

(DIS)CLAIMED FROM STATIONERS' HALL: THE CASE OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Roy Stanley

Following the Act of Union in 1801 which united the two separate kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, the Copyright Act of the same year (41 Geo III c.107) extended copyright protection to Ireland and designated two Dublin institutions as legal deposit libraries: Trinity College Dublin [TCD] and King's Inns.¹ In 1802 Trinity College appointed the publishers and booksellers Cadell and Davies as their agent in London, and the first delivery from Stationers' Hall was recorded in the library minute book on 10 August 1802.²

From the start the library took a selective approach to legal deposit receipts. Some items recognised for their academic value were immediately catalogued and placed in the library; others received in sheets were sent for binding. The Librarian, John Barrett, sent others to the Provost for inspection; some of these were selected for the library, but in 1802 at least one book rejected by the Provost was sent to the college bookseller to be sold, with the proceeds to be credited to the college account.³

The first reference to music received from Stationers' Hall appears in the library minute book on 27 November 1811: 'Put up into Ms. Room in the press in the N.W. angle, all the music sent in from Stationer's [sic] hall at various times & lying in the Libr. Room.'⁴ There is a similar account in July 1815: 'Dr. Nash sent in one large basket full of books and four very large bundles. They were all left in the Ms. Room on the table until a list of them could be made out & entered in this book.'⁵ And twelve days later: 'Put up in Press L in the Ms. Room the music sent in on 15 July in the parcels that day recd. from Stat. Hall.'⁶

¹ Apart from the archival sources referenced in the footnotes below, material for this article is drawn principally from two published works: Kinane, Vincent, 'Legal deposit, 1801-1922' in Kinane, V. & Walsh, A. *Essays on the history of Trinity College Library Dublin*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000; and Fox, Peter, *Trinity College Library Dublin: a history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

² TCD MUN/LIB/2/1, 10 August 1802.

³ TCD MUN/LIB/2/1, 19 October and 18 December 1802; Fox, p. 132. John (Jacky) Barrett was Librarian 1791-1821, with gaps of one year each in 1808-09 and 1813-1814.

⁴ TCD MUN/LIB/2/1, 27 November 1811.

⁵ TCD MUN/LIB/2/2, 15 July 1815. Dr Richard Nash was appointed Assistant Librarian in 1807.

⁶ TCD MUN/LIB/2/2, 27 July 1815.

These entries show that Trinity College received some music from Stationers' Hall in the early years of legal deposit, and that it was stored in a press in the manuscripts room. This music does not appear to have been added to the library catalogue (at that time maintained in manuscript form), and no trace of it has been found listed in the later consolidated printed catalogue, published in 1872.⁷

An explanation for the dearth of early deposits of printed music is found in a submission to a Parliamentary Select Committee on legal deposit written by Barrett on 3 July 1817:

*I beg leave to submit to their Lordships the Commrs. of his Majesty's Treasury, that the instructions of this Coll. to their agent in London have been to claim neither music, novels nor school books. And that these instructions have been very generally attended to. And that of the books received a considerable part have been bound and placed in the public library. And that the remainder consisting of imperfect works or such as there occurred some difficulty in determining upon the propriety of placing them in the public library are in the custody of the Librarian, none having been disposed of, either directly or indirectly.*⁸

If, as stated by Barrett, it was library policy at this time not to claim music publications, it is not clear how long this instruction remained in force. The library minutes provide hints that by the 1830s some music was again being deposited. On 17 November 1836 the warehouse keeper at Stationers' Hall was sent a list of books that had not been supplied to the agent. A note at the end states: 'The music is not included in this list', though in fact the list does contain one music publication: *Souvenir du Montferrat* arranged by T.H. Wright.⁹ A year later, in an entry for the 'price of books received in 1837', a valuation of £68 12s 6d is placed on 'music recd. from May to Decr. 1837'.¹⁰ More specific evidence is found in two handwritten lists of 'music sent to Trinity College Dublin' in October 1859 and September 1860.¹¹ The 1859 list contains 335 items (all ticked off), while the 1860 list has 563 items (one crossed out).

This apparent change of policy may reflect the influence of James Henthorn Todd, Assistant Librarian 1834-1850 and Librarian 1852-1869. As well as reforming library procedures, Todd developed a much more active

⁷ The earliest music items so far discovered in that catalogue were published in the 1840s.

⁸ TCD MUN/LIB/2/2, 7 July 1817. There must be some doubt about the full reliability of these assertions, given the evidence that at least one book received in 1802 was consigned for sale.

⁹ TCD MUN/LIB/2/3, 17 November 1836.

¹⁰ TCD MUN/LIB/2/3, December 1837.

¹¹ TCD MUN/LIB/22/16 and TCD MUN/LIB/22/17.

approach to pursuing claims under legal deposit.¹² Additionally, in his role as a member of the college board he showed an interest in music: in 1839 he recommended the purchase of ‘two ancient Manuscripts of Church Music’,¹³ and for many years he appears to have been responsible for arranging the attendance of choristers in the college chapel.¹⁴

In spite of these fleeting references, the collections show almost no sign that music received from Stationers’ Hall in this period was catalogued and retained. A few items contain handwritten accession dates which are reasonably close to the dates of publication. We may speculate that these might have come from Stationers’ Hall, but as Trinity College did not use special stamps or accession lists to record provenance it is impossible to say with any certainty:

Joseph Haydn, *The seasons* (C. Lonsdale, 1840). Accession date: October 1841. [Shelfmark P.b.28]

Samuel Arnold, *Cathedral music*, ed. E.F. Rimbault (D’Almaine & Co., 1843). 3 vols. Accession date: January 1849. [Shelfmark Q.aa.2-4]

Joseph Haydn, *The creation* (Sacred Music Warehouse : J. Alfred Novello, 1859). Accession date: May 1869. [Shelfmark: Gall OO.15.15]

Felix Mendelssohn, *Original compositions for pianoforte solo* (Novello, Ewer & Co, 1872). 4 vols. Accession dates: Vols. 1-3: March 1872; Vol. 4: March 1887. [Shelfmark: Gall OO.14.36-39]

On the other hand, fifteen volumes of Handel Society editions published by Cramer, Beale & Co. between 1843 and 1857 have an accession date of June 1874 [Shelfmarks: Gall PP.14.1-15]. Were these received through legal deposit and stored uncatalogued for over twenty years? Similarly, a set of parts for Rousselot’s edition of Beethoven string quartets published by R. Cocks & Co. in 1846 have an accession date of October 1870 [Shelfmarks: Gall OO.14.24-27].

These are rare examples of music scores added to the main library collection in the nineteenth century. Not until the late 1870s was sheet music routinely retained: large quantities of printed music from that decade onwards survive, though much of the earlier material remains uncatalogued (systematic cataloguing of printed music did not begin until the 1950s). The library’s general treatment of music is outlined in an entry in the library minute book for 1902:

¹² Fox, pp. 167-173, 192-195.

¹³ TCD MUN/V/5/7, p. 246, 23 December 1839.

¹⁴ O’Shea, David, ‘The choral foundation of the Chapel Royal at Dublin Castle, 1814-1922’. PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2019. Vol. 1, pp. 142-3. Todd may also have played a part in the appointment of John Smith as Professor of Music in 1847; soon afterwards he was presented with an elaborately decorated volume of Gregorian chants arranged by Smith (TCD MS 2025). I am grateful to David O’Shea for generously sharing his research on Todd and Smith.

A cellar has just been shelved in the Museum Building to receive the volumes of Patents Specifications now in Library Attic. . . . They are now to be moved to the Museum Building Cellar so as to leave the shelves they occupy in the Attic free to receive unbound music. Up to the present, with the exception of some scores and other vols of music selected on no system, the music retained by the Librarian as suitable for preservation has not been catalogued but stored in Press E of Classing Room & other places. It is now proposed to sort this music into groups on the long shelves in the Attic.¹⁵

A few days later it is recorded that 'Mr. Dobbin, with Dr. Abbott's permission, began this grouping and spent about a fortnight at it.'¹⁶

This account highlights two key factors influencing library policy throughout this period: a shortage of storage space, and a selective approach to the retention of some publications received through legal deposit, apparently based on a short-term evaluation of their academic worth. Though there is some evidence that the library recognised its responsibility to preserve publications for future generations,¹⁷ pressure of space ensured that the same materials rejected in 1817 – novels, school textbooks and music – were still considered dispensable right up to the 1920s. The library minutes contain numerous accounts of novels being sent in large quantities to local hospitals and workhouses, and to the armed forces in local barracks and overseas during conflicts in South Africa and Europe. School textbooks were sent to a local school, and for use by prisoners of war.¹⁸

Some materials, including music, were disposed of with even less respect. In 1896 two workers were employed to sort documents, mostly Indian papers and patents. Over a period of four months they sent 170 sacks of waste paper to Drimnagh Paper Mills for pulping, and it is probable that this included legal deposit items.¹⁹ In 1917-18, over 10 tons of patents and other materials were sold as waste paper.²⁰ The Assistant Librarian's report for the year 1916/17 confirms that music was included in this disposal:

All the unsorted music which was filed in the West Attic under the western slope of the roof was carried down to the Newspaper Room, and there sorted by the Librarian. Several sacks filled with separate band

¹⁵ TCD MUN/LIB/2/7, 30 January 1902.

¹⁶ TCD MUN/LIB/2/7, 4 February 1902. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott was Librarian 1887-1913.

¹⁷ For example, in 1863 J.H. Todd, wrote: 'I do not allow the question of the utility or the merit of a publication to interfere with our right to it.' Letter to the Ordinance Survey, TCD MUN/LIB/2/4, 11 February 1863.

¹⁸ TCD MUN/LIB/2/7, 8 July 1897 onwards; Kinane, p. 132; Fox, p. 269.

¹⁹ TCD MUN/LIB/2/7, 21 September- 8 December 1896; Kinane, p. 132.

²⁰ TCD MUN/LIB/2/7, 21 November 1918; Fox, p. 270.

*parts and music-hall rubbish were sent to the wastepaper merchant. Full scores were put in Dr Todd's cabinet in the Librarian's Room.*²¹

While an academic library's disdain for unwanted 'band parts and music-hall rubbish' a century ago is easily understood, the reasons for TCD's broader lack of interest in music are less obvious. Why, in 1917, should the library still be following the same procedure in dealing with music scores as it had in 1815 – storing them uncatalogued in a cupboard in the Librarian's Room or Manuscripts Room? The simple explanation is that there was no formal music tuition in the university throughout this period. Though Trinity College appointed its first professor of music – the Earl of Mornington – in 1764, the chair remained vacant from his resignation in 1774 until the appointment of John Smith in 1847. Smith was succeeded by Robert Prescott Stewart (1862-1894) and Ebenezer Prout (1894-1909). These professors were only required to conduct and supervise examinations for music degrees, and deliver occasional public lectures. Stewart and Prout progressively elaborated the curriculum (as published annually in the university calendar), but at this time Trinity, in common with Oxford and Cambridge, did not offer degree candidates any practical or theoretical musical instruction. Instead, candidates prepared through private tuition or at independent teaching institutions such as the Royal Irish Academy of Music.²² Thus, unfortunately, the library had no incentive to develop its music holdings until this became necessary during the course of the twentieth century, as the status and rigour of music degrees gradually improved.

It remains a matter of regret that, for practical and academic reasons, throughout the nineteenth century Trinity College Dublin neglected its capacity to develop a strong music collection through legal deposit. Though mitigated to some extent by the purchase of Ebenezer Prout's personal music library in 1910, this lost opportunity has deprived the college of what would undoubtedly have been an important legacy collection.²³

²¹ TCD MUN/LIB/17/157.

²² Parker, Lisa, 'The expansion and development of the music degree syllabus at Trinity College Dublin during the nineteenth century' in *Music and institutions in nineteenth-century Britain*, ed. Paul Rodmell. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, pp. 143-160.

²³ The Prout Collection, rich in music scores and theoretical works published during the nineteenth century, is currently being catalogued online. When this project is completed in 2020 the entire collection will be searchable at <https://www.tcd.ie/library/>.

Abstract

Though the legal deposit privilege was extended to Trinity College Dublin in 1801, for most of the nineteenth century the library failed to recognise the value of adding music publications to its collections. This was partly because music, along with novels and school textbooks, was regarded as ephemeral material, and storage space was limited. The university did not offer music tuition: degree candidates prepared independently for music examinations. There was therefore no immediate incentive for the library to preserve music materials, resulting in a regrettable gap in its legacy collections.

Roy Stanley is Music Librarian at the Library of Trinity College Dublin