

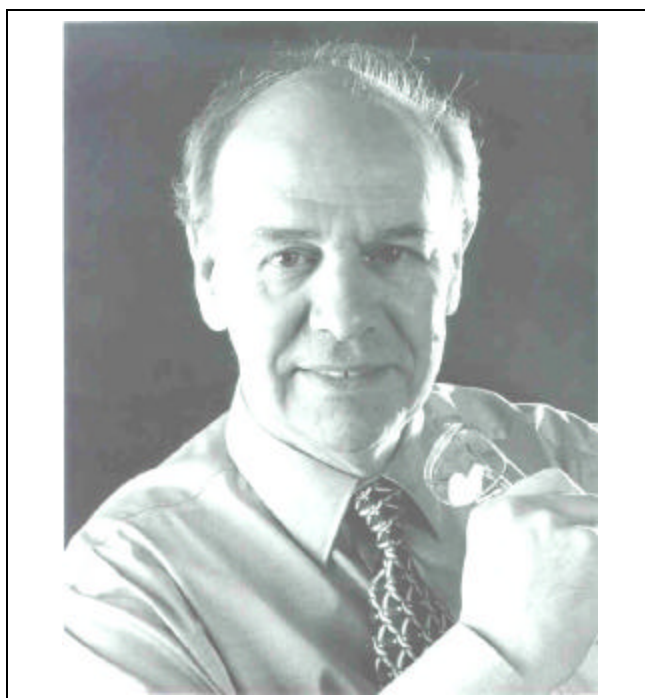
A conversation with Dr. Alan Walker

Alan Walker, Professor Emeritus in the School of Art, Drama and Music, came to McMaster as Chair of the former Music Dept. in 1971. He has published thirteen books, including the critically acclaimed three-volume biography of Franz Liszt, and received many awards in recognition of his scholarly work. In 1997 he donated the Alan Walker Collection to Archives and Research Collections. He recently talked about his work and collection.

What first brought you to McMaster?

I had been with the bbc for ten years in London, and thought it was time for a change. I wanted to get back to my first love, which has always been teaching and research, and McMaster offered me the opportunity.

What has been the highlight of your academic career? When I was presented with the medal Pro Cultura Hungarica by the President of Hungary in Budapest. It acknowledged what I consider to be the best of me in research and even in writing, and that is the 3 volume biography. *You have written much on both Chopin and Schumann. How and when did you come to concentrate your research on Liszt?* Well I suppose we have to go back almost to the beginning. Central to my musical life has been the piano and you can't really go very far in higher piano studies without coming across the music of Chopin, Liszt and Schumann. I still had no idea that I would become a writer because I was intent on becoming a pianist. It was not until much later, when I was with the bbc, that I realized that there wasn't a decent book in English on Liszt. And so, when I put together a vast Liszt piano series and I had to start writing the program notes for the announcers, I decided that I ought to set



Dr. Alan Walker

myself the task of writing a Liszt biography. Liszt has had a bad press, his biographers have been too attracted by the externals: the showbiz personality, the womanizer, the man who was the Elvis Presley of the 19th century, and this image has been made worse by being projected by Hollywood. I decided not to make a major statement that couldn't be supported by documents and that meant I had to travel. And because Liszt himself was a traveller the archives were everywhere. So that's how the Liszt biography got started.

Given your stature as an internationally renowned Liszt scholar, I'm sure your papers would be greatly appreciated by many institutions. What factors made you decide to donate them to McMaster? Other institutions have expressed interest in my papers; in fact, I negotiated with the Library of Congress, and also with the International Piano Library at the University of Maryland. The Library of Congress would have made great sense

because it already has a vast Liszt archive. But I realized that perhaps the best place after all was McMaster University, since I have spent twenty-seven years at this institution. Also, I have to say from a purely selfish point of view, it's rather nice to have my papers looked after just down the road, because I can come and consult them any time I like! *Can you describe the nature of the papers which you have donated?* The papers fall into two groups. There is what we can loosely call the correspondence, and then there is the archive material. The correspondence I'm deeply attached to. I brought a lot of it over to Canada with me in 1971. It consists of letters generated while I was at the bbc with all the people I had invited to contribute to the

series of symposia that I'd edited, and quite distinguished British musicians who took part in my

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With thanks to donors

The Library receives donations and bequests each year from many alumni and friends. Our supporters ask that these gifts be used for acquisitions, and we encourage them to specify the area of special, personal interest, or even the titles of books they wish purchased for the library with their donation. We are happy to assist in identifying appropriate areas and additions to the collection which will make a difference in the ability of McMaster's students and faculty to teach and learn. These gifts have become an essential element of our collection building activities as publishing prices continue to rise. An additional factor is the value of the Canadian dollar on the world market, which affects what we must pay for materials. Approximately 85% of books, journals and electronic products acquired each year for Canadian university libraries must be imported from outside Canada.

Frequently donors ask us to purchase a book for the Library to honour a graduate, recognize a birthday or anniversary, or remember a loved one. The Collections staff are happy to help in identifying suitable titles. All books purchased with a donation are book-plated in consultation with the donor.

During 1999 the Library is particularly anxious to purchase some costly items that are well beyond the scope of regular acquisition funds. Perhaps some of our readers will be interested in assisting with the purchase of one of the following:

David B. Milne: Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings by David B. Silcox and David Milne Jr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. \$500

The Mercator Atlas of Europe edited by Marcel Watelet. Seventeen facsimile prints of maps from the original atlas. Oregon: Walking Tree Press, 1999. us \$245

The Encyclopaedia of Molecular Biology. 4 vol. Edited by T.E. Creighton. Wiley, 1999. \$2,250

Polymer Handbook. 4th ed. Edited by Johannes Brandup, E.H. Immergut and E.A. Grulke. \$487.

Directory of American Scholars. 9th ed. 5 vols. Gale, 1999. \$750.

For more information on how you can contribute to these purchases or support

other Library acquisitions, please contact Charlotte Stewart at ext. 24737 or Anne Plessl at ext. 24865.

Of course your donations are always tax receiptable. ❁ (C. A. Stewart)

Digital Resources Specialist

A Digital Resources Specialist has recently been hired by the University Library to assist library users with various licensed electronic products. The Digital Resources Specialist will, over the next few months, set up the Library's Data/Text Service in Mills Library.

The last few years have witnessed an explosion in the publication of digital data and text and the demand for such products crosses research and departmental lines. Many sets of digital data arrive bundled with pre-packaged interfaces and require little more than loading to be completely accessible to the user. However, a growing number of data/text producers make their products available only as unformatted data. Such products can offer great flexibility in the ways in which the user can extract and manipulate data, but they often require special expertise in order to get the most value from them. Many such products must be downloaded from the Internet and require significant amounts of disk storage space for the user to carry out complex manipulations. The University Library seeks to maximize its buying power by membership in a number of consortium arrangements such as the dli (Data Liberation Initiative), but has come to believe that it must provide a different type of service in order to get the fullest possible value from such products.

The Digital Resources Specialist will work to create self-serve interfaces, where appropriate, to allow the user to extract the required data or text independently. However, he will also assist the researcher who requires more specialized assistance. Eventually, the user will be able to send datasets from stations within the Centre to his or her own computer through networked communications, or simply print out the results of the project and hand in the assignment. ❁ (S. Pepper)

(Dr. Walker Continued from p. 1)

programs. I had several large boxes of the stuff when I arrived in Canada and then it just went on growing. The Liszt research material I decided to part with because I knew I could gain instant access to it. I have original documents in the hand of Sir Sacheverell Sitwell and composers like Alan Rawsthorne and Lennox Berkeley. There's microform material as well in this archive and I'm proposing to make a second accrual available within the next 2-3 years.

What impact do you believe these papers will have on McMaster's reputation as a research library? I hope the impact will be positive. I think it will enrich the music materials that we have already. There are more and more scholars now starting to take the 19th century seriously.

Archival research has figured greatly in your own research. In what ways do you hope your papers will be used by other scholars?

The more papers we have available for scholarship the better. The days have long since passed where scholarship, particularly musical scholarship, could rest on hearsay. Time was when it was enough to stay at home and join two or three old books together to create the new one. But original documents are now essential. My collection probably will be useful to scholars in that there's a lot of raw information there for people who have the time and the interest to look at it. Particularly in the field of Liszt reception, the archival material is important enough for future Liszt scholars to want to consult. So I hope it will enhance and increase the reputation of the University as a centre of research. *What do you hope your legacy to the University will be?* Setting the highest possible standards in teaching and research. (A. Plessl) ❁

Awards

Sir Edwin Leather, one of the Library's most generous donors, will receive an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from McMaster at the spring convocation of the Faculty of Social Sciences on June 2nd. Sir Edwin was profiled in the Fall 1998 issue.

Research Collections Librarian Dr. Carl Spadoni will receive the Marie Tremaine medal from the

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Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara now accessible on the Web!

In 1975 McMaster University Library entered into an agreement with the Anglican Diocese of Niagara to act as a repository for the records of the Diocese and its many churches. These records are a great source of genealogical research and a treasure trove for church and social history. Whenever the records of a particular church are acquired, the statistical registers are microfilmed and the churches receive photocopies of them. The originals, along with other records, are kept for safekeeping in the Ready Division. Researchers have used the microfilmed records almost on a daily basis in the Ready Division's reading room. Often a request for information is received over the telephone or by e-mail.

In the past finding aids to these records have existed only in hard copy. The finding aids consist of five large binders of descriptions. This meant that researchers could only discover the type

and extent of the records of a church by visiting the Library, although summary descriptions of the records of the Diocese and the churches were published in *Guide to the Holdings of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario* (Agin-court, Ont.: Generations Press Inc., 1990).

In the last several years all of the finding aids have been rekeyed onto disk. At same time we have prepared in electronic form what are called fonds-level descriptions for the Diocese and individual churches. Fonds is the archival word for a body of records created or kept by a person, company, or organization. A fonds-level description provides a succinct description of the fonds akin to a bibliographic record for a book. By contrast, a finding aid is ordinarily more comprehensive and detailed in terms of description. All of this information on the Diocese and its churches has now been brought together on a Web site at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/library/ready/docs/anglican>. The site consists of an introductory page and links to maps of the Diocese, fonds-level descriptions and finding aids of Diocesan records and the records of individual churches. The site also includes mailing addresses, a list of



individual churches with records prior to 1869, and a list of clergy up to 1991. Interested researchers will still have to visit McMaster to examine the microfilms of these records because neither the fonds-level descriptions nor the finding aids index personal names. Nonetheless, the Web site is a great advance, enabling researchers from any part of the world to get access to descriptions of these important archives. (C. Spadoni)

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Bibliographical Society of Canada in recognition of his contribution to Canadian bibliography and for distinguished publication. The award will be presented at the Learned Societies Conferences, to be held at the Université de Sherbrooke in June. (A. Plessl)

Preservation tip: adhesive tapes

Adhesive tapes, known as pressure sensitive tapes in conservation, are often considered an ideal method for mending damaged or torn papers. These tapes are applied with hand pressure and stick aggressively to most surfaces. Because of their low cost and ease of application, pressure sensitive tapes have gained wide acceptance. However, despite manufacturers' claims, tapes should never be applied to important papers, manuscripts or maps due to

their degradation properties over time.

Pressure sensitive adhesive tapes consist of two main elements: the backing and the adhesive. Tape backings, or carriers, can be made of plastic film, fabric, paper, metal foil, and other materials that provide a flexible support for the adhesive mass. The two general classes of pressure sensitive adhesives are those made from rubber and those made from synthetic polymers. No matter what its composition or the formulation of its adhesive, the long-term sticking power of pressure sensitive tape does not come from the initial pressing of tape to paper. Initially, due to the tackifiers present, a strong, Velcro-like bond does occur but long-term adhesion occurs through secondary bonding, an interaction between the adhesive and paper.

In the early stages of ageing, deterioration is slow, adhesion is weak and the tape can be easily removed by mechanical means. Continued ageing makes removal more difficult and places the item at risk as various chemical pro-

cesses work to undermine the structural integrity of the substrate. Staining and translucency of the paper begins to occur, often obscuring information and causing media to bleed. As time passes, this staining will become a permanent feature. Another degrading property of pressure sensitive tapes is that over time, the adhesive loses its ability to slide and flex thus becoming set and rigid in its structure. This attribute renders an item structurally unsound. The paper substrate cannot adequately support this type of rigidity and the result is further damage to the item.

Maintaining the original condition of any item is of utmost importance and for this reason, mending with pressure sensitive tapes should be avoided. Rather than repairing torn documents, one can house the damaged item in acid-free envelopes or Mylar sleeves. Larger items can be stored in boxes. Books maybe boxed, slipcased or wrapped in strong, acid-free paper. Repairs to such items should be left to a qualified conservator. (A. Schell)

Celebrating Collectors

On Sunday, May 16, Peter George, President and Vice-Chancellor and Graham R. Hill, University Librarian will host an Open House and Champagne Reception for library donors to meet and talk with collectors of books, maps and music. Collectors displaying items from their collections include Rabbi Bernard Baskin, Dorothy Farquharson, Ray and Donna Findlay, Karl Freeman, Don Jones and Carl Spadoni.

The event will take place from 2:00-5:00pm at the Great Hall of the Faculty Club in Alumni Memorial Hall. We look forward to seeing our many generous donors there! ❁ (A. Plessl)

American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies

Two McMaster-ASECS fellows took up their awards in the summer of 1998. Dr. Tiffany Potter, Department of English, University of Calgary, developed her projected book on English Libertinism across the Eighteenth Century using various approaches and texts from the collection. One of her major areas of concentration was the Library's extensive resources for research into London clubs of the Restoration and the eighteenth century, especially those reputed to be frequented by libertines such as John Wilkes.

Dr. Downing Thomas teaches French and Italian at the University of Iowa. He spent part of his stay at McMaster completing an article on interdisciplinarity in eighteenth-century studies and new directions in the field of musicology (forthcoming). The balance of his research was concentrated on early French opera and its cultural contexts for a book on *Opera in the Wake of Absolutism* which examines the political culture in which opera originated and the impact of opera on the culture of France during the period 1671 to 1785.

Tiffany Potter's study *Honest Sins: Georgian libertinism and the plays and novels of Henry Fielding*, based on

research completed prior to her fellowship, has just been published by McGill-Queen's University Press (1999). ❁

(C.A. Stewart)

Recent notable gifts

❖ From acta Press, a collection of conference proceedings, mostly on the topic of computer engineering.

❖ From the Estate of Gordon Allison, a collection of Canadian literature and texts.

❖ From John Barclay, courtesy of Thornton's of Oxford Ltd., eight recent translations of Iris Murdoch's books.

❖ From the estate of W. J. Eccles, the third accrual of his papers along with a small collection of 18th Century French books and facsimiles of maps.

❖ From Hamilton Public Library, *The Collected Works of Sir Winston Churchill*. London: Library of Imperial History, 1973-1976 (imprint varies). 34 volumes.

❖ From current and retired faculty members Simon Haykin and Gunhard Oravas, scholarly books on a variety of topics.

❖ From Ahmad Ibrahim, a collection of books on computer science.

❖ From Sir Edwin Leather, an accrual of his papers along with a substantial donation of books.

❖ From Christopher Levenson, his manuscripts and literary correspondence between 1969 and 1994 (60 cm. of textual records).

❖ From Norma R. Perry, eighteen pieces of Canadian sheet music.

❖ From Evan Simpson (former Dean of Humanities at McMaster), 26 imprints of his father's fine press, the Blackwood Press.

❖ From uswa (District 6 and Hamilton area councils), approximately 45 boxes of archives and books. Many Hamilton locals are represented.

❖ From Judge Robert Walmsley, Dean Swift's *Sermons*.

❖ From proceeds of the 19th Annual McMaster Business Conference 1998, a joint project of students of the Michael DeGroote School of Business and the Management of Innovation and New Technology Research Centre, 6 Internet stations for Innis Library.

We are grateful to all donors for their generosity to the Library. ❁

Publications

The following recent publications made use of our collections:

Haslam, Beryl. *From Suffrage to Internationalism: the Political Evolution of Three British Feminists, 1908-1939*. New York: P. Lang, 1999.

Kirkpatrick, B. J. and Stuart N. Clarke. *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 4th ed.

Landini, Gregory. *Russell's Hidden Substitutional Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Nunn, G. Raymond. *Canada and Asia, a Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in Canada*. London: Mansell, 1998.

Schweitzer, Rich. *The Cross and the Trenches: Religious Faith and Doubt Among Some British Soldiers on the Western Front*, *War & Society*, 16, no. 2 (October 1998): p. 33-57.

Stock, Guy, ed. *Appearance versus Reality: New Essays on Bradley's Metaphysics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Letters From a Lost Generation, a poignant and gripping 15-part radio series broadcast on Radio 4 in England, was based on the book of the same title edited by Alan Bishop and Mark Bostridge (London: Little, Brown, 1998). Both the series and the book drew from correspondence held in the Vera Brittain Archive. ❁

Calendar

May to July 1999: Nature Displayed: an Exhibition of Selected Books, in Archives and Research Collections.

June 5, 1999: Bring Your Old Books (byob), open to alumni, staff and the public. Have your books appraised by expert antiquarian book dealers. Mills Library, 9:30am-1:00pm, \$5.00/book. Proceeds to benefit the Library acquisitions fund. ❁