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Booklover -- Road Trip

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Of course, the physical condition of many of these scores may be in a perilous state, and in recent years a number of publishers have begun reprinting a great deal of music long out-of-print. After assessing all these factors, I decided to give some priority to reprints in my approval plans. Two such publications on my approval plans are the *Repertoire Explorer* series (primarily orchestral music, published by **Musikproduktion Höflich** in Munich) and *Silvertrust* editions (published in Riverwoods, IL), which concentrates on chamber music.

My last point concerns the necessity of closely monitoring the budgets and expenditures for approval plans. When I began these plans in 2008, I set a budget of \$25,000 for each one. This amount worked well initially, but several factors caused me to review this amount in 2009. At the start of this fiscal year I set up ten new standing orders for composers' collected editions and historical sets. Also, I found that our holdings in some scholarly editions were not completely up-to-date, so I worked on filling in these gaps. The result was that in the fall of 2009, we received a significantly greater number of standing orders than we had at the same point in the previous year. We were spending our money faster than I had anticipated, so I feared

we might run out of funds before the fiscal year was over. I obviously needed to keep some money in reserve for firm orders, so in November I contacted both vendors and explained the situation to them. I felt that I had no choice but to cut the budget for each approval plan by \$5,000. Naturally, this was not news they wished to hear, but they understood my reasoning and accepted it. I am pleased to say that the budget cut was only temporary. I continued to monitor our expenditures, and I noticed that the number of standing orders declined markedly in the new year. By February I felt confident that our budget could absorb the \$10,000 amount that had been cut from the approval plans. I notified both vendors and asked them to restore the budgets to their original amount, which they were happy to do.

With the approval plans now well into their second year and the experiences outlined above, I would like to return to the question that I raised at the beginning: am I still selecting? I think the answer is yes, but the following observations should be kept in mind. First, it is essential to stay in regular communication with vendors. Particularly in the early stages there were many emails and telephone calls about the scope of the plans. Fortunately, I have found both **Front** and **Harrassowitz** to be receptive to my questions, concerns, and requests for changes. They both gave the option of returning items that did not fit the plan,

although it has not been necessary to do so. Second, an approval plan is not likely to be set in stone. The plan is almost certain to be modified over time due to a number of factors. Changes in the curriculum; the hiring of new faculty; a decline in the materials budget; new publications that are deemed worthy of being added to the plan; and the arrival on the scene of important composers, whose work we desire to collect comprehensively — all of these scenarios are likely to affect approval plans in some way. In my own situation, I know that after the spring semester draws to a close and the last flurry of ordering has taken place, it will be time once again to review the parameters of the plans and to consider changes for the coming year. 🌱

Endnotes

1. *Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 479-482.
2. Information about the vendors' approval plans may be found at their Websites: http://www.harrassowitz.de/music_services/music_scores.html and <http://www.tfront.com/t-ApprovalPlansMU.aspx>. See also **R. Michael Fling**, *Library Acquisition of Music, Music Library Association Basic Manual Series*, No. 4 (Lanham, MD: **Scarecrow Press**, 2004), 124-128.

Booklover — Road Trip

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Summer is the time when we think about escaping from the routine of our daily lives. The modern school calendar probably contributed to this idea since summer is the usual break between school terms. I have many childhood memories of packing everyone in a car and going on a road trip. Cars were large sedans or station wagons, and seat belts were not a requirement for anyone in the car. We would build "fortresses" behind the clothes that hung in the backseat or among the luggage piled high in the back of the station wagon. The black top rolled out in front of us like a red carpet for our journey. More recently, I took a road trip with three girlfriends from high school. We explored I-95 from the southeast to the northeast and had a blast. With no agenda and only random crazy adventures in store we rotated driving, navigating, entertaining, or providing the never ending flow of snacks from the cooler in the back seat. We were seatbelted in, and the entire car was our fortress. Our Double Nickel Tour restored our souls and fortified us.

Sinclair Lewis' *Free Air* brought all these road trip memories rushing back to me this summer. Published in 1919, the story begins with a young girl, Claire Boltwood of Brooklyn Heights, ready for adventure and a break from the society of New York. Her father, Henry B. Boltwood, is a workaholic, and his worst nightmare has come true — the doctor's order of rest. Claire lures him

as far as Minneapolis to consult for a branch of his company, but once again he immerses himself in work. Claire is undaunted and again convinces her father that a road trip across the two thousand miles to Seattle, to visit their cousins, the Eugene Gilsons would be an excellent diversion. She has her beloved Gomez Deperdussin roadster shipped from New York and they depart on a July morning from Minneapolis along the edge of a cornfield between Schoenstrom and Gopher Prairie, Minnesota toward Seattle. It is not long before she realizes that she might be in over her head in this adventure, but like all adventures it is not without the villains and the heroes. Getting stuck in the mud, bad diners, cheap hotels, and quirky small town folks all contribute to the growth of Claire. And of course there is a hero in the character Milton Daggett. **Lewis'** version of a knight in shining armor. He has also taken to the road as a diversion from his routine, that of a mechanic in a small town garage. Retrieving Claire and her father from the con of Adolph Zolstav, the farmer making sure the road stays muddy in front of his house so he can "rescue" stuck cars for a price, sets the stage for a love of the road and its travelers. We feel the wind in our hair as we follow the roadster along the flat wheat lands, and we grip the book hard as we maneuver the windy mountain roads. And we hope that the social strata of the day will not interfere with a "happy-ever-after" end to the story.

In 1930 **Harry Sinclair Lewis** became the first American writer to win the **Nobel Prize in Literature** "for his vigorous and graphic art of description and his ability to create, with wit and humor, new types of characters." He was born in 1885 in Minnesota, studied at **Oberlin Academy** and **Yale University**, where he began his writing career that included numerous novels and short stories. His novel *Main Street* was a huge (a few million in today's dollars) commercial success and his short story *Little Bear Bongo* caught the interest of **Walt Disney Pictures**.

When presenting his Nobel lecture **Lewis** offered his view of American literature: "in America most of us — not readers alone, but even writers — are still afraid of any literature which is not a glorification of everything American, a glorification of our faults as well as our virtues." He described America as "the most contradictory, the most depressing, the most stirring, of any land in the world today." His comment about America's literary establishment: "Our American professors like their literature clear and cold and pure and very dead." Maybe so, but it is summer again. I feel the call of the road, dream of having the wind in my hair, exploring this great land of ours, and maybe discovering a new book or two. 🌱

