A Handbook to Twentieth-Century Musical Sketches

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budget-conscious archivist. For example, if the resources to barcode individual items and record their location via an electronic database are not available, she suggests using a system of note cards to track materials during a move. However, considering the current funding woes for nearly all archival agencies, Forde might have elaborated further on cost- and labor-conscious alternatives for small repositories with limited monetary and human resources.

This one relatively minor criticism is not intended to detract from the work’s overall excellence. Forde has compiled a definitive guide to preservation that condenses current, relevant information into an immensely readable work. It will serve as an ideal textbook for graduate courses in preservation and will likewise prove to be an indispensable reference source for practicing archivists and records managers. This exemplary book sets the standard for works on the vitally important topic of preservation, and it belongs on the bookshelf of everyone who bears a responsibility for ensuring the long-term availability of the historic record.

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A Handbook to Twentieth-Century Musical Sketches

The study of musical sketches and drafts of musical compositions has been an intrinsic component of music scholarship for more than a hundred years. The term musical sketch usually refers to the written material that a composer produces while composing a musical work. This material can take the form of basic jottings of musical notation on paper to more elaborate sections of a work, and even written descriptive instructions and marginalia. The study of music manuscripts and the different types of musical notation has served as the theoretical foundation of manuscript studies since the nineteenth century. The body of work that has stemmed out of Beethoven’s sketches, such as Douglas Johnson, Robert Winter, and Alan Tyson’s The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory (1985), or the diverse studies of European musical notation, such as Willi Apel’s The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900–1600 (1942), are examples of the application of musical manuscript studies. The new book A Handbook to Twentieth-Century Musical Sketches is among the first of its kind, mainly because it focuses on twentieth-century musical works and the composers who wrote these sketches. Editors Patricia Hall and Friedemann Sallis start out with an ambitious goal by labeling this publication as an “indispensable handbook [that] explains
how scholars and students should work with and think about the composer’s working manuscripts” (p. i).

The book is a compilation of fourteen essays written by musicologists, music theorists, and composers who are currently working in Europe and the United States. The book is divided into two principal sections. Chapters 1 to 6 provide the reader with the “knowledge and skills necessary to work efficiently in archives or other institutions housing manuscript material” (p. 2), and chapters 7 to 14 illustrate examples of studies on different composers and works that rely on the study of musical sketches. Overall, the book is quite interesting as it traces the ephemeral relationship of musical ideas and completed works relying on fragments of works and marginalia to understand how a piece fits within a composer’s particular style or the use of a certain technique in a composition. Some chapters were not written originally in English, and though the translation proves to be adequate, in some instances the choice of terminology is not what is commonly used in archives and library literature. The section that directly addresses archival research leaves many questions unanswered for users of archival material, the intended audience. This section might also be of interest to practicing archivists wanting to familiarize themselves with how researchers perceive archival research. This review focuses on this first section, mainly because it addresses issues that directly relate to using archives as opposed to the second section, where the authors focus solely on the product of their research using musical sketches.

The first chapter, Sketches and Sketching, illustrates the main uses and characteristics of musical sketches, and the practical problems associated with studying and interpreting these fragments of musical thought. Chapter 2, Preliminaries Before Visiting an Archive, presents crucial tidbits of advice for those who are planning on visiting an archives to conduct research on manuscript material. Even though this chapter focuses on primary music sources, advice such as securing copies of the material prior to the visit to familiarize oneself with the composer’s handwriting, makes a great starting point for anyone interested in preparing for researching manuscript sources. However, it was disappointing to find no mention of any kind of access tool to archival materials, either online or on paper. The author also does not mention two important archival principles, provenance and original order, which should probably be top subjects in any manual or guide to archival research. Chapter 3, Archival Etiquette, focuses on the basic handling and storage of paper documents and provides useful advice and illustrations on how to handle manuscripts while researching at the archives.

Chapter 4, the most captivating of this publication, is titled Coming to Terms with the Working Manuscripts. The author focuses on the current terminology that describes different types of sketches, including terms such as sketch, draft, and fair copy, and the different schools of thought that have
influenced the study and interpretation of sketches in musicological research. Chapter 5, The Classification of Musical Sketches Exemplified in the Catalogue of the Archivio Luigi Nono, explains the classification schema used by the archives of the Italian composer Luigi Nono (1924–1990), which involves a complex item-level numbering system that connects each item with related materials within the collection. While not the most traditional choice for archival arrangement and description, the author makes the case for arranging the material in this manner to highlight relationships between the different bodies of material within the collection. The next and closing chapter of the first section, Digital Preservation of Archival Material, presents a naïve approach to digitizing archival materials. The author explains the necessary steps that go into a digitization project but barely scratches the surface of the issues that arise when embarking on such an endeavor, mainly metadata creation, digital asset management, access, and long-term preservation of the reformatted material.

From an archivist’s perspective, this book presents an interesting view of the distant relationship that exists between the scholarly and the archival communities. Archivists as a community of professionals strive to provide the best service to their constituency, always increasing access to holdings, and constantly improving access tools to facilitate the researcher’s experience. But one can feel hopeless after reading comments such as “[g]iven the increasing complexity of compositional procedures, archivists and librarians often turn to musicologists because the challenges of cataloguing twentieth-century source material can be overwhelming” (p. 59). The researcher assumptions of how archival materials should be organized and interpreted reflect a lack of understanding about archival arrangement and description practices. This lack of understanding is noted again as some of the chapter authors refer to the “lack of organization” or the “need to systematically classify” archival collections to aid the researcher in the interpretation of the sources without ever mentioning finding aids and how they meaningfully describe a collection to facilitate access, or that standards for archival arrangement and description are methodically applied to finding aids and other access tools. This is, perhaps, the experience of the scholars that work in European institutions, but does not fall near archival practice in the United States. Nonetheless, this issue emphasizes the need for archivists to focus their outreach and access efforts on better educating users about what they do and how appraisal, arrangement, and description practices work in concert with one another resulting in the most useful research material.

The book provides a good selection of works on modern manuscripts and the skills needed to embark upon research projects of such caliber as those described in the last six chapters. It also may be a useful resource for anyone looking to develop or improve an introductory lesson on archival research since it casts a light on some of our users’ assumptions and expectations. Archivists caring for music collections might want to examine this volume to gain further
Build It Once: A Basic Primer for the Creation of Online Exhibitions


An archives serves two important roles: providing a place where collections can be preserved and supplying a space where users can have access to these collections. In an attempt to preserve materials and at the same time encourage greater user awareness and access to specific collections, many archives and libraries with special collections have started online exhibition programs. A thin book, Build It Once in eight chapters attempts to be a basic manual for creating online exhibits intended for librarians and archivists who suddenly find themselves thrust into the role of creating exhibitions from scratch. Drawing from her work with online exhibitions at the Spencer Library at the University of Kansas, author Sarah Goodwin Thiel wrote this book with several purposes: first, to give practical advice at the start of a project and guidance along the way; second, to serve as a useful reference guide after the first project is completed and subsequent ones are being considered. The casual tone of this volume, the detailed step-by-step instructions, and the examples drawn from the online exhibitions of the Spencer Library, make readers feel that they are getting advice directly from someone who has been there and knows what she is talking about.

Attempting to walk the reader through the entire process of setting up an “exhibition-style” website is an ambitious undertaking, and so, with no superfluous text, the author gets down to business. Chapter 1 is three pages long and addresses how to define an exhibition’s scope. Critical questions must be asked: Who is the target audience? What will the exhibit encompass? What resources do you have and what design considerations do you need to keep in mind before you start? Chapter 2 is two pages longer than the first and discusses the selection of equipment such as scanners, digital cameras, tripods, and imaging and Web-authoring software. Thiel also discusses a pattern common in creative technology projects—no matter how thorough the planning process, something always needs to be reconsidered. Speaking from my own experiences creating three online exhibitions from scratch, this should not be underestimated. Equipment needs, for instance, can evolve once the project is underway either because of the fragility of the material itself, or because of the inefficiency of the equipment initially selected. The author does well to point out that extra funds and lead time should be budgeted into every project, just in case.