

Regards to Broadway Walk Down Great White Way At Spring Conference by Hallie Cantor Acquisitions, Hedi Steinberg Library, Yeshiva University

When it comes to show biz, there's no library like the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

AJL-NYMA was given a taste of Broadway, Hollywood, and Tin Pan Alley all rolled into one at the Spring Conference, held May 23, 2002, at this remarkable institution. Located at Lincoln Center, home to some of America's finest stage and concert productions, the Library for the Performing Arts (LPA) contains one of the world's most extensive collections of circulating, reference, and archival materials on virtually everything in the performing arts. Each year over 400,000 patrons make use of its services – arts professionals, students, scholars, critics, and anyone who simply wants to study a *pas de deux* from *Swan Lake* or catch up on the previous *Star Wars* flicks.

Main Attraction

Mark Tolleson, Assistant Director of the library, spoke of its projects, services, and resources, including those for the Jewish patron. In addition to cantorial and liturgical music dating from the turn of the 20th century, the LPA houses the Bendert Stambler collection, which contains hundreds of 78s and LPs, and the Irene Heskes collection, named for one of the most prolific writers on Jewish music and a reviewer of Jewish books. The bulk of the LPA collections, in fact, comes from gifts and private donors.

In this library, the word "Judaica" is broadly defined, encompassing not only the traditional cantors, choirs, and

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From the President

Our Spring Conference, hosted at the newly renovated New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, was our final event this year. In keeping with our previous workshops and conferences of 2001-2002, this successful program featured a synthesis of much that is exciting and creative in 21st century librarianship. During the past year, we were privileged to hear experts, many from within our own AJL ranks, discuss current aspects of Judaica librarianship. We learned about working with traditional collections and were introduced to digitized collections, online reference service, virtual libraries, and new ways to enhance students' information literacy.

Sincere thanks to the following AJL and AJL-NYMA members who shared their knowledge, expertise, and most importantly, their enthusiasm with us this year: Naomi Steinberger, Fall Conference; Marcia Goldberg, Joyce Levine, Hudas Liff and Micha F. Oppenheim, Cataloging Workshop; Yael Penkower, Reference Workshop; and Sara Marcus, Day/School High School *and* Reference Workshops.

Thanks are also due the hardworking board members who brought these wonderful programs to fruition: Rita Lifton and Liza Stabler, Fall Conference Planners; Marlene Schiffman, Cataloging Workshop Coordinator; Yisrael Dubitsky and Sara Marcus, Reference Workshop Coordinators; Chaya Wiesman, Behind-the-scenes Reference Workshop advisor; Elana Gensler and Roz Friedman, Day School / High School Workshop Coordinators; and Marion Stein, Spring Conference Planner.

This is also an opportunity to thank all the other board members who have been supportive and helpful this year: Shuli Berger, Membership Outreach Coordinator and Past President; Julia Bock, Treasurer; Rita Lifton, Publicity Coordinator; Edith Lubetski, Past President; and Mary Moskowitz, Membership Coordinator. Special thanks are due Liza Stabler, Vice-President and Recording Secretary, for her constant willingness to assist in any way possible and for her beautiful flyers for several of our programs. And, *aharon aharon haviv*, thanks to Hallie Cantor, who edits this informative and timely newsletter.

I look forward to having all of you join us after the summer for a new year of rich programming, friendship, and professional growth as we continue to explore Judaica librarianship together.

Shaindy (Susan) Kurzmann

(Spring Conference, contd.)

repertoire, but the preponderance of Jews in the performing arts. Yosele Rosenblatt and George Gershwin might have both enjoyed the limelight, but they stood at the far opposite ends of the stage (with Molly Picon, perhaps, somewhere in the middle?). This is definitely a place where the religious and the secular meet halfway.

On with the Show

During most of his lecture, Mr. Tolleson gave the NYMA group a tour of the newly renovated building. The first stop was the foyer, where, he said, the swirling red border was "a motif" for the building which, originally of the New York Public Library, opened in 1965 to consolidate the enormous holdings of theater, music, and film. The circulation areas, located on the first and second floors, contain approximately 250,000 items. The research division, located on the top floor, keeps a permanent copy of a book which is never circulated. Although there is no fiction, there are numerous biographies of who is who in the theater, dance, and movie world.

The body of work continues to grow. In all, some nine million items – books, clippings, posters, manuscripts, playbills – are kept in the library. In addition to the artistic and entertaining, there are practical materials, such as books on entertainment law, or stage lighting. Indeed, half of show business is business, and not only artists and theater goers rely on the LPA, but administrators, technicians, and anyone who works "behind the scenes."

Besides a budget for acquisitions, there is a budget for production. The LPA is asked to tape shows, usually regional or off-Broadway (in spite of some union complaints and regulations). The library will hire videographers to do a "live edit": cameras shoot from different angles, while a film is cut, dubbed, and put into post-production there on the spot.

Mr. Tolleson appreciates this merging of two worlds, the creative and the technical. Himself a professional flutist as well as a librarian, he spoke of the liaison between "video people" and "data people." The library work appeals to both types, although it tends to employ people who want to work there because of their interest in the performing arts, rather than in library science. Nevertheless, patrons come from all backgrounds, from a PhD candidate completing her dissertation on Mel Brooks to the librettist needing the inspiration of Rodgers and Hammerstein. The official age requirement to use the sources of the LPA is 18, but the rules are frequently bent for young patrons such as high school students or child actors.

Mr. Tolleson also discussed the rapid advances in technology, and its challenges to library preservation. Films, most of which are available in video, are being replaced by DVD; music CDs will soon give way to super audio CDs. Digitization will affect and eventually replace the analog collections, especially items like crumbling posters and other aging artifacts. A digitization project is in fact underway, of The American Performing Arts, 1875-1973, which includes many silent films.

Nevertheless, obsolescent technology can also be a headache, as those of us old enough to remember LPs or 8-tracks can attest. The library must find ways to store or reproduce these materials. Cataloging can also become a problem when certain materials don't fit into any specific niche. Are they research? Or are they really academic? Or archival? Some twenty percent of LPA materials are

unpublished, such as field research on Native American songs. Someday these too will face an adoring public.

Play It Again!

The various stops on the tour took NYMA members through the circulation library, where work stations filled the airy lobby. Just as in all New York public libraries, access to the Internet is available, and to CATNYP, the NYPL catalog. Those who come here, however, would be far more interested in the numerous VCRs and boom boxes. Besides music CDs, there are enough videos to put Blockbuster out of business. The NYMA group walked past recordings of *Carmen* or Beethoven's symphonies. Scores of sheet music, located on the third floor, are available to any private orchestra and chamber group in New York. Materials can be reproduced depending on their condition and on copyright laws.

On the research floor, row after row of listening stations, each with tape decks and monitors, enable patrons to listen to and view portions of a dance or theater routine; they contact the technician, who delivers portions into the screen. Much of the material will be accessed online. A long-distance learning program is also coming soon – to a theater near you?

That's All, Folks!

Mr. Tolleson described the several kinds of library patrons. There are, of course, the fans and scholars, those looking for an early song by Stephen Sondheim or the latest book on Marilyn Monroe. Then there are those who savor the irony of Tom Stoppard or the pathos of King Lear. Lastly are those who want entertainment. They simply come to the library for fun.

To which group did NYMA belong? Probably all.

It may not win an Oscar, but the Spring 2002 Conference deserves applause. A big thank you goes to Marion Stein for arranging the conference – with a little help from her friends at NYMA. ✨

(Cataloging Workshop, contd.)

changes was to reinsert the "O.T." into Hebrew Bible headings. In a witty aside, Levine remarked, "If anyone challenges me, I will say that O.T. means 'Our Torah,' and N.T. means 'NOT Torah.'"

Mass Conversion

Leading part two of the program, "What's a Library to Do? Handling Reclassification Dilemmas," Hudas Liff, Cataloger, Congregation Emanu-El, spoke of her place of work, which had served as a general-interest library before it became a more traditional Judaica library. It uses Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), stays open six days each week, employs a single paid librarian, and allows no borrowing privileges. Its cataloging software is Mandarin.

When Ms. Liff originally volunteered to work with the Congregation Emanu-El collection, it was discovered that DDC had been misapplied to many works. A previous librarian had been putting all Judaica in the 296 class, where they had been sub-arranged by alphabetical order only. She proceeded to learn the application of MARC and Mandarin, and has been working with these tools for the past two years, six hours a week, in order to reclassify the Judaica collection. As the project is reaching its

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