

Foreword and Acknowledgements

This history of the Midwest Chapter of the Music Library Association (MWMLA) is possible because of the contributions of many MLA colleagues throughout the organization's existence. Newsletters, annual meeting programs, oral history interviews, photographs, and videos have helped document the business, activities (formal and social), meeting sites, and members of the organization. Many MLA colleagues—especially members of the Publications Committee—helped gather and review those records, thereby providing the foundation for this new chapter history.

The first chapter history was written by Elizabeth “Betty” Olmsted in 1977. It documented the first twenty-five years of the chapter in the publication, “Music Library Association, Midwest Chapter: A Brief History.”

The seeds of the 1977–86 and future chapter history documents grew out of that initial publication and the 55th Anniversary Meeting, held at Notre Dame University in 1996. MLA members, as well as many retirees, gathered to celebrate the anniversary year. They also collected and displayed photographs from earlier meetings and of MLA colleagues and provided descriptions of the music libraries in which they worked—whether in a public library, university, college or conservatory setting. Jean Geil suggested conducting a chapter oral history project to document the recollections of members. Therese Dickman accepted Jean's invitation to coordinate the MWMLA Oral History project in 1996; she put out a call for volunteers to conduct and audio-record member interviews and response was enthusiastic. Seventeen interviews were conducted that year and more were done subsequently. Volunteers (notably Rob DeLand) transcribed the interviews; Publications Committee members Greg Fitzgerald, Kate Harrison, and Mary Huisman, among others, reviewed the transcripts and recordings and identified potential audio excerpts to enhance a new written chapter history. Feature articles, closely based upon chapter project interview transcripts, came first. These were published in the *Midwest Note-Book* series entitled, “Speaking Our History.” The first article appropriately featured Jean Geil. Those who conducted an interview were given the opportunity to prepare the corresponding articles. The newsletter editors, Greg Fitzgerald, Anne Shelley and Abbey Thompson, therefore, have played an important role leading to the updated chapter history.

As transcripts were completed, Publications Committee members wrestled with how best to access the documents for use in future newsletter articles and an eventual chapter history, which would cover the time period following Betty Olmsted's “Brief History.” Through the efforts of Jennifer Matthews, a wiki hosted by Notre Dame University was soon developed to store oral and chapter history-related documents and accompanying audio recordings. A new MLA web server, with Katie Buehner's assistance, subsequently made a workspace available for committees, eventually replacing the wiki as the Publications Committee's designated place to store and make accessible needed materials. Lynne Weber used these resources to begin drafting the 1977–86 document which would follow Betty Olmsted's chapter history.

Compiling past chapter newsletters, annual meeting programs, and business meeting minutes were tasks assumed by Publications Committee members to aid in writing the chapter history. Abbey Thompson's discovery of a cache of long-sought newsletters in the Northern Illinois University music library, for instance, was revitalizing and motivating. Sandy Rodriguez, who was the MLA Archivist at the time, guided the transfer of MWMLA archival materials from the Music Library Association Archives at the University of Maryland to the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UM-KC), the designated, current home of the chapter archives. Anne Shelley, Sandy Rodriguez, Wendy Sistrunk, and Elizabeth Hille Cribbs assisted in gathering, digitizing, and posting chapter programs

and minutes from the MWMLA archives, thereby adding to the rich resources now available from the Chapter website.

Thank you to all who contributed in some way to the updated MWMLA chapter history. This has involved much work providing, gathering, reviewing, editing, and making accessible information, as well as paving the way for the writing project. A huge debt of gratitude is due to Lynne Weber who graciously and humbly accepted the 2014 invitation offered by John Wagstaff, the Publications Committee chair, to draft the chapter history with all its uncertainties and challenges. Thank you to Michael Duffy, Anna LoPrete, and Wendy Sistrunk, who reviewed five-year segments of chapter newsletters and summarized highlights to assist Lynne in 2016. Acknowledgement is given to current Publications Committee members (Therese Dickman, Jason Imbesi, Lynne Weber and Carla Williams) who have carefully reviewed and edited Lynne's originally drafted history document. Thank you also to Kathleen Haefliger who created the Index of Individual Names for the 1977–86 chapter history.

Special recognition is due to Anne Shelley, chapter newsletter editor from 2009 to 2016. She personally scanned and posted past newsletters to the chapter's website, thereby creating a comprehensive archive for the chapter. Anne also collaborated with MLA Archivist Sandy Rodriguez, Wendy Sistrunk, and Elizabeth Hille Cribbs to gather the available MLA meeting programs from the chapter archive and to post them on the chapter website. Don Roberts, Bob Acker, and Greg Fitzgerald had previously donated Midwest Chapter newsletters and meeting programs to the MLA Archives; other colleagues offered more recent ones. Such collaborative efforts to gather, digitize, and post these historic documents have made them easily available from our chapter website.

The Publications Committee chairs have all provided support and encouragement throughout this process, as have the MWMLA Chapter presidents and recent newsletter editors. Special thanks to Michael Duffy, current chapter chair, and web editor Jacey Kepich for their roles in finalizing and posting this updated chapter history.

The photo images that enhance this history are due largely to the generosity of Rebecca Littman and her photographer predecessor, Grace Fitzgerald. Other photos as well as selected audio clips from gathered oral history project materials for this and subsequent history documents are anticipated and welcome.

As we record and document the work of MWMLA and its members now and in the years ahead, may the chapter history provide context for how the organization has arrived at its current state. May we also appreciate what those who went ahead of us accomplished.

Enjoy reading this chapter history. May you continue to make your own MWMLA contributions. After all, *we* are the Midwest Chapter of the Music Library Association.

Written by Therese Zoski Dickman (12/8/2020)