

Chase Collection Accessioning Completed After 100 Years on Back Shelves

In October of 2020, the late Jim Whipple began work with tremendous focus and enthusiasm on a descriptive catalog of the un-accessioned portions of the Chase Collection. According to the HMA Library Bulletin of 1934, "Theodore Chase, an amateur in music and a member of the Association, willed us most of his music (received in 1925), amounting to 500 volumes [each volume containing dozens of scores]—a truly noble gift..." Most [and this constitutes perhaps 10% of the HMA collection] had been catalogued and have sat among the downstairs shelves for 85 years, but 225 volumes had never been accessioned or catalogued, probably because they weren't considered useful for circulation at the time. We're lucky they weren't discarded. These back-benched "binders' volumes" contain 4200+ scores and parts.



Theodore Chase in early daguerreotype.

By March of 2021, when Jim had to stop work due to intractable pain from what turned out to be a fatal cancer, he had listed and described 1500 items. Sophie Wang, who served as Covid-19-period page turner completed Jim's work in March of 2021 just after winning an audition to the BSO violin section. Under Jared Rex's tutelage, Lee Eiseman derived OCLC matches and, where unable to find same, listed the remaining items as OCLC unicas.

Of the 4299 items described (noting that parts listed separately are duplicative), one notes that there were no matching records for 741 items. Those could be treated to original cataloging if HMA believes that to be a useful investment.

What made this process relatively efficient, possible, and rewarding for me to undertake was the fact that 2279 of the matches were held by only one other library on OCLC. A few years earlier that would not have been the fact; much more original cataloging would have been needed. It's interesting and mystifying that I found 95 matches to existing records for items held by no other libraries.

We now need to decide whether to pursue original cataloging for the unique items. OCLC bid \$32,000 (\$48. per record). This is clearly not worth the money. They also bid \$18 per record for adding the HMA record to existing records. My humble efforts thus saved HMA something like \$50k.

The likelier scenario would be to depend on Google spiders to discover our unicas from a posting of the finding aid on the HMA website.