Killer Quantum Wombats

Wrangling the Bethards-Massey Collection of Popular Music Arrangements

Anna LoPrete, Music Librarian
The Great American Songbook
Library & Archives
The Bethards-Massey Collection
Collection Contents

- ~1890-1950
- Dance
- Ragtime
- Circus
- Silent Film Accompaniment
- Operetta and show tunes
- "Salon" music
- Jazz
- "Anything else that might have been played for popular audience"
Radio Stations

ABC (915)  CBS (3,365)  NBC (10,445)

NBCSF (2,778)  NBCKQW (446)
Individuals
Collections

- Henry Buettner, Music Director of the Palace Hotel, San Francisco (6,591)
- Mal Dunn, Arranger and band leader (443)
- Leo Kailin, Violinist and teacher (2,854)
- Gene Lancelle, Band leader and teacher (Not in spreadsheet)
- James Roseveare, organist (25,529)
- Walter J. Rudolph, Arranger, conductor, music director of the Ice Follies (84,114)
- Al Wallace, Leader and Violinist (917)
- Dana Suesse, original compositions and keyboard arrangements (144)
Greek mythology tells of a certain Corinthian king called Sisyphus, who was condemned in the lower world to push a huge boulder to the top of a mountain. Just as he reached the summit, the boulder would roll away and Sisyphus had to repeat this act incessantly.

Walter Rudolph, noted Oakland pianist, has set himself a task that is likewise endless. He decided one fateful day to catalogue all the music he owned in order to make any piece instantly accessible.

He is still cataloguing it.

It probably seemed simple enough to list each piece in a book and give it a special place on his shelves. It would have been simple, too, were it not for the fact that practically all the publications of America's leading music houses come to Rudolph in a steady stream.
Enter the Music Librarian, Stage Left
• "Pilot" project of cataloging stock arrangements beginning with the KQW collection.
• Remove duplicates and out of scope materials for eventual deaccessioning.
• Deliverables:
  • At least 1900 MARC records
  • Detailed processing guide
  • At least 2 finding aids
  • "Documented plan to sustain music librarian position, process the entire collection (10-15 years) and share it with broader audiences"
Three Spreadsheets to the Wind
How do we foresee this collection being used?

How do we want it to be used?

What all is in this collection?

Where the heck is everything?
then it is no longer organized and how in the heck do you find anything?
What would Michelle do?
What would Maristella do?
"Doc" Herrold at the KQW microphone, early 1920s.
From Wikipedia, 1/20/2022
Whisky Tango FOXTROTs

Fun discoveries and the cataloging and processing challenges they pose
Hopes and Dreams

Performance

Duke Ellington Big Band, Munich 1963
Photo: Hans Bernhard, from WikiMedia, 2/2/2022
Hopes and Dreams

A real-life researcher (and music librarian extraordinaire) researching at the Great American Songbook Foundation
“Anna’s Perfect Library”
So many parts
## INSTRUMENTATION

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Harp, 1st</th>
<th>Flute, 1st</th>
<th>Bassoon, 1st</th>
<th>Trumpet, 1st</th>
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### ADDITIONAL INSTRUMENTS:
- Violin 1-C
- Violin 1-D
- Guitar
- Solo Bass

## KEY OF F (G♯-A)
What would Michael Feinstein do?
Markings

Alternate instrumentations
Cuts
Segues
Chord symbols
Conductor’s parts and cues
Mutes
Changes in notes
Caricatures
Snarky comments
Commentary and Illustrations
AT THESE PRICES, FOR CHRIST SAKE PLAY IN TUNE.

IF IN DOUBT, WATCH THE BASS PLAYER’S FOOT.

LAY OUT AND COUNT YOUR MONEY, GO BACK.
"Shuffle off to Buffalo"
Manuscripts
Multiple Keys
Duplicates
Out of Scope
"The Great American Songbook is the canon of popular music primarily created between the 1920s and the 1960s for Broadway and Hollywood musicals, and television. Eligibility criteria include a song's lasting popularity/reinterpretations and the songwriter's nationality: American."
KEEP CALM
it's
OUT OF SCOPE!
Current status and future plans

- KQW almost done
- 676 arrangements
- 1294 BM shelf numbers
- 332 titles
- 75% requiring original cataloging
Reference Request
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TheSongbook.org