
The third edition of Richard Smiraglia’s classic handbook for music cataloging is more comprehensive than the previous editions. This edition is updated throughout and includes new chapters on archival materials, music videos, and multimedia products. The author states in the acknowledgments that Taras Pavlovsky reconciled “all of the variant versions of LCRIs (Library of Congress Rule Interpretations) and MCDs (Music Cataloging Decisions) to assure that the latest text appears here...” and “updated all of the bibliographic apparatus in this book...” (p. i). Smiraglia still calls the book a manual; it has not evolved into a theoretical treatise on music cataloging. The new edition remains the practical, straightforward handbook that music catalogers have known, and it will continue to be the tool they consult first.

In this edition, Smiraglia introduces the concept of musical documents as artifact, which he explains as follows: “Almost all of the materials that will be described using this book were not created as or intended to be items in libraries. That is, they were all created with other purposes and other audiences in mind” (p. x). He notes that an understanding of this fact will assist the music cataloger in making informed, measured decisions about description and access.

Chapter 5, “Description of Archival Collections of Musical Documents,” is new in this edition. Smiraglia notes that “archival processing of collections of materials has become more prevalent in both archives and libraries since the second edition of this book was written” (p. ix). This chapter is a pleasure to read because it offers an alternative to music catalogers who face backlogs of material for which item-level description is traditionally prescribed.

Chapter 7 is devoted to a thorough treatment of uniform titles. The reader is first introduced to the concept underlying the function of uniform titles, and then taken systematically through the more difficult aspects of uniform title construction, including distinctive title conflicts, additions that indicate manifestation or modification of a work, and collective uniform titles, as well as the use of authorized thematic indexes. Smiraglia also provides guidance for creating motion picture uniform titles: “Video-recordings, as motion pictures essentially, will almost always be entered under title proper, which given the ubiquity of manifestations almost certainly will require the use of a uniform title to distinguish the work from others of the same title” (p. 197).

The chapters devoted to description, the chapter on choice and form of entry, and the one on uniform titles close with a “Summary” that is an especially useful feature of the manual. These summaries enable the music cataloger to consult broad topics quickly, for ready reference, when in doubt about current music cataloging practice. Beginning music catalogers will find it helpful to read the “Summary” first and then return to read the full
text, to absorb the more intricate details after viewing the larger picture.

The chapters are organized logically and outlined in detail in the table of contents. Each chapter on description begins with a helpful summary outline of the steps in the process of creating the bibliographic description. In this edition, the examples pertaining to sound recordings are mostly of CDs, not LPs, reflecting what most music catalogers are cataloging now. Some of the examples are presented differently from earlier editions: the description information for sound recordings is arranged to suggest its actual appearance on the label, container, or booklet.

Smiraglia’s prose is often elegant, with light touches, such as the definition of sketches as “composer’s preliminary manuscript jottings . . . .” (p. 188). His explanations are concise, stating the premise before expanding on the ramifications of the topic. For example, this brief paragraph opens the “Choice and Form of Entry” chapter: “Access points are the means by which users retrieve bibliographic records. They are the doorways to the process of becoming informed. As such, the creation of access points is probably the most critical part of descriptive cataloging” (p. 123).

The only possible disappointment about Describing Music Materials is that it is not accompanied by an instructional CD-ROM or videorecording. It would be helpful to see exactly how the examples in the printed text appear, and are physically handled, in the real bibliographic world. Now that music catalogers are describing CD-ROMs, kits, electronic resources, and other products with video components, it is time for publishers to issue these tools in multimedia formats so that they can become an integral part of the music cataloger’s workstation.—Richard D. Burbank (burbank@staff2.csO.uiuc.edu), Music Catalog Coordinator, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.


What if librarians in all types of libraries found it necessary to withdraw books only because of outdated content and never because of highlighting and defacement? What if there were no more stories about pork chops used as bookmarks? What if all library staff recognized their role in preserving their library’s collection? Promoting Preservation Awareness in Libraries is designed to help librarians in all types of libraries develop preservation education programs encouraging proper use and handling of library materials. Editors Drewes and Page demonstrate that the rewards of a preservation education program lie in improved access to library materials.

The editors have been active in developing preservation education programs for library staff and users. Their experiences, the needs they encountered in libraries, and the interest in their program “Selling Preservation,” presented at the American Library Association’s 1994 Annual Conference, all pointed to the need for this sourcebook. Using topical overview essays and case studies, they provide reasons and methods for developing a preservation education program and for assessing its effectiveness. They then describe preservation education programs for school libraries, public libraries, academic libraries, special collections, and archives. Also valuable are four appendices: a short but strong discussion on developing graphics for displays and handouts, a list of audiovisual resources, and two bibliographies of books for use with staff, parents, teachers, and children.

Chapters 1 through 3 are devoted to the structure of a preservation education program. While this section is somewhat uneven, especially for those expecting to find an off-the-shelf education program, readers will nevertheless find a variety of ideas that they can mold into a program to suit their own needs. In a creative and entertaining essay, “Lite Preservation or, How to Win Over Your Staff and Customers Without Being a Heavy,” Harlan