

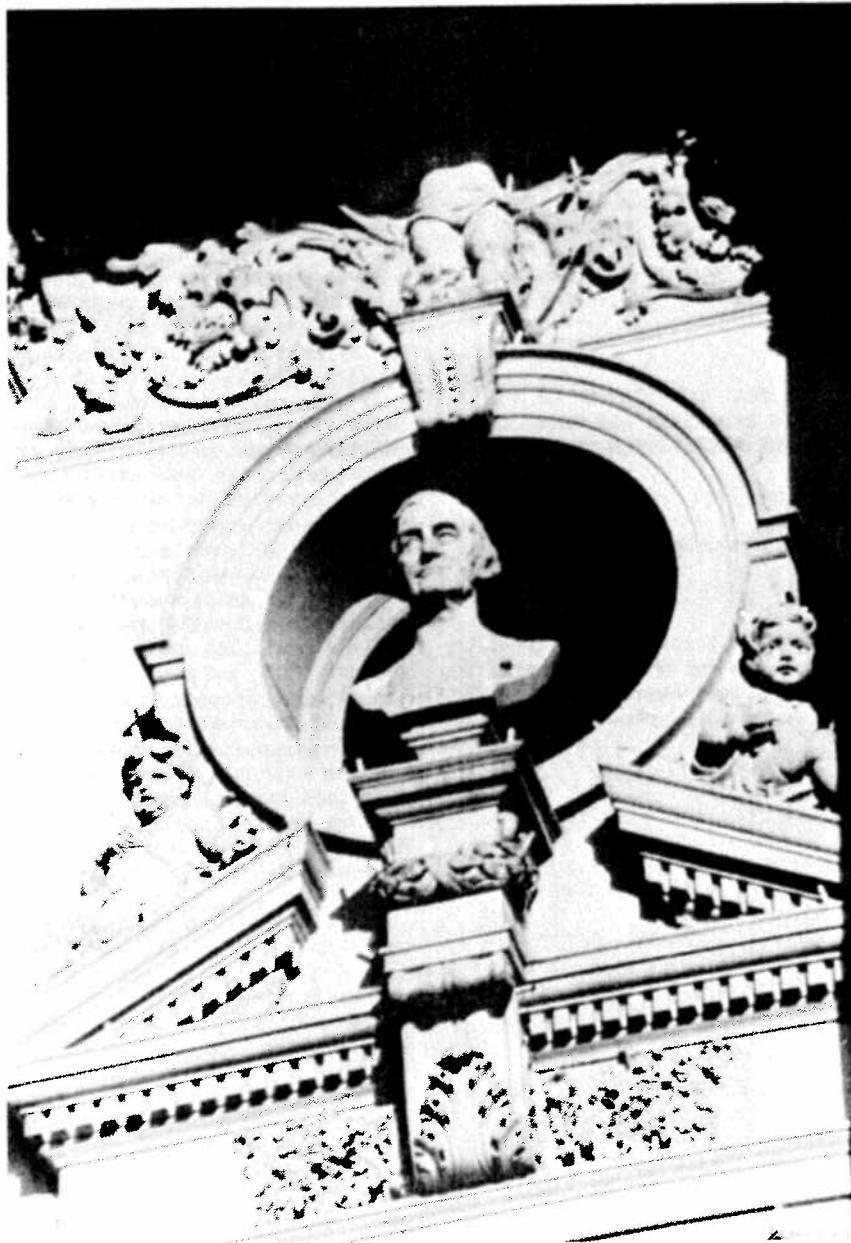
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SOCIETY AND SOLITUDE

PROCESSING SERVICES MUSICALES

by Oxana Horodecka

It all began in 1978 when I realized that I was starting to lose it—my piano skills, that is. Ever since graduating from college and no longer having to prepare for piano exams once or twice a year, I noticed a gradual deterioration in my playing. Like so many others, I had studied classical piano for a long time. And yet, twelve years after I stopped taking lessons and started winging my way through sightreading sessions at sporadic intervals, a frightening realization hit me: I had to do some serious playing. At least part of the year, I had to force myself to carefully read every note, every musical direction, and prepare something seriously. Otherwise, I could forget about preserving even a semblance of my previous skills.

I always enjoyed playing the piano and it occurred to me that it would be a lot of fun to get a group of people together who would take the time to prepare a recital piece properly. It was easy to find them. The Library of Congress is filled with many very talented musicians. There are numerous staff members who have seriously studied music, and many of them even majored in music. Quite a few have actively participated in various musical groups in the Washington area as members of orchestras, chamber ensembles, or choral groups. There was so much talent available that it became necessary to limit the membership of the group to Processing Services personnel. As the need arose, however, guest artists were regularly invited from other departments and from outside the Library.

The first recital, a morning musicale, was held in my apartment on April 29, 1979. For the next two years, Joseph Howard, then Assistant Librarian for Processing Services at the Library of Congress (and now Librarian at the National Agricultural Library), very graciously offered his home for the recitals and the use of his Yamaha grand piano. In 1982, the group wished to invite more friends than Joe's home could hold, so the fourth musicale was held at the Cleveland Park Congregational United Church of Christ. In 1984, thanks to the efforts of Betty Auman of the Music Division, we were given permission to use the Coolidge Auditorium for the first time, and have staged our musicales there ever since. I have been impresario and coordinator for the musicales every year since 1979, except for 1982, when Barbara Griffis took over. Although I enjoyed every aspect of concert management, as the event evolved, the role became extremely labor intensive and time consuming. Since 1985, therefore, all participants have helped out with publicity, public relations, program planning, musical biography preparation, scheduling practice sessions, coordinating with the Music Division, preparing invitations, writing concert articles for the Library of Congress Information Bulletin, typing, xeroxing, taping of the program, and handling arrangements (ushers, staging, tuning of instruments, lighting, backstage direction, etc.).

We have gone through many variations of format for these recitals. The group prefers the musicale to be held outside of normal working hours, and on the weekend rather than a week night. For a number of obvious reasons (security, Buildings Management personnel availability, etc.), the recital must be held when the Library is open to the public. Finally, the program is oriented toward classical music; however, there exists a rather liberal interpretation of what this concept encompasses!

At various times, we have had so many performers interested that it was suggested that competitions

might be in order. Can you imagine? Fortunately, we have not had to resort to this technique. The roster of participants fluctuates. Some play once, then drop out for a year or two, come back, or drop out for good. Only one person has performed in all recitals to date. We jointly decide on a time limit for each performer, but sometimes things get out of hand. We have once been accused of staging a Fellini-esque extravaganza, but what can an impresario do when musical inspiration strikes? Stand there with a stop watch and a whistle?

While the Coolidge Auditorium is a little too spacious for our needs, it is a real treat for us to perform on that stage. The acoustics are superb and we certainly have enough space for as many instruments and performers as we need (duo grand pianos, chamber ensemble, choral group, etc.). As a pianist, I can personally attest to the fact that it's a thrill to sit down at that Steinway Concert Grand and play even for a very short time on one Saturday afternoon a year. It's well worth several months of serious preparation. It's also very special to hear one's colleagues, who, for the most part, are not professional musicians, but play their hearts out and entertain the audience so magnificently. Moments like these make the whole effort worthwhile.

Many of us go to Kennedy Center and other concert halls frequently and become jaded by constant exposure to the best talent the world has to offer. Musical perfection and genius seem mundane to us cultural junkies. When one has to sit down and learn something which would not be considered particularly difficult on the scale of musical literature (and finds that it takes months to learn it properly), one quickly regains a fair sense of appreciation of musical skill. This is yet another benefit of preparing for a musicale.

One culinary point. After the first musicale, I prepared a champagne brunch and asked my colleagues Jacquelyn and Jack Reamy and Beacher Wiggins to help me serve it. They performed so elegantly that I dubbed them "The Ridgewell Surrogates." The following year John James joined them, and for the next three concerts The Ridgewell Surrogates either coordinated or prepared our post-concert repasts. These became in themselves major culinary events. When we moved the concert to the Coolidge Auditorium, we had to discontinue these receptions due to several logistical problems. We hope to go back to them, certainly for the Tenth Anniversary Gala, already planned as a black tie affair to mark that event.



In the meantime, the Eighth Processing Services Musicales will be held May 23, 1987 in the Coolidge Auditorium. (The hour will be announced at a later date.) Come and join us for an afternoon you will not quickly forget. Maybe some of you who have studied for years but have not performed for some time will dust off that sheet music, practice in the months to come, and join our group of music lovers for the 1988 Processing Services Musicales!

Performers in the Musicales, 1979-1986

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Reginald Allen | Mary Holmes |
| Leo Anderson | Oxana Horodecka |
| Alice Birney | Joseph Howard |
| Inge Bodansky | Nancy Jackson |
| Elmer Booze | Cynthia Johanson |
| Frances Callan | Judy Kessinger |
| Kenneth Carter | Albert Kohlmeier |
| Margaret Welk Cundiff | Lyn van der Linden |
| Peter De La Garza | Judy McDermott |
| Phillip De Sellem | David Maxwell |
| Jan Gannon | Norman Middleton |
| Lloyd Gedra | Linda Miller |
| James Gentner | Jim Moldavan |
| Virginia Gifford | Steve Permut |
| John Graves | Harry Price |
| Barbara Griffis | Regene Ross |
| Marilyn Hamilton | Leo Settler |
| Alex Hassan | David Summerfield |
| Sandra Hawkins | Edward Tappe II |
| Chester Hobson | Rebecca Wagner |
| | Stephen Yusko |

LC TREASURES IN PROCESS

The latest encounters of the serendipitous kind. Please forward similar nominations to J. Wayne COP EXAM, LM 447 (x7-8218).

ILLUSTRATORS 27. The Society of Illustrators 27th Annual of American Illustration. From the exhibition held at the Galleries of the Society of Illustrators Museum of American Illustration, 128 East 63rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, Jan. 30-Apr. 10, 1985. Published ..by Madison Square Press, Inc., N.Y. Distributed by Robert Silver Associates, N.Y. ISBN 0-942604-09-1 \$49.95.

With its contributions on Charles M. Russell and Arthur Burdett Frost, and illustrations by all of its contributors and prizewinners, it would be almost impossible for anyone to fail to find something super. Illustration lives!

GREAT MOVIE DIRECTORS. By Ted Sennett. AFI Press, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. (100 Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C. 10011) "Filmographies, bibliographies, appendixes, index. 327 illus., including 75 plates in full color." ISBN 0-8109-0718-6 \$35.00 PN 1998.A2543 Forget about colorization! The black-and-white stills and often unique color plates from otherwise b&w productions would sell this book. The biographical rundowns are equally detailed and choice--wish there were even more.

ANTONIO'S TALES FROM THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS. Watercolor drawings by Antonio Lopez. Stewart, Tabori & Chang, Publishers (740 Broadway, N.Y.C. 10003) 1985. ISBN 0-941434-73-7 ca. \$25.00 BJ 7716.A1B8 The collector's item of the future--one in a thousand-and-one! Sumptuous, beautiful, and sexy, all in one. Dazzling! Adult! Fabulous illustrations! (Sheherazade would approve.)

MS.LC CONDUCT RESPONDS



Correspond with her through her editors, Judy Krone, SUBJ CAT, or Emily Zehmer, MSS.

DEAR MS. LC CONDUCT: The confidential nature of this query is important, but I want to bring the question to light. Once again my supervisor is using the telephone to make personal long distance calls, something that occurs quite regularly. Can anything be done about the situation, or should I just grin and bear it?

HAD IT UP TO HERE

DEAR HAD: I would assume you mean that your loquacious supervisor is using the Library's lines illegally, but even you can't be sure, unless your hearing is very good indeed. He or she may have one of those handy access codes which, with a few deft digital movements, can charge long distance calls made on other telephones to one's personal account. Some Library of Congress employees, moreover, do have friends and acquaintances in remote places with whom they chat regularly about ALA matters, NACO, inter-library loan, and a wealth of other professional concerns before they get to the good stuff like trysts, divorces, incurable diseases, etc. It may just sound to you like a personal conversation, which brings me to my next point: Ms. LC Conduct looks with great disdain upon eavesdropping--especially when one can hear only one side of the conversation. Furthermore, in some divisions, telephone records are scrutinized very carefully by the higher-ups, and those who venture out on the WATTS lines may have to justify their presence there. Other divisions are not quite so picky or so nosy. Ms. LC thinks, to borrow a phrase from a fellow columnist, MYOB. It is not in your job description to rat on or reprimand your supervisor. Leave that to the higher-ups.

DEAR MS. LC CONDUCT: During the last several weeks, I have developed a heavy pash for a male LC librarian. Each day is torture because I don't know if he "is or isn't." How do I find out if I am wasting my time? ANXIOUS, SINGLE, FEMALE LIBRARY SCIENTIST/INFORMATION SPECIALIST

DEAR ASFLS/IS: It took Ms. LC a moment to figure out what a "pash" was, and another moment to figure out what your question was. But it only took her an instant to come up with an answer: if you have to ask, you are wasting your time.