

achieves a synthesis of scholarly detail and the experiences of a rich social-professional life. Since many of the articles are easily available elsewhere, the collection does not fill an obvious lacuna, but it conveniently brings together a diversity of materials for students of British and American music of the twentieth century. Above all it may be appreciated as a major contribution toward a context for appreciating the music of Peter Dickinson.

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Conversations with the World's Leading Orchestra and Opera Librarians. By Patrick Lo. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. [xviii, 276 p. ISBN 9781442255425 (hardback), \$92; ISBN 9781442255432 (e-book), \$87.] Illustrations, index.

Orchestra and opera librarians work in an environment characterized by expansion and contraction. Their skills and experiences extend beyond those of their peers in academic and public libraries, but their subject focus and clientele are much more confined. In each of his *Conversations with the World's Leading Orchestra and Opera Librarians*, Patrick Lo brings these considerations to the forefront by deeply examining the duties and demands of "performance music librarians" (p. xii), whose work encompasses general music librarianship, musicology, rights negotiations, resource management, materials conservation, and bindery operations. Indeed, the first interview, with Robert Sutherland of New York's Metropolitan Opera, describes challenges that might discourage novice librarians from investigating this corner of their field, but others might find the prospect of such high-stakes service thrilling. Lo's primary audience for this book—new music librarians and graduate students in library and information science—can

discover the benefits and challenges of this career path thanks to the thoughtful conversations with the interviewees. While seeking to reveal the unique perspectives of these librarians "in diversely different cultural, social, and managerial settings," Lo also hopes, rather boldly, that this publication will improve the "status and recognition of the performance music librarian profession and thereby contribute to a more long-lasting effect on the artistic quality as well as the future survival of the art form itself" (p. 253).

Lo is currently an associate professor in Library, Information, and Media Science at the University of Tsukuba in Japan, after serving for eighteen years as an academic librarian. His experience as a music librarian is uncertain, as he has focused his research interests in other areas, including comparative studies in information science, art and design librarianship, and information literacy. Nevertheless, his discussions with the orchestra and opera librarians prove to be relevant and illuminating.

Each interview begins with questions that address the personal and professional backgrounds and music training of the librarians and context about the performing ensembles. Each interviewee, however, offers distinct perspectives in their own voices. A corollary benefit of Lo's book is the information that these interviews reveal about scheduling practices of ensembles and how the librarians factor into that activity. To a smaller degree, this book also allows the reader to compare the histories of these diverse institutions side by side. Included here are conversations with librarians who not only work for symphonies and opera and ballet companies, but also as personal librarians for the conductor André Previn and the soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. The last interview, which offers the performer's point of view, is with the soprano Elena Xanthoudakis. In an ap-

pendix, Sutherland describes the creation of an in-house FileMaker Database for tracking the Met's collection.

The interviews present an assortment of themes, but a consistent topic is the level of advanced planning involved in concert preparation. Opera companies and established symphonies schedule performances one year, if not years, in advance, a time line essential to librarians working with various singers and their stand-ins to identify specific editions and alternate keys. Lo's subjects display their ingenuity and devotion in tales of last-minute changes (especially for premieres) or missing parts. However, these librarians do not often receive praise for their efforts; Benjamin Gould of the Qatar Philharmonic remarks that he knows he has succeeded "when [he hears] nothing from anyone" (p. 94). Lo's interviews show the commitment of these librarians to providing services that free conductors, soloists, and choreographers from the distracting logistics of how the music materializes on their stands. In the view of Xanthoudakis, the librarian "is vital to ensure the smooth running of the event but also allows the musical staff to concentrate on making quality music" (p. 250).

Clearly, the meaningful professional relationships that the librarians build with resident conductors influence the quality of their work in selection and acquisition. Licensing and copyright concerns also come up in most of the interviews, especially in conversations about contemporary programming or pops-style concerts. The perspectives from these anecdotes are more varied than other themes in this book. Another broad theme is how prior music training or experience relates to the librarians' successes. The interviewees—most of them musicians themselves—all share an affinity for organization, but the former professionals point to their musical instincts as

particularly vital to their work. Alice Chatterjee-Rieckhoff of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra agrees: "My previous training as an orchestra musician is most beneficial, as it enables me to understand the needs of the orchestra musicians" (p. 68).

A particular highlight of the book is its revelation of the passion that performance music librarians bring to their jobs every day. Each of them finds great satisfaction in the trouble-shooting that is entirely invisible to the audience (apart from the librarian's credit in the concert program)—problem-solving that results in productive rehearsals and inspired performances. As Ronald Whitaker of the Cleveland Orchestra states, "no one should join the library profession for the applause and recognition from the audience because there isn't any" (p. 63). That satisfaction is apparently a meaningful reward, considering that the financial compensation for these librarians is consistent with their academic peers. Most performance librarians are in positions with little to no opportunity for professional advancement, so these positions are for many the ultimate career objective. They place a lot of emphasis on job satisfaction.

Like many in the field of librarianship, these jobs have become more reliant on technology, which is both boon and bane. Several anecdotes recount how a sympathetic but distant librarian saves the day with a timely scan of a missing part. But then there are also the concerns about the future of music publishing and the advent of digital editions and screens for stands. Yet Jutta Lambrecht of the Westdeutscher Rundfunk Cologne counters, "I personally don't think iPads will be in the future" due to licensing concerns (p. 116). Lambrecht also calls out the publishers for putting more burdens on librarians by selling only PDFs of scores and parts. She states, "they are

charging us the same rental fees as if they were lending us the music in printed format . . . The actual 'publishing work' has been transferred to us orchestra librarians—that is, you need professional technical equipment" (p. 109). This type of gouging is unfortunate for the performing arts, which already struggles with increasing costs and decreasing ticket sales.

The book has a smattering of forgivable flaws. The interviews appear to have been conducted through email or chat, which makes the responses read like they were typed rather than transcribed from in-person interviews. This can make for dull or stiff prose. However, this limitation is entirely understandable given the geographical scope of this work and its purpose as a reference source. Fortunately, only one interview reads more like an online survey than a conversation. Relying on emailed transcripts might explain the occasional grammatical errors, mostly in the form of missing words, and readers might also wonder about the omission of certain regions (Chicago and Boston come to mind). The book is undeniably far-reaching but not meant to be comprehensive. If another volume or edition is planned, the inclusion of a librarian from an Italian opera house and from a military service band will further expand the perspective.

Lo's *Conversations with the World's Leading Orchestra and Opera Librarians*

accomplishes what it sets out to do. Consequently, it certainly belongs in any music library at a university with a graduate program in librarianship, despite Cleveland Orchestra's Ronald Whitaker's claim that "a library science degree is almost useless in our profession" (pp. 61–62). Others already working in this part of the field will find Lo's interviews affirming, inspiring, and also useful, with its narratives for advocating for resources (e.g. staffing support, more space, etc.). As a source to prepare future performance music librarians, it succeeds in outlining the requisite skills, traits, and knowledge. The book helps round out the literature on this topic, which includes, with a more practical focus, *The Music Performance Library: A Practical Guide for Orchestra, Band, and Opera Librarians* by Russ Girsberger and Laurie Lake (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music, 2011) and Girsberger and Lake's edited volume, *Insights and Essays on the Music Performance Library* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music, 2012). Though Lo regards his book as primarily useful to those working in nearly any role for performance institutions, it should also be required reading for graduate students of conducting. Through the stories told here, one can only respect and admire the work by these performance music librarians.

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