

The Role of the Music Specialist Librarian

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Structured Abstract

Background

The literature reveals that music is an appreciated art form, yet it is not given the place and status it deserves in libraries. Music is often regarded as unimportant and therefore, specialist staff are no longer the first choice of employment.

Aims

This investigation aims to identify specialist and non-specialist staff working in public libraries and determine how they differ in their handling of music materials and enquires. It also investigates the value of a music specialist librarian and any skills that could be passed onto non-specialist staff.

Methods

Ten libraries were contacted for interview, with a total of twenty librarians being interviewed. A questionnaire was sent out the IAML (UK & Irl) mailing list and received sixteen responses from librarians working in a professional capacity. A review of the literature was also carried out.

Results

The results are presented a question at a time, with three pie charts to show visually some of the questionnaire responses. Eleven specialists and nine non-music specialists were interviewed. More than half of them indicated that they struggled with enquiries and seven declared that there were cut backs in funding for their libraries. Analysis showed that training in music is needed to work with the collection and that this can be obtained in a variety of ways.

Conclusion

Teamwork between specialists and non-specialists was found to be the best and most workable solution for the future. Specialists were found to be important to a collection due to the knowledge they can bring to a library and the training they can provide for others. Cooperation between libraries was a key theme discussed. It was thought more work on the users of music in public libraries could further this investigation.

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1. Introduction

“Music is the creative art form that engages more people in the community than any other. To many people it is a vital part of their lives both as individuals and in a social context” (Anon, 2005:27)

The vast majority of people enjoy some sort of music in their lives, whether it be listening to a CD or playing a piece on an instrument. Music can be enjoyed by everyone and at any age. It can be used in a variety of ways, for example helping permanently disabled people express themselves or young offenders becoming more involved in a group projects. Music has been proved to be of great benefit towards their development and can positively affect many areas of their lives (Dorney and McKnight, 2004:7).

However, music seems to be a declining resource in public libraries and as a result, the number of specialist staff has also declined (Thompson, 2006:198). Dorney and McKnight (2004) show how the number of music librarians has been declining since at least 1992. Woodhouse (1993:25) also said that music has suffered considerable cuts since 1990. This dissertation will investigate the role of music specialist librarian and evaluate their importance in delivering a music service. The study will examine the various skills they can bring to the library, and offer some possible solutions for staff who run a music service, but may lack the necessary skills to fulfill their tasks effectively. The lack of knowledge and awareness is what encouraged me to choose this as a topic, as I wanted to gain a more in-depth understanding of the current issues surrounding this area in order to offer constructive suggestions and ultimately become more involved with the music scene.

I have always enjoyed music and have been a performer of music since an early age. My appreciation was enhanced throughout the completion of a BA in music and during this time I developed an interest in music librarianship. I was the librarian for the University of York’s Concert Orchestra for three years, and noted that there were some music librarians not trained in music working in public libraries. Though they took a while to construct, music sections in public libraries are now well established, but unless they are

properly managed they will just end up being neglected (Lewis in: Turbet, 2003). It is possible that this dissertation could help improve the present situation, as I believe music should be recognised as a necessary component of a library's service. Another point is that music sections could potentially generate a considerable amount of money for a public library. The crucial factor, however, is that of effective management and training.

The aims of this investigation are to identify specialist and non-specialist staff working in public libraries and to determine how they differ in their handling of music materials and enquiries. It will also investigate the value of a music specialist librarian and any skills that could be passed onto non-specialist staff. In order to address these issues, this dissertation will concentrate on two main areas.

Firstly, as indicated in the literature, there appears to be a lack of knowledge exhibited by many current library staff (Anon, 2005:26). This inadequate provision is considered a major problem in public libraries. There are a lack of specialist staff who know how to engage with music and musicology. Moreover, many staff are often unaware of the various issues surrounding music and musical education. The materials in a music section of a public library can be numerous and include CDs, books, DVDs, scores, sheet music and manuscripts. These all need special consideration when being catalogued, issued and located, which some current staff are unable to deal with (Hansen, 2004:40).

The constant stream of new releases in CD and print format for the music industry only presents more problems for the library staff. The reduced funding only allows a limited number of items to be bought and the essentials are not always purchased. This is often due to the staff's lack of knowledge regarding the kind of materials or resources on offer. This dissertation will not consider any immediate solutions concerning the lack of funding available; it will simply accept the situation and proceed with some potential solutions to other current problems.

The next focus concerns the training of specialist music staff and the shortcomings of non-specialist staff in regards to their required skills. Non-specialist staff will also be examined and compared with specialist staff. It appears that little is being done to help non-specialist staff who find themselves in control of a music section and do not know how manage its services and resources. This issue will be investigated, and a set of recommendations formulated. These recommendations are not designed to outline skills that librarians do not have, but instead are to help inform courses and training sessions that could be organised for those members of staff that feel they need to refine their skills.

These areas are considered the most significant because they will reveal how a music specialist fits into a library in regards to their role. It will also aid in helping non-specialist music staff. The following bulleted list comprised my objectives:

- To identify specialist staff working in public libraries at present
- To identify some public libraries where a specialist member of staff has left
- To compare non-specialist staff with specialist music staff
- To investigate the values and benefits of specialist staff
- To investigate what non-specialist staff are and are not able to bring to a collection
- To discover what is being done to help non-specialist staff in areas they feel they lack knowledge
- To make a set a recommendations as to what could be done to help non-specialist staff

For the purpose of this dissertation, a specialist is described as someone with 'appropriate librarian training in music librarianship, or an amateur interest in music with an ability to read music and understand musical terms'. This definition will be used to clarify specialists throughout, as with these abilities or qualifications it is thought that a librarian should be able to deal with most aspects of music within a public library.

The first chapter includes a review of the literature, which looks at the public libraries and how music is integrated into existing systems. Music librarians are then discussed as well as an examination of official documents and plans. The remainder of this paper is divided into four sections. The methods of investigation are listed and the interview questions are first examined, with the reasons why they have been chosen. The questionnaire is then designed with the options for each answer listed. Results are described section by section. The overall results are then reviewed afterwards with the outcomes of each. The interviews are followed by the questionnaire results. The next chapter then discusses the results and how they fit in with the overall view. The interview and questionnaire are considered separately and then together. Finally, conclusions are discussed and recommendations offered. These are first for ways to help non-specialists and then ideas for further research.

2. Literature Review

“It is an obvious truth that the strength of a music library ... depends on it’s specialised personnel” (Duckles in: Bradley, 1973:231)

2.1 General Overview

Currently, few studies have examined in depth the music sections in public libraries. They have generally restricted their comments to what has or has not been achieved by libraries (Thompson, 2006; Thompson and Lewis, 2003). Little research has been completed offering definite answers as to what could be done to improve methods of service, in particular, for public libraries. The academic communities do not always appreciate the potential of music, and so this might be a determining factor as to why they have not progressed as much as they might (Redfern in: Turbet, 2003:10). There have been studies looking at specific areas of music librarianship, but again, only a handful focus on anything directly relating to music in public libraries and problems that arise (Metcalfe, 2010a; Hart and Muncy, 2009). This appears to be an obvious gap in the literature.

Music is a well used and appreciated art and has wide popular appeal. A study by Hayes and Morris (2005b) showed that most people find listening to music in their spare time essential; 100% of people from one library responded in that vein and 100% from another thought it was either essential or very much a part of their every day lives. Music can be used to help the sick or disabled person. Hook (2005) provides a brief introduction into the healing power of music as an alternative medicine. Though it does not present any primary research of music being an effective healer, it outlines the theoretical perspectives of several other practitioners, as well as other studies and practices.

It has been proven that learning things through song can “facilitate and accelerate learning and memorization” (Crane, 2006:15). For example learning new languages. There have been numerous studies to reveal everything from brain activity to children being able to remember songs into adulthood. Crane (2006) lists the key studies and sources in the field, although most are pre-2000.

2.2 Public Libraries

Surprisingly, there has not been as much literature about the users of music in public libraries. Research has tended to focus on surveys to help enhance and improve the running of libraries, rather than on what the users themselves do not get from the library. Talja (2001) suggests that libraries should consider the needs of students and users when selecting material for stock. She arguing that libraries should support the culture and promote the general development of people within the library by encouraging self study, she also states that users of public libraries often avoid the cultural significance of libraries. It is therefore necessary to emphasise the rationale and purpose of libraries and reconsider their primary role and function.

Hayes and Morris (2005b) carried out a study on the function of a library and focused on the public library being used as a leisure activity. However, music is mentioned as just consisting of CDs and does not include any other formats, like performance sets or scores, which limits the scope of their investigation. It covers a small section on health and wellbeing listing benefits, particularly for the older generation; from simply having somewhere different to sit during the day to the social aspect a library can bring to their lives. It concludes that the traditional role of libraries being a leisure activity has been generally forgotten, which could be an area for future study. Whilst focusing on the leisure aspect of libraries, it disregards issues of stock and facilities, and whether they are functioning to their full potential in the library.

It is argued by Lai and Chan (2010:63) that users of music collections in public libraries have particular needs, which can include needing a specific format of a piece or a particular instrumentation which cannot be substituted by another instrumentation. After carrying out a survey for a library in Hong Kong better channels for future communication were opened. They also discovered areas in which there was a distinct lack of awareness. Though this was linked with an academic setting in Hong Kong, the same principles can be applied to public libraries here in the UK. The conclusion from this study could be applied to all libraries, but it also highlights the specific needs of music users, something which Hayes and Morris (2005b) do not do.

Written from a theoretical perspective, an anonymous article in the *Library and Information Update* (Anon, 2005:26) asks, "Is there a future for music services?". It argues that music is being recognised as important in the creative development of children and adults alike, yet little is being done by those in authority to prevent the demise of music services. Conversely, Jones (1979:13) has said that many users of public libraries regard music collections as "recordings for loan" and not as another department. This could be a reason for the relatively unimportant view of music that library managers still appear to have, regarding it as the "soft" option when implementing budget cuts (Muir and Douglas, 2001:266).

It is undeniable that music sections in public libraries are in decline and something must be done about them (Dorney and McKnight, 2004). Dorney and McKnight (2004:8) indicate that it would be advantageous to promote collections. Promoting will help increase the usage of the collection, and consequently, managers and councils will be less likely to decrease or close them. The large differences in collections are a problem when it comes to inter-library lending and this is not helping to increase the usage of collections. In a recent editorial by Goulding (2009), she offers a range of impacts that are occurring due to the recent credit crunch. She mentions the recent credit crunch and how it has directly impacted certain aspects of

libraries. In order to counter this problem and deal with cut backs in money she also suggests promoting events. Fund raising activities can increase public awareness and help towards some financial costs.

Local authorities hesitate when making staff redundant, but when staff leave, new staff are not employed to take their place (Goulding, 2009:4). The staff who are left behind often find themselves faced with an increased workload and yet they are still expected to keep the collection in order and provide a standard of service at the same level as before.

The performance of public libraries is frequently measured on the basis of performance indicators, including counting the number of books issues (Hayes and Morris, 2005a:78). However, these are not necessarily suited to all the libraries' strategic visions or mission statements. At the beginning of this century, Muir and Douglas (2001:267) reported that the indicators used did not always show whether a library is being used to its full potential, particularly as they do not give any indication of the quality of service that is provided to the customer. Ways of delivering and improving library services have been investigated and implemented, but until the indicators used to measure these services are changed, these new schemes influence cannot be measured and therefore they are considered by the government as having no noticeable impact.

Access to music and music collections is vital if they are to be used to their maximum potential (Kuyper-Rushing, 2002:140). Centralisation and decentralisation are hot topics which are often discussed, particularly with relation to the tight budgets that libraries have had in the past few years. Kuyper-Rushing (2002) outlined the dilemmas there have been, with reasons why the centralisation option is often taken. Centralisation of a music collection is often taken up, as this way the music can all be stored and cared for in one place and loaned out to branch libraries when needed. With the collection centralised, consequently fewer members of staff are needed to look after it.

2.3 Music and Music Librarians

A small article by Hansen (2004) highlights the problematic nature of music and the consequent need for special consideration. She lists taller shelving, extra security for CDs and special classification systems as just some of the range of problems associated with music (Hansen, 2004:40). Hart and Muncy (2009) also mention some drawbacks with regards to performance sets: the quantity and physical weight of performance sets make them difficult to store and handle, the non-standard size of scores can be an issue, and also performance sets are a time urgent medium.

As well as printed music, there are also the audio collections that require different handling and managing. Metcalfe (2010a; 2010b) identifies problems which occur with audio stock. Although CDs are possibly more attractive to library managers as they can bring in money, they still need to be well looked after and managed properly. She explores the idea of taking on a selling initiative by introducing offers and 'listen before you buy' schemes. However, expanding different formats of music listening will require staff to be able to manage it. As no libraries appear to have the desire to remove their audio collections, they will need to make sure there is staff available with the ability to deal with the stock in future (Woodhouse, 1993:15).

There has been a decline in the number of specialist music staff, which has negatively impacted on the knowledge of the remaining staff (Dorney and McKnight, 2004:8). The cuts libraries have faced due to lack of funding has been the major factor influencing this and will always be a concern in libraries, certainly in the near future. Thompson (2006:198) has suggested that this is because of the restructuring of libraries and the favoured managerial approach to training. Funding is also stretched unrealistically in terms of the standard of the service expected. Department/sections have been grouped together with staff only having expertise in one area within their group, if that. Dorney and McKnight (2004:10) have also argued that it is

due to the decline in graduate level courses for music librarianship. Overall, libraries promote the general development of culture as they are centers for culture and learning, and without knowledgeable staff this will be greatly reduced and negatively affect this aspect (Talja, 2001:82).

The International Association of Music Libraries (IAML, 2005) has been the most predominant in promoting music librarianship, with the UK branch, IAML (UK & Irl), being set up in 1953. They assemble every year for an annual meeting, but the project groups within meet more regularly. They appear to be the only organisation actively helping non-specialist staff in public libraries. Yearly courses called “Music for the Terrified” are offered to help give non-specialist staff the basic skills for handling music (Hart and Hellen, 2000:2).

2.4 Information Plans/Official Documents

It is evident that large plans for library services tend not to contain sections specifically relevant to music and music services. For example, the *Blueprint for Public Library Excellence* which is the plan for public libraries between 2008 and 2011, indicates a need for a “motivated and skilled workforce” (Dolan, 2007:7). This would presumably include specialist trained music staff, but there is no specific mention of music or the arts in the document. IAML (UK & Irl) (2007) commented on this document and its effectiveness, and offered useful insights into where music can fit into sections of the Blueprint. It particularly mentioned the necessity for specialist staff and the need to follow the users’ requirements.

On the other hand, there are documents that deal directly with music and music resources. Dorney and McKnight (2004:7) have highlighted a decline in public library music provision. They recommend that all staff are trained appropriately, and consider that an increase in the profile of music within libraries may result in more cooperation between all parties involved. The unique nature of music requires specialist staff to process it and to serve its users effectively, which currently could be improved (Metcalf, 2010b).

Reports have been written over the years, but they do not seem to bring about any concrete changes. Luening (in Bradley (ed.), 1973:23) wrote a report to the “Director of the Public Library Inquiry” that carried out a survey of American public libraries in 1946. Thompson (2006) also wrote a report on activities within music libraries for the British Librarian and Information Work. It is worrying to note that even when the decline in music services has been mentioned and many ideas for improvements have been suggested, people have not taken heed of these observations, and for this reason music in public libraries continues to decline.

An extensive report from IAML in 2003 indicates 134 recommendations for music in libraries, which shows their attempts at getting more recognition (Thompson and Lewis, 2003:12). It took a comprehensive look at all issues and practices taking place in libraries across the UK and Ireland, and though the recommendation list is extensive, most of them would not take too much to achieve. The aim was to review the document in 2006 to assess the progress, but so far this has not occurred. We can only speculate for reasons why this did not happen, but the enormity of the task will undoubtedly have been the main factor.

New Zealand has recently brought out a review of its national library services and collection (National Library of New Zealand, 2009). It is designed to generate a new strategic direction until the year 2017 and a consultation document invited feedback from the public. It suggests some options for changing the collection and also highlights the need for specialist knowledge to be able to cope with the diverse formats and the musical language. This direction could be undertaken in the UK, with the development of music in libraries in public, academic and specialist sectors being overviewed separately. Independent reviews would need to be carried out in order to comply with the requirements of each individual sector.

No reports have been located which show how American libraries and librarians are managed as a whole. Instead, each state appears to govern its own libraries, for example there is a webpage on strategic plans, statistics

and councils which only relate to Utah State Library (Utah State Library, 2010). However, similarly to the UKs *Blueprint for Public Library Excellence*, this does not mention anything specific about music or the arts.

In 1973 the USA had a more optimistic view of music than others and Bukofzer (in Bradley, 1973:13) saw the future of the music services in public libraries becoming smaller versions of the large music libraries. They were also setting up their way forward by creating things that helped respond to their customers needs (Sonneck in: Bradley, 1973:149). A report from the Libraries and the Learning Society (1984) stated that there was a problem with the education system in 1984 and it proposed various recommendations, including having fully trained librarians working in libraries and schools. Nowadays they appear to have a strong music librarianship base with the Music Library Association (2009), getting involved with many events and publications.

Many official investigations are produced, including one on collaboration and cooperation by Yarrow *et al.* (2008). This was published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, who have been useful in setting up guidelines for libraries all over the world to follow, but they do not include anything directly relating to music. They do, however publish breakthroughs in the handling of music, including updates of the new ISMN number (IFLA, 2010).

3. Methodology

*“If you are going to do music you have
got to have a musician to do it”*

Response by interviewee

In terms of the investigation, an impartial view was taken to avoid skewing the resulting conclusions. The study was restricted to libraries in England as there was thought to be sufficient data of adequate regional variation without extending the research further within the time constraints.

The aim was to investigate the current music and non-music specialist staff in public libraries. This provided in-sights into where help was needed for non-specialist staff. The role of the specialist music librarian was also examined in order to determine its value in a public library. A brief look into ways non-specialist staff need more training informed a set of recommendations designed to help the non-specialist cope with music in a public library and refine their skills.

In order to carry out the investigation, firstly the IAML mailing list was consulted to contact any music specialists that left their library and were not replaced. The mailing list is run by the JISC mailing list facility that contains all members of IAML (UK & Irl) plus any other interested parties. Although some libraries did not have a named music post remaining, the individual who left that post still remained at the same establishment. These individuals still had the potential to influence the music collection and could therefore have given an inaccurate representation of a library if it were to be considered as having no specialist. There was no way of knowing before an interview if a library would fit into this category and therefore on the two occasions this was the case, it was taken into account when the findings of each interview were discussed and were use to determine if the libraries contained specialists or non-specialists.

The IAML (UK & Irl) mailing list responses indicated those public libraries with a specialist remaining in post. These were then contacted. Some public libraries where the music collection was doing particularly well were carefully considered, so that the recommendations could be better informed. Word of mouth was also used to identify any other music specialists who remain in public libraries. As these types of public libraries are more readily available and were more willing to participate, similar sized libraries to the ones chosen were selected with no music specialist remaining. This made comparisons between the libraries chosen fair. The location was also important when selecting libraries. Libraries in remote areas are smaller and have less support than libraries in the centre of London, for example. Therefore, libraries of similar sizes in terms of the population they serve were chosen for both specialists and non-specialists, in order to make comparisons between them more viable. Slight differences could not be avoided, but this factor was taken into account when analysing the results. This was necessary as it would otherwise affect the validity of the findings (Robson, 2002:231).

Once the range of libraries was picked from the results of the enquiries above, interviews were set up with ten libraries. For the libraries with no specialist, the member of staff responsible for the overseeing of the music section was consulted. This was either a head of section or simply a librarian; the post title itself was considered irrelevant to the answers given. When an opportunity arose to interview more than one member of staff in a single library it was taken in order to expand the investigation and present a variety of views from different positions in the team.

The next focus of my dissertation involved investigating the value of a music librarian and whether they bring something unique to a collection. To do this, the first part of the interview questioned each interviewee in terms of their musical backgrounds. It included some key terms that they would be expected to know when dealing with music. They were also consulted on their training and ability to read music. They were not, however, given any music to read, and where an interviewee did not recognise many terms or they were unable to answer the questions, they were made brief, so as not to

distress the member of staff. The answers given by both the music specialists and non-music specialists were then compared to investigate the knowledge and skill of employees. This information was used to determine if there is a marked difference between specialists and non-specialists.

A set of recommendations concludes the dissertation. The responses from the interviews were used, but also a short questionnaire sent out to the IAML (UK & Irl) mailing list. This asked what the music specialists thought would be important for the staff new to a music collection to know. These answers remain anonymous and as the response rate was expected to be low, it was sent out to as many people as possible and encouragement was given to pass it on to anyone whom they felt it would be relevant. The information gleaned from the questionnaire has acted as a supplement to the interview responses, mainly to validate and back up the recommendations. It has also reviewed ideas for training topics for the training of future music librarians.

3.1 Interview

It was thought that an interview was best to discover the librarians' views, as it allows for more interaction with the members of staff. Though it is time consuming, surveys are not good for exploratory work and the interviews instead provided complimentary information to that of the questionnaire (Robson, 2002:232). The interview was divided into two sections. The first comprised the questions and terms in order to access the background knowledge of music that each interviewee had. It included some key terms which a customer may expect them to know when answering enquiries.

The second part included the main interview questions and was divided into sections to maintain the flow of the interview. These sections are; how the service is managed, the usage, stock, any plans for change and finally questions relating to music librarians. These sections made it easier to analyse the results, as well as giving the interview some focus. The interview itself was semi-standardised, and although there were set questions which required responses, a semi-structure gave the interviewer the ability to side

track or probe with further questions in order to obtain greater, more in-depth answers: something that a fully structured interview would not allow (Berg, 2004:95).

When the interview questions were considered, key questions and themes which required answers were decided upon (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007:83). Direct questions were then thought of, which successfully produced answers on the topics required. These questions will now be discussed, with due consideration as to how they fit into each category.

3.1.1 Musical Background

*Do you have a music degree or any other musical examination certificates?
(e.g. ABRSM instrumental grades)*

Do you have any music librarianship training, formal or informal?

Are you able to read music confidently?

These two questions revealed any qualifications that the librarians had. The informal training was also asked for, showing any in-house training and courses that they had been on, which did not always offer a formal certificate. The last determined how many librarians could actually read music.

Do you understand each of the following terms?

vocal score

miniature score

piano reduction

conductor's score

orchestral parts

symphony

concerto

opera

key signature

alto

baroque

romantic

These terms tested the knowledge of the librarians. The terms were selected to offer a broad overview of what the customers might expect the librarians to know. The first few relate to formats encountered in many libraries. The next few relate to the classical forms of music. Alto was put on this list because of its multiple meanings with the most common being a type of singer and a type of clef. By including these terms one could determine which of the librarians had a greater degree of musical knowledge. The final two terms are periods of music which can apply to other forms of art.

Do you know what a movement of a work is?

Are you aware of the differences between editions?

The next two questions were asked to determine if the subtleties of music were known to the librarians. This would show if they had in-depth knowledge of conventions composers commonly adhered to, or a basic awareness of a movement. Editions vary in accordance with what the editors add to them and choirs in particular need the librarian to know the difference between editions, even if they do not understand them.

Are you familiar with any aspect of music copyright?

This was more of an exploratory question to see who knew any of the details of copyright. A full explanatory was not necessary, but the initial reactions were noted.

3.1.2 How the Service is Managed

The group of questions was to ascertain the context in which the library was set;

Is there a member of staff who has had specialist training in music amongst you?

How many members of staff look after the music collection?

If there is only one member of staff, do they manage other sections as well as the music section?

If yes, what are the other sections?

These questions were used to determine how many members of staff were expected to deal with music in some aspect of their job and, where they were not solely dedicated to it, which other sections they dealt with. This included anything from the general lending of stock to specific subjects. Where specific subjects were specified by interviewees, it implied either that the library manager took pride in different aspects of the collection, not just music or, that due to monetary constraints the library had made reductions in its staff.

Are there opportunities for the staff, (including) you, to receive any training?

Do you have a library policy directly relating to music?

The final two questions enquired briefly into any training that the staff had had, or may have in the future. This illustrated whether training, particularly for music librarianship was considered useful. Having a policy relating to music also highlighted if music was thought of as important enough to warrant its own policy. It must be stressed that negative responses to these two questions, as with others in this section, were not necessarily the fault of the individual staff: managers make most of the decisions and the staff have no option but to deal with whatever situation they are given.

3.1.3 The Usage of the Collection

The next section was to determine the usage and range of the library's collection.

Would you say your music collection is used to its full potential, or could more usage be got from the collection?

As with the first question, this is more direct and draws on the librarian's point of view. The responses obtained highlighted the problems that they have with the collection on a day to day basis.

Are you able to supply all materials that customers ask for from within the collection in your library authority?

Do you partake of inter-library loans?

From inter-library loans and your stock are you normally able to satisfy all customers' requests?

Do you hire out performing sets to choirs/orchestras?

The responses acquired determined the overall reach of the collection and gave rise to any points that the librarians felt were preventing the collection from reaching its full potential. The answer to the question regarding inter-library loans meant that the reliance some libraries have on other libraries' stock was identified. This also revealed whether cooperation was an issue which prevented the service from reaching its full potential.

Has there ever been a time where you have not felt confident in answering a customer's question?

This last question encouraged open answers and allowed the interviewees to reflect on any bad experiences they had faced. It acted as an example of where music specialists were able to handle and deal more confidently with customers' requests: something they should be able to do when working in the music library.

3.1.4 What Stock the Library Manages

What media do you have in you library?

Which media/format in your library would you say is loaned the most?

Is there a reason for this?

These questions are related to the stock the library has and therefore the responses determined what enquiries were generally about. The responses

regarding which format was most frequently loaned, brought up the areas which would most benefit non-music specialists in terms of training. When a certain media is loaned regularly, then there is a higher chance that it will also generate a greater number of enquiries. A reason was encouraged to prevent any discrepancies that may have affected the results.

How often do you buy new stock?

Who decides what stock to purchase?

How much does your library spend on new music related stock? Either as a figure or percentage of stock.

Is there one area in which you buy stock more frequently?

This group of questions relating to stock, again helped to give an overview of the library's services. The only budget related question has been used to inform analysis on different sized libraries. The last of this set, regarding area has been used to inform the analysis of the results to see how they compare to the earlier question of which format is loaned the most.

Have your resources for music been increased, maintained or cut back in recent times?

The recession hit libraries hard and a general question as to whether this was true for all libraries seemed appropriate at this point. The recession is not mentioned in order not to expose acute feelings towards it. However, this question offered interviewees the potential to interpret the question in this way without feeling as if they are blaming anyone.

Do you have a special music cataloguing team?

If not, who catalogues the music you buy?

The question relating to stock and cataloguing was asked in order to get a general feel as to whether there are music specialist cataloguers in public libraries. Cataloguing was not dealt with directly, but the responses provided an insight into the differences between music specialists and non-music

specialists. It also gave the librarians a chance to comment on any issues with cataloguing which they were having.

3.1.5 Any Plans for Change in the Library

Are you happy with the way the music section is stored at present?

Is there any way, in your opinion, that it could be improved?

These two questions were put tactfully to the interviewees, as they could have given the impression of someone being to blame. However, as they work with the collection on a regular basis they were acutely aware of anything in need of change.

Are you currently thinking of changing the way the music collection is housed/stored in any way?

yes - If so how?

yes - Do you think this change would be good for the collection?

yes - Why?

no - Do you think that a change in the way the collection is stored would help it in any way?

The last few questions enquired as to potential change in music libraries. This helped to uncover any problems with the current collection as well as reasons for and against proposed changes: whether interviewees really thought change was needed. Often change can be disruptive, making it difficult to maintain a working and stable collection.

Many of the previous questions were asked as it is necessary to be aware of the context in which each of the libraries work (White, 2009:7). In the next section the librarians were asked specifically for their point of view.

3.1.6 Music Specialists

Would you say that music specialists bring something to the collection that non-music specialists do not?

If yes, what would these skills include?

Would you say that non-music specialists bring something to the collection that music specialists do not?

If yes, what would these skills include?

The next four questions were designed in pairs. Though an answer to the first pair was relatively straightforward, answering the second pair demanded more thought. The questions regarding skills were composed in order to determine anything that would aid the set of recommendations. Both pairs uncovered the general feeling amongst library staff concerning whether a music specialist is considered necessary for a music collection.

Would you say that music specialists or non-music specialists are able to handle the music collection better?

Why do you think this?

Though the previous pair addressed this issue in a slightly different manner, asking it to the interviewee as a direct question provided a focused answer. This uncovered whether the staff thought that having musical expertise would benefit the collection.

Would you agree with the statement, 'the number of music specialists is declining in public libraries'?

Finally, to conclude the interview, a general question on the topic of this dissertation was given to encourage any other thoughts on the subject.

3.1.7 Post Interview

As soon as reasonably practicable after the interview was completed, time was set aside to transcribe it fully (Pickard, 2007:177). A check of the

recording was also made, with the intention of writing down as much of the information as could be remembered immediately, had an error occurred (Patton, 1980:251). Fortunately no errors did occur during any of the recording process and each recording was audible throughout and transcribing was able to be completed. Extensive notes were not taken, as this would have involved analysing the data as the interview progresses and not simply recording it (Silverman, 2005:178). A CD was used to back up the interview on the return journey from each library to ensure its longevity.

3.2 Questionnaire

1. Which of the following best describes your views?

- a) Music specialists alone should look after and handle the music materials in a public library*
- b) Music specialists and music non-specialists should look after and handle the music materials in a public library together*
- c) Non-music specialists alone should look after and handle the music materials in a public library*

This first question complements the interview question with regard to whether music specialists or non-music specialists are able to handle the music collection more effectively. Here options were given to make it easier for the librarians answering, so as little of their time as possible was taken up.

2. Do you think that librarians working with a music collection should be especially trained in handling music collections, or do you feel that they should be able to deal with it with their general librarianship training?

- a) Trained in music (go to question 3.)*
- b) Will already have the skills from general librarianship training, degree or otherwise (go straight to question 4.)*

This question compliments the previous question as it enquires as to the training that librarians feel they should receive. It determined what librarians thought were the key skills when dealing with and handling a music collection. If they considered that training in music is required, then they were

instructed to go to question three so that they could elaborate further about the sorts of training that they consider best. Otherwise, they were instructed to proceed to the final question.

3. Where do you think that most of the training needed to work with a music collection could be acquired?

- a) Music specialists that are working in the library*
- b) Courses and training days run by various organisations*
- c) Librarians should come ready trained to the library*
- d) Other, please state _____*

This was to find out the librarians views on how effective they perceive different types of training to be. The 'other' option was applied here to ensure that answers were not limited.

4. If they were to have some training, what would be key skills that librarians new to working with music should learn? Either give specific musical terms/ areas they need to know about, or any skills that are particularly valuable when working with music collections.

This final question provided an insight into topics that librarians thought their colleagues should be trained in. This helped inform the recommendations, as well as possible topics for future training events.

3.2.1 Post Questionnaire

Each response was analysed as it was received. The answers were inputted directly into a table which allowed for easy access to the data. Pie charts were made to represent the first three answers, as this gave a more visual representation of the proportion of librarians supporting each answer. The last question required a purely written discussion due to the wide variety of answers that it induced.

3.3 Piloting

Both the interview questions and questionnaire questions were piloted with librarian colleagues. This was to ensure that the order of the questions made sense and the question prompted an answer on the topic required and was not misinterpreted. Some minor alterations were made to wording, but only to clarify certain aspects. This also presented an opportunity to ensure that the recording equipment recorded at a volume that was audible and could therefore later be transcribed.

4. Results

*“...a lot of people come here and are amazed
at the size and the material that we have”*

Response by interviewee

4.1 Interview

The interviews were successful and many examples were given to illustrate points. There was only one problem as a result of a train being delayed. Out of the twenty that were interviewed, nine were non-music specialists and eleven were specialists. None of the librarians interviewed were given an indication as to whether they were considered to be a specialist or not, so this could not bias or skew the results in any way. Librarians were interviewed from Barnsley, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Chesterfield, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham and Rotherham. To keep it anonymous the libraries will hereafter be referred to as A-J, so that the members of staff cannot be identified (Kvale, 2009:272). I was also able to interview a service which will be referred to as a specialist service, so that the identity of these individuals will also remain anonymous.

Of the ten libraries interviewed only three had entirely non-specialists, five had only specialists and two had a mixture of both specialists and non-specialists. This gave a good spread of results, though ideally more non-music specialists would have been interviewed. Only one library did not reply to the original plea for interviews, which meant that more libraries did not need to be picked to create a balanced set of findings. One of the libraries was unable to spare the time for a face-to-face interview, due to the changes they were suddenly faced with. Instead the questions were sent to them, with a couple of email follow up enquiries to expand certain questions. Therefore this will also be treated as an interview and added in with the rest of the results.

Berg (2007:108) describes how the length of an interview can be a relative concept, depending on what it is that is required from the interview. These

were between fifteen minutes and an hour, with the majority lasting about thirty minutes in total. A couple of the interviewees were unsure about it being recorded, but after an explanation of why it was being done, their fears were dispelled and they expressed no further objections. Nothing went wrong with the recording process which meant the brief notes made were largely unnecessary. During each interview a neutral stance was taken, particularly with the opening questions about music background (Silverman, 2004:140). It was essential so as not to put the interviewees under any pressure, or to offer any indication as to the validity of their answers.

Each of the sections of the interview will be looked at as a whole and the results within them discussed. Any other questions relating to that topic which were commented upon by the interviewees will also be presented. After this they will be discussed in more detail in the discussion chapter. All interviewees and the whereabouts of each library they belong to will remain anonymous.

4.1.1 Musical Background

*Do you have a music degree of any other musical examination certificates?
(e.g. ABRSM instrumental grades)*

Twelve of the twenty librarians had some sort of musical playing experience. Of those twelve, five of them have music degrees, in which extensive musical knowledge is imperative. Of the grades mentioned, all stated that they were above grade five, with five librarians performing to grade eight standard, one to grade six/seven, two to grade five and even one at diploma level, which is the stage higher than grade eight. There was also a librarian who said that when she first came to the post, she felt she lacked music theory knowledge, and consequently completed an Open University course in music to expand her understanding.

Do you have any music librarianship training, formal or informal?

Only four of the twenty librarians have had any music specific librarianship training. Two librarians completed a module within their librarianship course and the other two did a joint music and librarianship qualification at Aberystwyth. A quarter of the librarians said that they attended one or more of the courses run by IAML for some training. One librarian mentioned that she had no specific training in music librarianship, but that she runs training courses for others, as she is a music specialist. A couple also mentioned that although they have no formal qualifications, they have learnt on the job and have extensive experience. Worryingly, six of those who stated that they do not have any musical training also lack music librarianship training. So despite having no musical skills, they are still expected to work with a music collection.

Are you able to read music confidently?

Eleven of the librarians stated that they could read music competently. Five thought they had some level of understanding, but would not be able to sit down and play something if they were presented with a score. Unsurprisingly, the four who answered no to the qualifications questions were also unable to read music.

Do you understand each of the following terms?

vocal score

miniature score

piano reduction

conductor's score

orchestral parts

symphony

concerto

opera

key signature

alto

baroque

romantic

Eleven librarians gave confident answers which explained all the terms accurately. All of the librarians were able to answer at least a couple correctly. Two librarians answered about half of them correctly, but were unsure about the rest and gave what seemed like guessed answers. They did, however, mention that they would probably be able to point a customer in the right direction for particular formats, even if they could not give an accurate definition of them. The remaining five only got one or two answers incorrect, and those were mainly to do with the more technical questions: piano reduction, symphony and concerto.

Do you know what a movement of a work is?

For this question, only three librarians were unsure what a movement was. Most gave a simple definition that it is a section in a piece, with a few showing slightly more knowledge by providing examples. Three librarians were unable to provide a definition due to their lack of knowledge and training either in music or music librarianship.

Are you aware of the differences between editions?

Four answered no to this, and were still unsure when they were told that there were differences. Three of them had no training in music, but one who had completed music and music librarianship training was unsure. Another librarian said that they were aware of different editions, but they could not tell me how they are different.

Are you familiar with any aspect of music copyright?

Unsurprisingly, most librarians knew about music copyright, with many 'heaving sighs' before they answered. There was only one who said no, although they elaborated by saying that if there was a query about copyright they would immediately refer the customer on to the music publishers. A couple of librarians also said, that although they did not know any details,

they knew that they were not allowed to let any member of the public photocopy music. It is worth noting at this stage that all those librarians who do not have as much training in music knew about some aspect of music copyright.

Using the responses for all the questions in this section, nine music specialists and eleven non-music specialists have been identified. Some were easy to identify, but others were more difficult. This was because they either answered all the terms correctly, but do not have any music qualifications, or they have qualifications, but were unable to answer all of the key questions. However, using the definition stated at the beginning, “A specialist is described as someone with appropriate librarian training in music librarianship, or an amateur interest in music with an ability to read music and understand musical terms”, they were differentiated accordingly.

Two of the non-music specialists were able to answer all of the terms correctly, and both of them have been working with music collections for a long time. Most of the specialists were able to give correct definitions, though the two that gave a couple of incorrect answers have not been working with music collections as long as others. This highlights just how much knowledge is gained, not only from a music qualification, but through the valuable experience of working with a collection. However, two librarians argued that having this knowledge was not a requirement of the job and it was not until they were appointed that they were pushed into the direction of music, due to the knowledge they had in that area.

4.1.2 How the Service is Managed

Is there a member of staff who has had specialist training in music amongst you?

This evoked a varied response, with some providing contrasting answers within the same library. Ten librarians said there was someone with musical training amongst them with nine saying that there was not such a person. A

couple of the nine said that there was a music specialist until recently, but that they have now retired. This matches the aim to identify libraries where a specialist member of staff has left. One librarian from Library A pointed out, that of the staff there is only one who is required to have musical training/knowledge as part of their job description. There was also one member of staff who was unsure if there was a specialist working within their library. Someone with specialist training matches the definition stated at the beginning. Two or three librarians said that they worked with someone who had picked up a lot of musical knowledge from working there, but these were not counted as specialists in the terms of this dissertation.

How many members of staff are there that look after the music collection?

There was a great mix of responses for this question, ranging from thirty to one. Library A definitely have the biggest set of staff, but they include all the lending staff as the music stock is combined with the rest, especially CDs. Library J are in the same situation, but have a slightly smaller group of about twenty librarians to look after one music collection. Library I employs twelve members of staff with the sole purpose of managing the music section and the other librarians have two or three. Library E has the smallest number of staff with one working full time and two working part time.

If there is only one member of staff, do they manage other sections as well as the music section?

Libraries C, D, H, I and the specialist service are the only libraries that have separate staff for the music section. All the rest have to manage other sections as well. The specialist service was interviewed in the same manor as the other libraries, even though they do not work in a full library like the others interviewed. They have an online catalogue of performance sets of music that can be inter-library loaned to any library. All the libraries which employ non-specialists, also require them to look after other sections as well as the music one.

If yes, what are the other sections?

The other sections mostly include general responsibilities. Nine of the twelve have general lending tasks which are mostly for the whole library. Three others have defined roles which range from support assistant to central lending manager. This implies that due lack of funding, librarians now also have to manage other sections in the library and not just music.

Are there opportunities for the staff, (including) you, to receive any training?

Though five librarians gave a definite no, a couple said they were not aware of any musical training they could do. Of the thirteen others, ten of them said they have been on some sort of IAML training course. 'Hit the Right Note' and 'Music for the Terrified' were two that were mentioned specifically. *Allegro Training* and *Libraries North West* for inter-library loans was also revealed. It is strange that many were aware of courses, yet revealed in an earlier question that they had not attended one. Four of the librarians said that they gave training for other members of staff. Unfortunately one no longer does this, but they do use the IAML courses instead. Two of them send staff to other courses, as well as giving them in-house training. Here there appears to be no distinction as to specialists or non-specialists knowing more about training opportunities, however only music specialists give any in-house training.

Do you have a library policy directly relating to music?

Only seven librarians (interviewed in just four libraries) indicated that there was a policy within the library which related directly to music. Most have a general policy but through discussion it was found that these all relate to stock. There was one library which does not even have a written policy and another which did have one specific to music, but since they have undergone a restructuring, she was unsure as to the current situation. Unsurprisingly, all but one of the music specific policies came from libraries that have a music specialist employed. The managers must feel that music is important and therefore are giving it the individuality it needs.

4.1.3 The Usage of the Collection

Would you say your music collection is used to its full potential, or could more usage be got from the collection?

Fourteen said that they felt that the collection was not being used to its full potential, suggesting that more could be got from the collection. Some thought that more could be got from it, but mentioned problems such as a lack of staff to be able to promote the collection and the public being unaware of what the library has in stock. One library gave an example of when they had a free issue month for CDs. Instead of the usual approximate two thousand issues, it went up to nine thousand for that month. This just shows that collections have more to offer. The specialist service was slightly different and they mentioned a problem with trying to predict the needs of their users. It was thought to be used to its full potential by the local borrowers, but maybe more could be seen from the external borrowers. All other music specialists thought that collections were not reaching their full potential.

Are you able to supply all materials that customers ask for from within the collection in your library authority?

Two librarians indicated that they were, with one explaining that they thought that there was a low expectation from users who do not ask for things they know the library does not possess. Three other, bigger libraries thought they were able to supply most of the materials. The remaining fourteen said a definite no, making comments such as no library would be able to supply all the customers' needs just from the contents of one library. Library H, which has recently vacated their building, said how they will probably have to rely more on other libraries now that they do not have easy access to a lot of their stock. With the exception of one library, all the libraries with non-specialists reported that they could not supply all materials just from within their library.

Do you partake of inter-library loans?

All the libraries interviewed said they took part in some sort of inter-library loan system. One said that their usage was minimal and another only used it for single copies of music. There were also a couple of other libraries mentioned, which were often used to refer customers to, for example the Wakefield library.

From inter-library loans and your stock are you normally able to satisfy all customers' requests?

There was a positive response to this question with seven affirming 'yes' and the rest somewhere between 'most' and 'majority'. A few unavoidable problems were considered by interviewees, such as when customers' ask for things that are hire only, or they are within copyright. Also if they have a short window of need and unreasonable demand, for example a choir practice next week.

Do you hire out performing sets to choirs/orchestras?

Library I was the only library to say that they never charge for the loan of performing sets. They believe it should be part of the core service and they are used regularly. The four librarians that do not hire out at all said that they refer people onto other larger places. Libraries B and F both said they would either inter-library loan them or refer to Wakefield to satisfy the customer. Library D stated that they only hire out to orchestras.

Has there ever been a time where you have not felt confident in answering a customer's question?

The librarians from libraries B, C, D, E and I state that there has never been a time when they have not felt confident in answering a customer's question. These are all music specialists. There was also a non-specialist librarian from Library F who said that they used the reference training they had received for the other part of their job to find out anything they were unsure of. The

remaining twelve all stated there were lots of questions they often struggled with, and through further probing the following areas were listed: jazz, folk, world, unknown composers, acoustics, arrangements/editions, parts, formats, old songs, for example 1930s. There was a comment about customers assuming that all of the librarians have very specialist and technical knowledge, possibly even coming in with a vague query and expecting the librarian to be able to interpret what they want in order to find what they require. They also often expect any librarian they contact to be able to read music.

There were a few comments which stated that as music is such a huge subject, no one person would be able to know everything. Library I has gone some way to resolving this problem by harnessing the staff's knowledge of different aspects of music, and when a query comes in they pool their knowledge and use each other's expertise. This knowledge pool, however, has been created by accident and when librarians retire, the gap of their knowledge is felt by the others when the retired librarian is not replaced. Other librarians also mentioned that it was good to be able to refer to someone when a problem was encountered. One final point, brought up by only one librarian, was the ability to be able to search the library catalogue with ease. She mentioned that it was particularly hard to find things when there was limited information on the catalogue, or the terms that you want to search for were not there, for example being able to search a song title that appear in anthologies, which often do not have a list of contents on the catalogue.

4.1.4 What Stock the Library Manages

What media do you have in your library?

For comparison in this section the specialist service will be excluded, because they are slightly different to the library setup and only possess performing sets for hire.

Where more than one librarian was interviewed in one library, no two librarians gave the same response to this question. This could be because they forgot one or two smaller items or maybe they were unaware of what the term 'scores' entails. All libraries have CDs and DVDs. Only one library has any LPs and videos left. Nine librarians said their library had performing sets, which is eight libraries overall. Previous responses, from those that said they loan them out to users, indicated that there are seventeen librarians who should have named performance sets for this question. However, as not all librarians deal with performing sets, they could have temporarily forgotten about them.

Fourteen librarians mentioned scores in their library, with a couple mentioning hard copy music. This probably encompassed scores as well. Ten also have some other form of printed music, ranging from sheet music and anthologies, to teach yourself guides. Thirteen librarians said that their libraries had books on music. Five librarians mentioned having a few manuscripts and two have microfilms.

Library A mentioned some planned electronic pianos with their new music library. On touring the libraries, electronic pianos were also spotted at Libraries C and I. Libraries D, I and J have some sort of streaming facilities or electronic resources, with Library F currently considering implementing such a system. Library I is also the only library to mention digital images, though these are in the special collections

Which media/format in your library would you say is loaned the most?

Most librarians said that CDs were loaned the most with twelve indicating just CDs and one thinking it was between CDs and music sets. There was also one response in favour of DVDs which was justified with the opinion that most people are downloading audio music these days. Libraries H and J both have performing collections of high standing, and it is unsurprising that they both voted these over CDs. Library D has a strong influence from the surrounding area and their song books are used most due to auditions for the local colleges.

This question was not worded as well as it could have been. By a loan, many librarians questioned if a performance set of sixty copies would count as sixty loans. Once told a whole set was counted as one, they gave the above answers, but on reflection this question did not prove as useful as initially anticipated.

Is there a reason for this?

Other than Libraries D, H and J which were mentioned in the previous question, everyone else gave similar reasons. CDs are thought to be the most popular, appealing across the broadest range and the easiest format for the general public. Not everyone can read music and so there are more passive musicians than active ones. Playing music was not thought to be as popular as listening to it, as no specific knowledge or skills are required to simply listen. There were also references to the public treating the collection as a 'listen before you buy' scheme.

On a more technical note, one librarian argued that there is a limited collection of music now, as there is no team approach to stock development where different members of staff are in charge of individual areas. This is due to a re-structuring that occurred. There was also a comment from a member of staff who suggested that when there was a change in the layout of the score section, it was thought that the issue count would go down, due to it being less accessible. Instead, however, the issue count actually went up. This particular librarian thought it was because it was more aesthetically pleasing after the change which implies the layout has a positive impact on things issuing. Finally the specialist service said that their vocal scores were more popular than any other format, due to the popular hobby of choral singing.

How often do you buy new stock?

Most librarians have some aspect of stock involved in their job, though a couple were unsure, as their jobs did not require them to order stock. It

appears that CDs are bought most frequently, either weekly or monthly. Books are also purchased every month. Scores are bought less frequently varying from monthly to three times a year. Performing sets are the stock bought most infrequently. These seem to be more along the lines of 'several new sets a year' and are not bought at set times like other formats. DVDs seem to have the biggest variance on frequency, ranging from weekly to three times a year with extensive reviews. This seems to mirror the budget of the library, as to whether there is money available to buy DVDs. Only one library mentioned any problems with buying new stock and as their stock manager recently retired they are facing more problems, like deciding how the responsibilities are divided amongst the remaining staff.

There was a librarian who indicated that they used to be on supplier selection but due to an overload of popular music they switched to choosing it themselves. It seems to be most popular to order items on standing order or by using supplier selection. Suppliers that were mentioned included Bertram, Cramer and Askews. Cramers are used most, but there were many positive comments about each.

Who decides what stock to purchase?

Most of the librarians have some aspect of stock selection in their jobs. Only five claimed not to have an input on the new stock being chosen. Nine librarians said it was solely their job, but often they use opinions from other members of staff, particularly for old or worn out materials that need replacing. Seven librarians stated that the responsibility of stock was distributed between a number of people. This ranges from three to twelve.

How much does your library spend on new music related stock? Either as a figure or percentage of stock.

Library B by far has the smallest budget here. They only have a few hundred pounds per year and are consequently unable to buy much stock. The biggest budget is from Library I at just over £60,000, followed closely by Library A. They are having a new music library built and have some extra

funding for that, but even disregarding that, they would still have the second largest budget. Libraries D and H are next, though the budget for H is to be spread across all branch libraries as well. Libraries C and G are relatively close with just over £20,000 each, while E, J and F follow behind with a smaller budget.

How the amount is spent over the formats varies from library to library, but books and scores appear to be where most is spent. Books and DVDs are also often grouped with other things from the lending library which are unrelated to music. Four of the ten libraries spend considerably more on CDs than any other format. One of these, however indicated that like Library H, they buy CDs for all their branch libraries.

Is there one area in which you buy stock more frequently?

Library J was the only library where sheet music is bought most frequently. This could be because of their reputation as a good performance set supplier and a high level of demand which necessitates a good stock of sheet music. Their lack of budget means that it is necessary for them to prioritise the music they order to keep up their reputation. Library C indicated that they spend up to their budget on everything and nothing is given particular preference. Of the remaining librarians, eleven said that CDs were undoubtedly the most popular with three indicating that popular music is bought more frequently than any other genre. The specialist services fit in with this in that they buy the more popular items which are in demand.

Have your resources for music been increased, maintained or cut back in recent times?

Eight librarians reported a cut back in the resources, though some indicated this was minimal, but enough to have an impact. One librarian also mentioned current financial problems which have caused the cut backs, which may otherwise have remained constant. Positively, ten libraries said their resources have been maintained with one being unsure. The remaining librarian told of a previous cut they had, but now there is an increase in their

finances. This is partly because of a new music library plan, but will help them to replenish the stock. However, of the others interviewed in this library, none were aware of the increase in money.

Do you have a special music cataloguing team?

Library I is the only library where they have a specialised cataloguing team. Although they are not all cataloguers, the entire music team takes part in cataloguing to ensure the standard is maintained at a high level. One other librarian indicated that there was a music specialist, but other colleagues have clarified that this was not the case. This librarian is a music non-specialist, and it appears that they were mistaken about the training of the cataloguer in question. The remaining fourteen said they had no specialist team, with a further two indicating that there used to be a specialist cataloguer, but they had recently left the position.

If not, who catalogues the music you buy?

Those who replied yes actually gave answers to this question as well, so will be included here. Eleven named the general bibliographic services as those who catalogue the music. Three of these have a strong interest in music and another liaises frequently with the music team when queries arise. The specialist service and Library I's music is catalogued in-house by the music staff, as mentioned previously. Only one librarian mentioned that they thought the suppliers catalogued all the music. This individual is a non-specialist and does not deal with the stock, which according to other members of staff at the library is done by the general cataloguers. However, this librarian did admit to knowing very little about the cataloguing done in the library. One librarian said that they used to send their cataloguing away to a department which was run by the council, however, this has recently been shut down and they are unsure how they will cope now.

There was a discussion with one librarian who suggested that the management puts the librarians under pressure to accept the standard of

cataloguing done by the general cataloguers. She further explained how classical music in particular needs careful cataloguing.

4.1.5 Any Plans for Change in the Library

The next set of questions will be considered in terms of each library separately. This will take into account responses from all the librarians questioned in each library. All the questions in this section directed at change.

Library A

A lot of changes have happened at Library A in the past few years, but there is another plan to separate the music stock, creating a separate music library again. It will give them a chance to modernise the library with practice pianos, a music technology suite and PCs for music websites. They also want to employ someone with an extensive knowledge of contemporary music and music technology. They are, however, fighting against management who want them to redeploy into the post instead of creating a new one.

The non-music specialists who were interviewed here gave consideration to points not revealed by music specialists. One thought that having a separate music library would actually be detrimental to the stock, in that people would not necessarily venture into the music library. At the moment the CDs are first on display when you walk in and the rest of the music stock is at the back of the room. Another librarian spoke of the problem of staff not knowing enough. They said that if they had more knowledge then they would not have to send people away disappointed and they would also be able to help organising the stock. There were also some complaints about the shelving and things getting caught, but with the new shelving in the new music library this should be solved.

Library B

There is lots of uncertainty at Library B. A re-development might take place in a year's time and the library may be moved to temporary accommodation for a while. Alternatively, the current financial pressures may overtake this and they may be left as they are. This makes developing or changing the current building problematic, as it could result in money being spent for no ultimate gain. If the new building does proceed, it is hoped that music would be an integral part of it. There would be a larger space with fewer subsections dividing areas. This would help the collection to be better displayed, more prominent and therefore more attractive to library users.

They had a recent initiative which stated that all the stock on the shelves must look new and therefore more attractive to users. This went against music as a lot of the stock was perfectly usable, but did not look new. The miniature scores were struck particularly hard and as only a few remain on the shelves, most customers no longer realise they are there. There is a sign up instructing them to ask, but it seems that as users cannot browse through them, they are now barely used at all. The enquiry desk in the music section of the library was also cut back, following the general trend in reducing music sections about a year ago. It physically still remains there, but enquiries are taken at other points in the library. The librarians said that this has had a negative impact in terms of their interaction with customers.

Library C

Library C is generally happy with the way their music collection is housed on the top floor. Though a little more room and some more shelf space would be advantageous, there are no major problems. However, it must be taken into account that they will now have a new manager and the successor may have a different opinion. The new manager was unavailable to talk to as he was not due to take up his post until later in the year and until he has settled in it would be unfair to do so anyway.

Library D

The music collection at Library D has seen some serious changes in the past few years. Having been moved three times it is accustomed to change. The only real complaint here was the lack of space. They have a lot of stock in the stacks which people cannot browse through. However, due to it being a listed building, there will be no plans for any renovation and they will have to make the most of what they have for the foreseeable future.

Library E

Change is happening at Library E, although, as yet, it is unclear exactly what. A department from the City county is coming into the building and the librarians do not know how much room they will need. This change is not necessarily for the benefit of the library and this has caused some anxiety amongst the staff. The music library has amalgamated with the arts library and a lot of training has been required so that the staff on the enquiry desk are able to answer enquiries confidently. They originally thought that they would have less room than they have and there is room to put some more stock out, providing no other section is being moved to the same floor. They also thought that improvements to the lighting would be beneficial, as the low level stock is difficult to see due to the large shelves, full with stock.

Library F

There are mixed feelings at Library F as to the current layout and storage of the music collection. It is felt that better display systems might be able to house the stock more economically, but due to the recent refurbishment in the building they have to integrate seamlessly with the rest of the decor. The collection is also split across two floors and due to space restraints, the music books have been split across these two floors. There is no current plan to change anything due to the recent refurbishment. However, a lot of the stock is unable to be displayed and this is thought to have had a negative impact on the issuing of items, even though there are signs indicating where they have more stock available.

Library G

Here, staff highlighted the problem they were having finding things. A few years ago they did a complete revamp of the way they arranged the music stock on the shelves by putting in categories for anthologies, popular music etc. The stock was also re-labeled with clearer headings and this was particularly helpful for the non-specialist staff. There is currently no plan to change the public display, but they are hoping to move stock around in the basement to make it easier for staff. The music stock also has an older Dewey numbering system, so there is a desire to change these to the new numbers. A bit more space would be advantageous in terms of stock and some more light on it, particularly at ground level.

Library H

Library H is another library which is undergoing changes however, it has an advantage over most in that it has a temporary library for the interim period, which is where the interview took place. The librarian spoke of how they have been lucky to have a whole room for music to themselves, whereas other departments have had to merge, resulting in far less space. They will open again in three years, though the final plans are unclear at present. The librarian talked of how a thorough sorting of the collection meant that she was able to see what was really being issued and what was not. It was also a chance to get rid of some old, unused stock, though a lot of it has gone into storage and is not easily assessable currently.

Library I

None of the librarians at Library I are happy with the way the collection is displayed at the present time. In three years, however, they will have a new library which is currently undergoing construction. This new library will bring with it positive and public exposure which will benefit the library by attracting new customers as well as the old ones. One major problem they have at the moment is attracting users of the library to venture past the first floor to

explore the music collection. They have three floors but it is not explicit how to get to the second and third floors. This is definitely something which has been considered and solved in the new library. They are also hoping to have rolling stacks in the public area so that more stock can be accessed from the stacks, which is currently inaccessible to the public. With a planned retrospective cataloguing project, all the stock that is currently un-catalogued in the stacks will be online for all to see. With external and internal performance spaces planned, along with the practice rooms and editing booths, the library will be a lot more up to date and offer good amenities for the public, particularly in the music section.

Library J

A redevelopment is currently taking place at Library J. There will be a thorough modernisation of the building which will bring the library up to date and open up many more possibilities. It is thought that the current library does not have good displays and with the new library this should be solved, making it more attractive to the users.

Specialist Service

The specialist service is based in a library and due to the change at this library, they are consequently moving upstairs. They are cramped where they are at the moment and so this change is welcome. Both librarians questioned here mentioned that having the stock in a separate place from where they are can make it difficult, but when they go upstairs all the stock will be going with them. This will make it easier to access, but in order to house it appropriately, it will need proper shelving. They also told of a complaint from a user about not being able to reserve items, but there are no plans to resolve this issue at present.

Overall

It seems that despite the recent hardship financially, many libraries have new buildings or music sections planned. Six of the libraries talked of some sort of

change ranging from a small a change, like moving the stock around to a larger change involving the venue. A lot of the librarians complained about the lack of space they have and as a result, stock is often stored behind the scenes where the public cannot browse through it. The issues which can arise when stock is separated is also generally thought of as problematic, though one librarian said that maybe having a entirely separate music department with its own staff is a bit old fashioned now. There is also an emphasis on modern and attractive looking shelving which can display the stock better.

4.1.6 Music Specialists

Would you say that music specialists bring something to the collection that non-music specialists do not?

This question was responded to with a unanimous yes. One librarian said probably, but all the rest were certain that music specialists bring something to a collection which non-specialists do not.

If yes, what would these skills include?

Twelve librarians mentioned knowledge in some form or other. Knowledge of editions, repertoire, materials and technical knowledge were all thought to help with enquiry work. One non-music specialist librarian indicated that she thought that she did not have enough knowledge. Staff also thought that communicating with the customers on the same level was important, with six saying that it was necessary for enquiry work. Being able to understand the customer is crucial, particularly if they give you an incorrect piece of information. Only a couple of librarians thought that an ability to read music was a key skill, but both said this was useful when judging whether the music was suitable for a customer, for example a beginner would need very different music from an advanced player. Supporting the overall needs of customers was mentioned by one librarian, who also thought that a music librarian could help develop a user's interest in a way that a non-music specialist could not.

It was thought that specialists would benefit the stock itself: a familiarity with stock and particularly editions is helpful for enquiry work, but also for developing the stock. Three of the librarians who thought that knowledge was key, indicated that familiarity with the most common repertoire is useful when choosing what to buy amongst other things. Having a general awareness of both popular and classical music as a whole subject will positively benefit a collection. A couple of librarians mentioned here that training non-music specialist staff is very beneficial to a library. This training, however, would be done whilst on the job by the specialist staff.

One non-specialist librarian commented upon the “old image of a music library”: a place where only the really educated go, with an intimidating enquiry desk and stacks of old scores/books, stating that it “could be seen as very off-putting and uninviting by other librarians as well as customer”. This idea that music is an elite subject could have prevented librarians becoming involved with music when they otherwise might have done. There is also a problem for members of staff who are not so technically minded being able to deal with the new technologies which are now available. A couple of librarians who are also involved in a managerial capacity reported that local authorities do not think that specific knowledge relating to a single subject is essential anymore. Instead, they want people to be multitalented, claiming that there is no longer sufficient money to be able to employ specialists.

Would you say that non-music specialists bring something to the collection that music specialists do not?

In answer to this question, seventeen librarians said that non-music specialists do bring something to a collection. The remaining three all said no, but later reconsidered and admitted that they can have a different way of viewing things. The librarians who answered no were all music specialists.

If yes, what would these skills include?

Seven of the librarians thought that different musical interests could be brought to the collection. These may not be training in music, but an interest

in a certain genre or style. For example, one librarian said that a member of their staff was a gig promoter for a local venue, which had given him an in-depth knowledge of local bands. An enthusiasm for music is also thought to help. Four librarians said that a non-specialist can bring a fresh pair of eyes to the collection, analogous to those of the average customer. They may see things that music specialists miss.

As well as music related skills, six librarians thought that bringing some transferable skills would be useful, including management skills, practical skills, information searching and organisational skills. It was noted that classical music is hard to learn on the job, but other forms of music do not pose the same difficulty. For example popular music, particularly CDs. One librarian also noted that having librarians of different ages helps considerably, as different ages tend to enjoy different forms of music and consequently have different specialisms and aptitudes.

Would you say that music specialists or non-music specialists are able to handle the music collection better?

No-one thought that non-specialists would be able to cope alone, but six declared that both a specialist and a non-music specialist would be better than having either one or the other. One of these said that only a single specialist was needed and it really was required to be able to run a high quality service proficiently. One librarian was of the opinion that having a specialism was not a determining factor as to whether a service is run correctly. Thirteen librarians said that they would prefer specialists to handle the collection, although two of these said that a combination would be an ideal situation.

Why do you think this?

A quarter of the librarians said that specific knowledge was the reason they thought a specialist was needed. When there is a particularly large collection, having somebody who other members of staff can approach with queries is also thought to be essential. Three librarians mentioned the need to be able

to communicate on the same level as customers when dealing with enquiry work, mainly to be able to give them what they require easily. It was also thought that the Western Classical divide from other music has made it particularly hard for a non-music specialist to cope with. Therefore a specialist was thought to be needed in this capacity, even if there were non-specialists working in conjunction with them. Training was again mentioned as something which only a specialist can provide.

There were also some comments in support of employing a dedicated member of staff for the music collection. They could then dedicate more time to the collection and accomplish far more than could be achieved by distributing staff throughout the library. One librarian also said that music can have many hidden dangers that non-music specialists might not be able to recognise. An example was given of a non-specialist member of staff not knowing the difference between a violin and a viola. As the two instruments use different clefs, this would undoubtedly cause problems. In answer to an earlier question there was also an example given of a non-specialist manager thinking that having one flute part missing from an orchestral set is acceptable, as there was another flute part in there, which he believed would be adequate for the purpose.

Of the librarians that said a combination of specialist and non-specialists would be preferable, one said that there are not many specialists left, so employing only music specialists would not be an option. Someone else said this was due to funding problems. A couple thought that having a range of skills would be better: either some specialists and some non-specialists, or librarians with transferable skills in terms of organisation and management. A non-specialist said that she considered that other non-music specialists would be willing to learn about music, enabling them to answer enquiries more confidently. This is best achieved with specialists and non-specialists in the library, so that a non-specialist has chance to prove themselves and learn new skills.

Would you agree with the statement, 'the number of music specialists is declining in public libraries?'

This was another question that received a unanimous yes. A couple of librarians said yes, but were not entirely sure and thought that it was probably true. There was also a librarian who said that she had evidence that this was the case from messages about posts being deleted on the IAML mailing list.

4.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire received sixteen replies altogether, which was higher than expected. Two more librarians said that they would fill in the questionnaire, but they were not able to send it back before the deadline set and were not able to be included. It is presumed that most of these will have been from music specialists, as music specialists more commonly signed up to the mailing list. The geographic spread of these libraries is unknown, as this information was irrelevant in terms of the answers they gave. From their work email addresses, however, it was identified that they were not concentrated in one area, and so their location could not have biased the results.

1. Which of the following best describes your views?

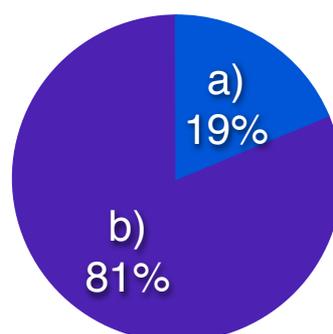
a) Music specialists alone should look after and handle the music materials in a public library

b) Music specialists and music non-specialists should look after and handle the music materials in a public library together

c) Non-music specialists alone should look after and handle the music materials in a public library

● a) ● b) ● c)

Question 1.



Three thought that music specialists alone should look after and handle the collection. The remaining twelve stated that both music specialists and non-specialists should share the task. No one chose the option for just non-music specialists.

2. Do you think that librarians working with a music collection should be especially trained in handling music collections, or do you feel that they should be able to deal with it with their general librarianship training?

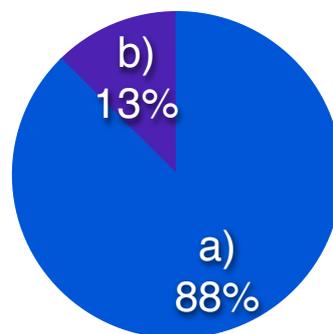
a) Trained in music (go to question 3.)

b) Will already have the skills from general librarianship training, degree or otherwise (go straight to question 4.)

● a)

● b)

Question 2.



Most thought that librarians should be trained in music in some form or other. Only two answered b), thinking they will already have some general skills. One of the two said that they thought a) would be preferable, but that public libraries do not have the resources to employ music specialists. This could be because they believe music specialists do not bring many general skills with them. So instead, if someone is employed in the library that has any music knowledge, they are pushed towards the music collection.

3. *Where do you think that most of the training needed to work with a music collection could be acquired?*

a) *Music specialists that are working in the library*

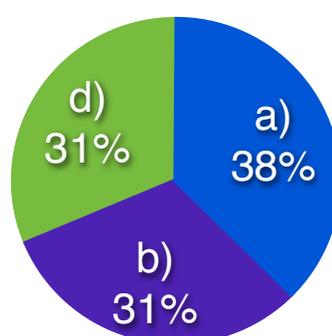
b) *Courses and training days run by various organisations*

c) *Librarians should come ready trained to the library*

d) *Other, please state*

● a) ● b) ● c) ● d)

Question 3.



This question had the most varied response. Four answers for a) were given, four for b) and five for d). No one gave c) as a response. This shows that they thought some sort of training will be required in the post. Those who answered d) stated that a combination of the answers would be best, with a) and b) mostly being stated. Someone also mentioned the potential problem with option a) in that it would require a music specialist to be in the establishment already.

4. *If they were to have some training, what would be key skills that librarians new to working with music should learn? Either give specific musical terms/ areas they need to know about, or any skills that are particularly valuable when working with music collections.*

This received a wide variety of responses, ranging from specific skills to ideas about music librarians in general. A few contradictions occurred, but

generally they were in agreement about most things. There were also things mentioned with particular reference to non-specialists.

Firstly a general knowledge of music was thought to be important, but this does not need to be gained through a music degree or its equivalent. Some knowledge of the major composers, music history and its development are needed for queries involving repertoire. General knowledge of repertoire for the various forms of music, including popular songs is also helpful.

Cataloguing was described as being carried out effectively, only when the cataloguer had some knowledge of arrangements, performing sets, keys, uniform titles and can read music. These are the things which are the hardest to learn, but during a music degree they would all be necessary and developed further.

It was considered that librarians new to working with music should become au fait with specific musical terms. Most are learnt when doing music theory and can be taught relatively easily to non-specialists. They are therefore a good starting point for any non-music specialist developing their music knowledge. These skills also received the most mention amongst the librarians responses. Musical symbols (including clefs etc.), dynamics, key signatures, time signatures and which instruments are transposing ones are all learnt about in music theory. Instrumentation and musical formats are also considered key skills that librarians should learn. The role played by arrangements and transcriptions should also be known, along with some knowledge of how editions of the same piece of music differ, often a serious consideration for choirs. The difference between 'accompanied' and 'a capella' was listed by one librarian, while another said an awareness of multimedia was needed more nowadays. These findings fit in with a study produced by Co-South (2005:22) about users of performance sets who, in their questionnaire, received comments from users such as, "the person who deals with music is never available when I call, and no-one else seems to understand my request". This shows that many users do expect the librarians to be able to understand what they are asking for.

The ability to read music was one of the topics which caused some controversy. Some thought it was necessary to be able to read music so they are able to communicate on the same level as the customer, however others thought it was unnecessary. The majority however, thought that reading music was a useful skill in terms of answering enquiries, but also necessary in order to effectively gauge the standard of a piece and its suitability for a performer. This applies especially to a simplified version of a piece. Only one librarian said that having played a musical instrument or sung, in a choir for example, would be useful. The general consensus was that it was imperative that a librarian working with music should appreciate the difficulties of language in music. Specifically mentioned were translations of operas, parallel texts and an ability to pronounce composers' names and titles of pieces.

More commonly known librarian skills also apply to aspects of music. The bibliography of music was thought to be important, both with online and printed materials including Grove, music supplier websites, catalogues, Encore and other specialist databases. The general principles of the inter-lending of music and a basic knowledge of the copyright laws relating to music are also invaluable, along with knowledge of the music publishing industry and why some items are not in the public domain. More specifically to music, a few responses mentioned that knowledge of sheet music repair would be helpful. Familiarity with the musical activities and resources in the local area would also be beneficial, so that when enquiries regarding these sorts of things are made, then they are able to offer informed, accurate advice: one librarian mentioned having a contact they could go to, who is not a librarian, but a local music specialist. Being able to use budgets effectively is also a good skill to have, along with physical fitness for carrying around music and a knowledge of the risks associated with manual handling.

A few issues were raised that cannot be learnt in a course as such. Five responses stated that an interest in music was essential, either a general interest, or an interest in a specific genre of music and also an enthusiasm for the subject. This interest must extend to being able to keep up with the latest trends. Two librarians said that having an awareness of the music

librarian community is advantageous: it offers things like courses that can be attended to extend their knowledge. One librarian said that in their experience much can be learnt on the job, but there is a certain amount of knowledge that must be gained in order to take requests and deal with enquiries competently. On the other hand, another said that knowledge of musical terms is not needed when buying stock, but knowledge of where to find new releases and what the essential stock items are, is necessary. It was also thought that being able to organise stock in a logical way is important and it is something which a music degree or an in-depth knowledge of music does not guarantee.

Another thing that was debated in the responses was whether customers expect the librarians to have very specialist knowledge. One librarian argued they do, particularly when helping them to locate materials. Another argued that technical knowledge was not needed, as customers can make appropriate judgements themselves, for example knowing whether a piece is at a suitable level, or what key it is in. In contrast, one librarian claimed that music users were unforgiving of staff who are unfamiliar with musical terms. An answer from a different librarian was that it is necessary to listen carefully to what a customer really wants. This applies to both sides of the argument.

The next factors were considered by a few librarians. One said that finding a fully qualified and experienced librarian who had knowledge across a wide range of music is difficult: an expertise in one area may lead to another area being neglected. They also stated that difficulties arise and escalate by not being able to solely focus on music. The views uncovered from the interviews carried out mirror these responses to the questionnaire. Another librarian mentioned that strong in-house training is invaluable, but these days it is not always possible. This was also concluded from the interviews, particularly as they need the time and expertise to train other new members of staff.

A couple of librarians stated that their answers would be different depending on the type of librarian employed. A librarian working with a special collection, or a strong music department in an academic setting would be required to have in-depth musical knowledge. There was also a distinction between

professional and non-professional staff. The professionals were thought to need some musical background, for example a music degree or a practical examination certificate, due to their higher responsibility. Non-professionals however, could learn the basics after being appointed to the post. Learning could take place in the form of in-house training, or external courses. That said, they do need a strong interest in music and a desire and ability to extend their knowledge.

5. Discussion

“...classical [music] is very specific, and you need to know a lot to fathom it out.”

Response by interviewee

5.1 Interviews

In the end there were nine non-music specialists and eleven music specialists interviewed. This meant that comparisons were fair and unbiased. The questionnaire did not determine if they were specialists, as this was not necessary to know. Instead, the only criterion for completing the questionnaire was that they worked with music in a library, due to it being related to training and what staff should know when working with music.

Only a fifth of the librarians interviewed have specific music librarianship training and it is therefore surprising that a further seven out of twenty interviewed are also music specialists but have not had this specific training. The trend that few librarians have music librarianship training may be indicative of the lack of facilities available to educate them. Presently only one module at Aberystwyth exists which provides this facility. However, the majority of the librarians interviewed have developed an understanding of music through their own performance or being around music enthusiasts. This long term engagement and enthusiasm for the subject which leads to an increasing awareness over time is not something that can be learnt in a day on a librarianship course.

It seems that most of the non-music specialist librarians have acquired knowledge from just working in the library, but it takes a lengthy amount of time. When informally talking to staff at Library H they indicated that after working there for about twenty to thirty years, they are just starting to feel confident that they can manage any enquiry themselves, without feeling the need to consult anyone else. The two youngest librarians who were

interviewed from Library A turned out to be non-specialists, and they struggled with defining specific terms, which supports this point.

The larger libraries have a trend whereby specific music staff are only allocated to the music collection, whereas smaller, particularly branch, libraries have to cope with other general responsibilities as well. As larger libraries acquire more money they will be in a better position to spend more on staff. In branch libraries there will be less money and the reduced number of staff will be needed to cover more areas. This will mean the smaller libraries will find it harder to employ specialists, though if the music collection is prominent in the library, they should try to do so. Currently, all libraries with non-music specialists require the librarians to look after other sections, as well as the music one. Whatever sized library, however, they may still be doing varied tasks within their role: cataloguing, enquiry work, desk work or stock buying.

Training is of particular importance when there are non-music specialists in the library. Two librarians were unaware of any courses they could go on relating to music. IAML (UK & Irl) could be more proactive in advertising these, particularly to the smaller branch libraries where they are in need of more help. It is encouraging to note, however, that half of the librarians have been on some form of IAML course, whether it be 'Music for the Terrified', 'Hit the Right Note' or the study weekends. *Libraries North West* has a slightly smaller reach, covering inter-library loans specifically. *Allegro Training* also does other courses for librarians which are not necessarily specific to music, so they do not have as wide an audience for music as IAML.

The four librarians who give in-house training deserve praise, with two of them sending staff to other courses as well. There were references to in-house training being invaluable, indicating that it should be implemented in more libraries. A non-music specialist indicated that she would be willing to learn whilst on the job, but only a specialist can give this sort of training. The specialists would be able to give basic training to beginners, moving onto more advanced enquiry work once they had understood the basics. They would also support staff having difficulties with enquiries. Library I has a

range of knowledgeable staff who they find crucial when answering enquiries, but this number of staff would not be feasible for smaller libraries with their financial constraints.

Seventy percent of the librarians, including all of the music specialists, considered that their music collections were not used to their full potential, in that they can get more usage out of the items they own. This shows a realisation of what can be achieved from a music collection. The lack of staff time proved to be a constraint, as they are not able to spend the time promoting the collection and giving it adequate publicity. Efforts have been made in some libraries, with displays made of newly bought stock or older collections for loan, but the general consensus was that more staff time is needed. Unfortunately if the general trend of councils continue and staff continue to retire with no replacements then the maximum potential of the collection may not be reached. This will actually cause an overall loss to the council, as it is likely that user numbers will go down.

There was a positive reaction to inter-library lending with all libraries saying that they used the system in some form or other. All of the larger libraries and Library B said they were able to supply most things from within their library. Those that do not have performing sets also refer users to other libraries which can provide the materials. This shows that libraries are willing to cooperate and that librarians do so on a regular basis.

Even with this cooperation there are still customers who leave empty handed. Although all of the librarians said that they were able to answer most of the queries, only specialists stated that they had been able to answer all of the queries. There are always unrealistic queries or demands which are not able to be rectified, for example if it is in copyright or if they decide they need something at short notice which has already been taken out by another user. When the librarians were asked to specify the areas where they did not feel so confident answering questions, many topics were listed. Though Library I has used group knowledge to solve this sort of scenario, we can only speculate as to how other libraries cope. Those that have a specialist with extensive experience are well catered for, but many others still have to send

customers away either unhappy or frustrated that the librarian does not understand what they mean and therefore cannot fulfill the request. For example if they ask for a particular song or an obscure composer, a non-music specialist may have more difficulty finding this and may not be able to find it at all.

Librarians commented that a lot of the customers expect very specialist and technical knowledge, and also assume that the librarian can read music. If the customer is unable to communicate the enquiry to the librarian there is no hope of it being satisfied. There were many stories of non-music specialists not understanding what would seem simple to a musician, for example, you must have the correct number of parts for each member of the orchestra in an orchestral set. In such a circumstance, the specialist members of staff could be used as a contact for any non-specialist struggling. The query could be written down and referred to the specialist. They could then get back to the librarian and point them in the right direction, or handle the query on their behalf.

New library designs all include increasingly modern features, for example the addition of computers and music technology. This is a significant improvement on the previously dated facilities available.

CDs are the most popular format used and are accessible to active and passive musicians alike. However, some libraries with a strong and maintained collection of performance sets tend to get more usage from these than CDs. CDs of all genres of music, but pop music CDs in particular are the most frequently bought in libraries, which mirrors their usage. It shows that the library is following the trend of the general population, in that they are catering for the needs of the majority. Libraries do not appear to have a preference as to whether the librarian buying the stock is a specialist or not and using a specialist does not result in additional funding.

As CDs are generally the most popular format, it could be said that they will get more queries relating to them. As non-music specialists are able to cope with most CD related queries, this could be the reason behind the continuing

recruitment of non-specialists by councils. This appears to be the only reason uncovered by this dissertation as to why non-specialists appear to be the preferred employees. However, they are only confident when handling the few genres known to them and as the genres of music are vast, evidence suggests that being a non-specialist is disadvantageous in terms of music based enquiries. Also, a study by Metcalfe (2010b:11) showed that fourteen of the seventeen authorities she interviewed thought that the issues of CDs were declining. This is to the detriment of non-specialists, as they are generally capable of dealing with CD enquiries.

It is most surprising of all to find that only seven librarians in three libraries said they were experiencing cut backs. This covers the libraries which have the highest budgets, which would be expected, but also the library with the lowest budget - Library B. This just shows how a general lack of money affects the libraries and funding is not increased if a specialist is employed.

Those librarians working daily with music collections responded unanimously with the view that music specialists bring certain, desirable skills to a music collection. Knowledge was the top of the list, with enquiry work and communication not far behind. It is obvious to say that music specialists bring a lot of innate knowledge with them, because most of them are highly trained in music. This is also true of any specialism. The most important thing uncovered here was that they can communicate with customers in a way in which non-specialists cannot. Communicating on the same level allows them to give the customers what they want much more quickly, and they can recommend other things the customer may be interested in.

There is also a predominance of opinion that non-music specialists also bring different qualities to the collection. Being a non-specialist does not mean that they are not without knowledge of a number of different musical genres. Everyone has their preferences and individual tastes, which means that we are most familiar with the genre of music we like to listening to. Though non-specialists will be unable to tell what key a piece is in, they will probably be able to name quite a few artists or composers of their preferred style of music, amongst many other things. This is all useful when it comes to

answering enquiries. There were also more general skills which non-specialists were thought to have developed, for example management and organisation. Though a specialist could also possess these skills, they may have concentrated more on the music side and so a non-specialist with these other skills would be valuable to a library.

When asked whether they thought a specialist or non-specialist should look after music, seven replied that a combination of both should be equally involved and thirteen said that a specialist should be in control of the collection. None thought that a non-music specialist would be able to successfully manage the collection independently. This should be noted by councils that are insistent on hiring only non-specialists to manage music collections. This will work if there is already a specialist there who can help them, but otherwise evidence from staff who are currently dealing with music suggests this approach is unconstructive. A few of the specialists mentioned at some point during in the interview, that if they left or retired, a non-specialist would be the most likely substitute. Many also said that the requirement to have specialist skills was not within their job description. This needs to change if the full potential of the collection is to be realised.

5.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire overall gave similar results, with only a couple of debated points. They all gave some knowledge specific to music, with the majority saying that general librarianship skills are also necessary. These range from being able to sort music and shelve it in the correct place, to knowing how to buy stock to a budget. The majority of librarians said that a basic knowledge of musical terminology was essential, with formats, key signatures and symbols (including clefs etc.) being the main three. This kind of knowledge can be taught easily on a course. They do not have to remember exactly what each symbol means, as a reference sheet can be referred to if necessary whilst carrying out their job. These skills can also be attained by either playing an instrument, or studying music theory.

There was also a large majority that said some form of musical history was desirable, mainly a knowledge of composers for reference work. This is harder knowledge to gain, but can be absorbed purely by reading a music history book. Building a thorough knowledge of composers takes time and new information is constantly being uncovered. However, knowledge of the main composers certainly helps when choosing key repertoire for the library. This includes modern artists as well as older composers of Western Classical music.

Having the ability to read music produced mixed views from the librarians, similar to those produced in the interview. Four thought it was necessary to be able to handle music enquiries properly, whereas two others thought it was unnecessary. That said, those who thought it was unimportant were in the minority. A librarian did mention that being able to read music is like another language and without that knowledge they will not be as competent as someone who has that knowledge.

There was also a small question as to whether customers expect specialist knowledge. More librarians stated that they did and were dissatisfied when they found the librarians did not have this knowledge. There was, however, one librarian who claimed that customers do not expect this. It could be that they have come to realise the staff do not have a detailed knowledge of music, or more likely, they can do it themselves, and so do not need the librarian to do so for them. As only one librarian gave this contrasting response, evidence suggests that generally customers expect the librarian to have a secure knowledge of the subject.

Needing to keep up with the trends in the music librarian world, and IAML specifically, would help any librarian with recent developments, as well as looking out for training courses to attend. There was a particular reference to training and that carrying out in-house training out effectively within libraries would help both specialists and non-specialists. Complaints were made about librarians not being able to spend as much time on music as they would like to.

6. Conclusions

“If it’s very, very specialised I would call someone”

Response by interviewee

The aim of this investigation was to identify specialist and non-specialist staff working in public libraries and to determine how they differ in their handling of music materials and enquiries. It also investigated the value of a music specialist librarian and any skills they thought non-specialist staff should acquire. The objectives were:

- To identify specialist staff working in public libraries at present
- To identify some public libraries where a specialist member of staff has left
- To compare non-specialist staff with specialist music staff
- To investigate the values and benefits of specialist staff
- To investigate what non-specialist staff are and are not able to bring to the collection
- To discover what is being done to help non-specialist staff in areas they feel they lack knowledge
- To make a set a recommendations as to what could be done to help non-specialist staff

The investigation identified specialist and non-specialist staff to interview in public libraries. It was only able to identify two libraries where specialist staff had left the establishment, which meant this objective was not completed as fully as was expected. This was because it was harder to find a library devoid of any music specialist contact, as they were often restructured instead of retired. An investigation into the value and benefits of having specialist staff was carried out and a look into what non-specialist staff are unable to bring to a collection was completed. It was discovered that more needs to be done to help non-specialist music staff if they are going to be employed increasingly and recommendations follow this conclusion.

It was highlighted that as music is such a huge subject, no one person could possibly know everything about music. However, a true specialist will know where to find information about various genres of music, which is vital for enquiry work. Staff working with a music collection also need to have a strong interest in it because of the large amount of work needed to manage it properly.

When investigating how valuable a specialist is to have in the library, it was ascertained that specialist knowledge is generally needed to be able to answer customer enquiries. At least one specialist would be ideal in a library, but due to the current situation it is likely that this may not be a viable option. Teamwork appears to be the best option with at least one music specialist available for the non-specialists to refer to. This way knowledge can be pooled to the mutual benefit of customers. One suggested option is for each county to hire a team of music specialists whose sole job is to help all libraries answer enquiries. They would act as a point of contact for anyone within that county. At present, the IAML mailing list is running a similar idea, where anyone can post queries. This could be better advertised to all involved and consequently used more widely. The only problem here though, is that staff on the list are not paid to answer queries, and therefore cannot guarantee quick answers at the detriment of their own jobs.

It was proved by the interviews that plenty of music librarians do not have training in music librarianship. Many critics have suggested that the lack of music librarianship training is resulting in a small number of music librarians, for example Redfern (in Turbet, 2003) wrote an article on 'The Education of a Music Librarian'. However, a deficiency of specially trained music librarians does not mean that there are not librarians who are music specialists. My results show that experience in music is instead the driving factor. All of the specialists interviewed gave correct answers to the initial exploration of knowledge, and over half have not had specific music librarianship training. This shows just how much knowledge they have gained about music from other areas, such as performing. It is implicit that non-music specialists do not have the same level of understanding and therefore should not be

expected to answer all enquiries with the same degree of competence as a music specialist.

This dissertation also investigated what non-specialist staff can and cannot offer a music collection in the library. All interviewees declared that music specialists positively benefit the collection and all the non-music specialists stated that specific music knowledge was the key skill that the specialists brought to the library. Non-specialists were also thought to bring in different benefits relating, in particular to alternative genres of music. However, all but one of the non-specialists said that they did not feel confident when answering customer enquiries. This is where the specialists are particularly necessary. Non-specialists can be trained to deal with formats, but they will not have the experience or depth of knowledge brought by specialists.

Nevertheless, the way forward is a collection maintained and managed by both specialist and non-specialist staff. They are both able to help promote the collection and deal with its day to day running, for example issuing materials and shelving materials. In fact, the entire lending team is able to deal with these kinds of tasks. However, the specialists are needed to provide competent, professional service, in the form of answering specific enquiries for customers, but also to catalogue music so that it is easier for the non-music specialists to locate materials, as well as the members of the public. Enquiry work is of particular importance. Only music specialists are confident at doing this, unless the non-music specialist has been through extra training, for example, reference work.

Little is being done in libraries to help non-specialist staff. Only three of the specialist librarians interviewed still give in-house training to their non-specialist staff. There were comments from non-specialists that they would like to be provided with in-house training and learn from another librarian on the job. There were also stories of libraries who had given a great deal of support to new librarians, but due to restructuring, this was no longer an option. All staff from smaller libraries mentioned having to spread themselves over many areas and departments and consequently, less and less time was dedicated to the music section.

IAML do workshops at various levels for staff and are taken advantage of throughout the country. Half of the librarians interviewed had been on one of the IAML courses and all who had, spoke highly of them. With this in mind, more could be done to offer them to others, particularly public library staff. As these courses are time consuming, other things could also be done. For example information packs for non-music specialists could be used as a reference. Alternatively an online course could be designed so that librarians can complete it in their spare time and increase their knowledge at a pace which suits them. This may involve additional funding to create, but could potentially be designed by librarians on a voluntary basis. Denmark has developed an online tool box after music became a core service in their public libraries (Thompson and Lewis, 2003:84). Here there are a number of links to resources that are all in one place and easily accessible to any librarian doing enquiries (Musikbibliotek, 2009).

Many librarians have said that their music stock was not being used to its full potential. This is something that authorities could take note of. Rather than spreading out resources, they could instead concentrate on a few key areas and develop them. Most librarians would like more space for their stock and many new libraries are solving this problem. The new libraries are also all working to promote themselves and their services. Several have completely new images which will gain publicity. Quite a few libraries mentioned having a problem with un-catalogued and unused stock. This should also be changed and brought out for public use.

Cooperation is thankfully seen amongst all librarians in many ways. All libraries said that they participate in inter-library loans. There were also many librarians who said they would refer queries on to other libraries, could they not fulfill them in their library. This mainly included performance sets, but is another encouraging sign of cooperation. A similar level of cooperation could be established with a music specialist at the heart. This would mean that any librarians who are stuck on a query, not necessarily non-specialists, would be able to go to them for assistance instead of wasting time which could be used to carry out other tasks.

In conclusion, it is clear that all of the librarians working in the libraries interviewed are doing the best they can within their individual situations. This investigation has suggested that specialists are a valuable asset to a library, bringing another level to enquiry work. Non-music specialists with an enthusiasm for music are also valuable in a different way. They are found to be willing to learn new skills to help improve the service. A collaboration of specialists and non-specialists seems the best way to run future services. It was also shown that most specialist music librarians are untrained in music librarianship, but instead have had a strong interest in music since an early age. Overall, everyone spoken to is providing the best service they can with the knowledge and resources available.

6.1 Recommendations

This final section contains a list of recommendations for what can be done to help non-music specialists working in public libraries, and particularly those who are struggling.

- In-house training from music specialists - the value of this cannot be underestimated. Staff who have been through this system constantly praise it, not only for the knowledge they have gained, but also for the support they felt they received.
- IAML (UK & Irl) need to extend their outreach work - a one day course is a feasible proposition in terms of the time set aside for it and it offers invaluable training for those that have not had the opportunity to do anything specifically with music materials.
- Develop a contact point, either an individual or a team, whom a non-specialist can go to should they need help with a query - this could be within the library or county, but those that have a contact point to go to have remarked how reassuring they have found it, and those who no longer have that support talked of how hard they found it without them.
- Encourage and promote involvement - music is a well liked and practiced art, a small amount of promotion encourages more users and importantly, more librarians to get involved with music.
- Design an online learning environment or information pack - this can be used as a reference tool which can help encourage non-music specialists to handle music enquiries themselves.

6.2 Further Research

It would be useful to carry out a further study of the users of music in a public library. This would give a greater insight into whether they know exactly what a music collection can offer them, but would ascertain the extent to which they are satisfied with the service they are receiving currently. Lai and Chan (2010) have carried out a similar survey, but mainly focused on what users borrowed, whether they were satisfied with it and was for an academic library.

This research also possess questions on which further work could be based:

- Do the users really know what is available in their local public library?
- Are there things missing which users would like to see available at their local public library?
- Do managers and authorities realise how much knowledge a specialist has that users rely upon?
- Are there other specialisms that are equally under the pressure due to a decrease in specialist staff?
- What is the role of the library? Is it classed as a place for leisure activity any more?
- How can libraries be promoted to encourage more users to get involved?
- Are music specialist cataloguers needed?

Word Count: 21,575 words

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Appendices

Interview Information Sheet

Information Sheet - 11/06/10

Project Title: The Role of the Music Specialist Librarian

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to accept this invitation it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

About the Project

The aim is to investigate the current music and non-music specialist staff in public libraries. This will determine how they differ in their handling of music materials and enquiries. Hopefully, this will give insight into where help is needed for non-specialist staff to cope with music in a public libraries.

You will not be expected to give away any personal details. You will remain anonymous throughout the process and the responses you give will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications.

Your Participation

This project will be carried out over four months. You were chosen because you fit into one of the following categories: music specialist or non-music specialist working in a public library. There are 8-10 others that are also involved at this stage. You will only be required for this one session. Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help inform those that are less confident in

dealing with music, which should in turn benefit the field as a whole. Should you wish, a copy of the report can also be sent to you.

This research is entirely voluntary and there is no problem if you choose not to participate or to discontinue participation at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

If you do decide to take part then you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. You will be required to answer questions posed by the interviewer and you are encouraged to expand on your answers. The first section of the interview will comprise of a few questions regarding your musical background.

With your permission, this interview will be recorded. The audio recordings of your interview made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. They will be deleted after the project is complete.

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Information Studies Department review procedure.

If you have any complaints please contact the University of Sheffield Information Studies Department, where my supervisor is Peter Willett. If you require any further information after today's session, please feel free to contact me.

Email: vanessafudge@hotmail.com,

Address: 2 Storth Bank,

Simmondley,

Glossop,

Derbyshire,

SK13 6UX.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Interview Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The Role of the Music Specialist Librarian

Name of Researcher: Vanessa Fuidge

Participant Identification Number for this project:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated *11/06/10* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. Please contact the interviewer at vanessafuidge@hotmail.com, should you wish to do so.
3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.
5. I agree for this interview to be recorded. The audio recordings of your interview made during this research will be used only for analysis and then deleted. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Interview Transcript

Interview Questions

Please elaborate on anything you feel is necessary to give as full answers as you can.

Set questions, but happy to side track if necessary.

Any questions please ask at any time.

Need to explain difference between music specialist and music non-specialist:

A specialist is described as someone with appropriate librarian training in music librarianship, or an amateur interest in music with an ability to read and understand musical terms.

I shall be taking a few notes, but will let the recorder pick up most of it.

If you wish to stop or withdraw at any time, then just indicate this and I shall stop the interview.

Turn recorder on

What is your musical background knowledge?

Do you have a music degree or any other musical examination certificates?
(e.g. ABRSM instrumental grades)

Do you have any music librarianship training, formal or informal?

Are you able to read music confidently?

Do you understand each of the following terms?

vocal score
miniature score
piano reduction
conductor's score
orchestral parts
symphony
concerto
opera
key signature
alto
baroque
romantic

Do you know what a movement of a work is?

Are you aware of the differences between editions?

Are you familiar with any aspect of music copyright?

How the service is managed

Is there a member of staff who has had specialist training in music amongst you? (A specialist is described as appropriate librarian training in music librarianship, or an amateur interest in music with an ability to read and understand music terms)

How many members of staff look after the music collection?

If there is only one member of staff, do they manage other sections as well as the music section?

If yes, what are the other sections?

Are there opportunities for the staff, (including) you, to receive any training?

Do you have a library policy directly relating to music?

The usage of the collection

Would you say your music collection is used to its full potential, or could more usage be got from the collection?

Are you able to supply all materials that customers ask for from within the collection in your library authority?

Do you partake of inter-library loans?

From inter-library loans and your stock are you normally able to satisfy all customers' requests?

Do you hire out performing sets to choirs/orchestras?

Has there ever been a time where you have not felt confident in answering a customer's question?

What stock the library manages

What media do you have in your library?

CDs/DVDs/manuscripts/books/streaming facilities/scores/sheet music/
performing sets

Which media/format in your library would you say is loaned the most?

Is there a reason for this?

How often do you buy new stock?

Who decides what stock to purchase?

How much does your library spend on new music related stock? Either as a figure or percentage of stock.

Is there one area in which you buy stock more frequently?
(CDs/DVDs/manuscripts/books/streaming facilities/scores/sheet music/
performing sets)

Have your resources for music been increased, maintained or cut back in recent times?

Do you have a special music cataloguing team?

If not, who catalogues the music you buy?

Any plans for change in the library

Are you happy with the way the music section is stored at present?

Is there any way, in your opinion, that it could be improved?

Are you currently thinking of changing the way the music collection is housed/stored in any way?

yes - If so how?

yes - Do you think this change would be good for the collection?

yes - Why?

no - Do you think that a change in the way the collection is stored would help it in any way?

Music Specialists

Would you say that music specialists bring something to the collection that non-music specialists do not?

If yes, what would these skills include?

Would you say that non-music specialists bring something to the collection that music specialists do not?

If yes, what would these skills include?

Would you say that music specialists or non-music specialists are able to handle the music collection better?

Why do you think this?

Would you agree with the statement, 'the number of music specialists is declining in public libraries'?

Would you be willing to be contacted further by email or phone, should any follow up questions be needed?

Questionnaire Information Sheet

Information Sheet - 11/07/10

Project Title: The Role of the Music Specialist Librarian

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to accept this invitation it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

About the Project

The aim is to investigate the current music and non-music specialist staff in public libraries. This will determine how they differ in their handling of music materials and enquiries. Hopefully, this will give insight into where help is needed for non-specialist staff to cope with music in a public libraries.

You will not be expected to give away any personal details. You will remain anonymous throughout the process and the responses you give will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications.

Your Participation

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will help inform those that are less confident in dealing with music, which should in turn benefit the field as a whole. Should you wish, a copy of the report can also be sent to you. By replying to this message, it is assumed that you give consent for your data to be used in the study. This research is entirely voluntary and there is no problem if you choose not to participate or to discontinue participation at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Information Studies Department review procedure. If you have any complaints please contact the University of Sheffield Information Studies Department, where my supervisor is Peter Willett. If you require any further information after today's session, please feel free to contact me.

Email: vanessafudge@hotmail.com,

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Questionnaire

Music Librarian Questionnaire

Please delete or mark as appropriate and follow the order of questions, unless otherwise stated.

1. Which of the following best describes your views?

- a) Music specialists alone should look after and handle the music materials in a public library
- b) Music specialists and music non-specialists should look after and handle the music materials in a public library together
- c) Non-music specialists alone should look after and handle the music materials in a public library

2. Do you think that librarians working with a music collection should be especially trained in handling music collections, or do you feel that they should be able to deal with it with their general librarianship training?

- a) Trained in music (*go to question 3.*)
- b) Will already have the skills from general librarianship training, degree or otherwise (*go straight to question 4.*)

3. Where do you think that most of the training needed to work with a music collection could be acquired?

- a) Music specialists that are working in the library
 - b) Courses and training days run by various organisations
 - c) Librarians should come ready trained to the library
 - d) Other, please state
-

4. If they were to have some training, what would be key skills that librarians new to working with music should learn? Either give specific musical terms/ areas they need to know about, or any skills that are particularly valuable when working with music collections.