. Twelve years ago, the Music Library moved from what is now the music student cafeteria to temporary space in an office building across the street from the Faculty. It often must have seemed over the years that the Music Library had an untreatable case of wanderlust. Finally, however, with the twenty-first century well established, it seems safe to predict the Marvin Duchow Music Library will have a permanent home at McGill, back in its rightful place in the Faculty of Music.