

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As a member - off and on - for the last 20 years - of the Canadian Music Library Association - I must say now how disgusted I am with the periodical newsletter.

Surely the aim of this publication should be to report upon the state of the Profession [sic] and its activities in Canada. Why do we need Mr. M. Lewis' tin-pun-alley - which is not amusing - or Calderisi's reports upon "delicious dinners in Lisbon" or I. Rose's touting of U.S. publication and local restaurants.

The Newsletter stands as a monument to the amateurism and un-professionalism of music librarianship in Canada.

Peter Cheetham.

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BROADCAST LIBRARIES: MUSIC FROM CREATION TO WRITE-OFF*

It is essential, before you read this litany of jobs that the CBC Music Library in Toronto handles, that you understand a bit about the nature of broadcasting and the attitude that exists toward libraries in broadcasting organizations. The people who use the Music Library services regard a library as a specialized warehouse that furnishes them with scores, parts, and musical instruments. No broadcasting organization ever plans for a library staff until their collection becomes too large to handle quickly. When a library staff is finally hired, their jobs are defined in control and custodial terms, not in information science-oriented terms. All broadcast libraries have to be tailored to the very special needs of its users; and therefore, standard library cataloguing systems and procedures do not work -- all broadcast libraries are hybrids. Standard subject headings are not adequate for our needs; for example, a "Christmas Music" category is essential. Another characteristic of the broadcasting library is instant service. For example, music for a program is often left to the last minute -- music or recordings are needed instantly -- hardly time to get the numbers down before the production assistant flies out the door on the run. Orderly checking out and searching procedures are negated, everything must be closed stacks, and the music staff must be constantly on call. In line with broadcaster's view of our custodial role, we also are in charge of the care, maintenance, moving and tuning of the CBC's 28 pianos, celestes, large drums, and vibraphones. Our

*(A summary of an address given to the New York/Ontario Chapter of the Music Library Association in Toronto in October, 1978.)