reference work, but also of the definition of a field hitherto largely neglected. These hopes are disappointed, because the project exceeds the detailed knowledge and even the linguistic / geographical perspective of its compilers. The subject remains ill-defined, and as a result, the bibliography is much less useful than it might have been.

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Patrick O'Neill is Coordinator of the Speech and Drama Programme in the Modern Languages Department at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, and a theatre historian of note. We owe the ‘discovery’ of Canadian copyright material at the British Library to his tenacious search for printed copies of Canadian plays which he has described in his article ‘From Theatre History to Canadiana: The Canadian Deposit Collection in the British Library’ (Papers of the Bibliographic Society of Canada 25 [1986]: 26-37). O’Neill condensed his account in the introduction to a series of checklists, briefly explaining what accidents of copyright legislation, disasters and disinterest led to the sole survival in London of several thousands of books, pamphlets, broadsides, maps, photographs and sheet music deposited for copyright in Canada between 1895 and 1924. Besides Vol. 4 for Sheet Music, already published are: Vol. 1, Maps [1984]; Vol. 2, Goad Insurance Plans [1985]; Vol. 3, Part 1, City and Area Directories [1986]; Vol. 3, Part 2, Telephone and Miscellaneous Directories [1988]; and Vol. 5, Photographs [1989].

I have qualified the use of the term ‘discovery’ above because I know of at least two persons who were aware of the existence of this material before O’Neill found it. Dr. Helmut Kallman, former Chief of the Music Division at the National Library, had himself ‘discovered’ deposited sheet music during a visit to the British Museum in 1973. Official publications specialist Elizabeth Deavey was asked to look into the matter, and she ‘discovered’ the law which provided for the deposit in London of the material in question. Nevertheless, since no one followed up on that information, we must all be grateful to Patrick O’Neill for having carried his own detective work through to a concrete conclusion.

The sheet music checklist is by far the largest to date. In two parts, it contains an impressive 11,338 numbered entries, arranged alphabetically by composer from Abbot through Zucca, a composer / lyricist index (pp. 681-756), and a title index (pp. 757-893). As stated in O’Neill’s preface (pp. vi-vii), each entry also includes the title, the category (whether song or piano piece), place of publication, publisher and date of publication, the copyright registration number and the British Library shelf number. Not explained but easily deduced is the indication of size used by the British Library (e.g. 8°, folio). Where applicable, the entry also includes the names of
co-composers, lyricists, and arrangers accessible through the index, and supplementary copyright information. The checklist is oblong, two columns to the page, and well-laid-out with a good centre margin for binding.

The use of this list to identify the gaps in the National Library collection has revealed some difficulties, however, especially in the imprint area. I believe the information given there is copyright data rather than publishing data. Allow me to explain. The title-page for sheet music is its cover. It usually includes the place(s) of publication and the publisher(s), as well as distributor(s) if applicable, but almost never a date. The dates in some entries with full call numbers — indication that the items had been catalogued by the British Library — are bracketed in the conventional fashion. In fact, the entire entry should have been bracketed in many cases since deposit copies often have blank covers and the cataloguer would have used the caption title and the copyright statement on the first page of the music, and perhaps information from the copyright deposit lists as well. The entries for the music not yet catalogued at the time the project was being carried out and stored in bundles by decade have no brackets at all. I can understand that all those brackets might have given the text a heavy and busy look, but there should have been some consistency in their use. At the very least, the source of the imprint information should have been revealed in the Preface, and perhaps symbols used to identify those pieces with blank covers and those not examined personally by O'Neill or his co-workers.

Another problem, and a most puzzling one, is the selection of a standardized form of name for the main entry. When I decided to compare the music of the composer used in the Preface sample entry to the entries in the checklist, I had trouble finding some of it. Certain titles listed under Blankte-Belcher, Henriette were published under the name of H.B. Blankte and no cross-reference is given either in the text or in the index. I assumed that the British Library had established the compound name, but found that The Catalogue of Printed Music at the British Library to 1980 lists the composer — if indeed, she is one composer — under two names, Blankte, H.B. and Belcher, Henriette Blankte with a cross reference to the latter from Blankte-Belcher. By what authority were the two names combined in the checklist? Also, an embarrassing and, I am afraid, not solitary ‘glitch’ is the alphabetization under ‘A’ for ‘A Withered Rose.’ A few pages later, the list of works under Browne, John Lewis are correctly alphabetized but in two sequences. We all know about gremlins in the computer, but careful proofreading could have corrected these and other technical and typographical errors.

And finally, I wonder about the main organization of the checklist. Without a doubt, the alphabetical arrangement by composer is ideal for checking library catalogues and I favoured this arrangement at one time. But to justify its publication, this checklist will have to be useful to a much broader public than that represented by music librarians, and a chronological arrangement might have been more valid from a historical point of view. The index provides access to all those responsible in some way for the artistic and intellectual content of pieces. But there is no date index for researchers seeking sociological or economic data for a smaller segment of the period covered. Organizing the list by copyright deposit number would not only have provided the desired chronological approach, but the music list could then have been compared to the entire field of publication in Canada to determine what
proportion of time, effort and money was devoted to supplying the amateur Canadian musician with his needs or desires. Another argument for such an arrangement is that in approximately 60% of the contents of the checklist, the only Canadian element is that it was registered and deposited in Ottawa. True, to qualify for copyright, the item had to be printed or published in Canada. But when a U.S. publisher of a U.S. work deems it useful to publish in Canada simultaneously or within a designated number of days after the original date of deposit, there must have been a good reason for doing so. Did registration or simultaneous publication in Canada entitle the American publisher to protection in countries that had signed the Berne Convention? This is neither the time nor the place to discuss the complexities of copyright legislation, but I wanted to point out that the composer arrangement has less validity for the U.S. deposits than a chronological one. And I had dreamed of a publisher index, too.

I was perhaps expecting too much from a checklist. When I first heard of the project in 1982, I did not expect that it would reveal much more music than we at the National Library already knew about and had catalogued – seen or unseen. But then, when we were given the opportunity of spot-checking a couple of letters from the alphabet, the results were astounding. When the final count is in – as near as we were able to come with the descriptions in hand – 64% of the 11,338 items in the checklist is not held at the National Library. If we can accept the Canadian imprints as they are cited in the list, almost 80% of that portion is not in our collection. That fact alone justifies the existence of the O’Neill checklist, and all its shortcomings fade in comparison. The more we know about Canadian music publishing and the music business in general, the more we realize how significant it was to our social history and what we need to do to make the data more accessible. Our thanks therefore to Patrick O’Neill for his persistence and dedication, and to his team for the mind-numbing checking and cross-checking of the lists against British Library catalogues and against the deposits themselves, and of the tedious entering and editing of the entries for publication. Others will take up where they left off, but in the meantime the checklist as it stands is an important addition to the spare corpus of Canadian music publishing history.

María Calderisi Bryce  
National Library of Canada


The extraordinary events unfolding in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union have increased Western focus on that part of the world. Closer relations with the West are already at hand, and greater understanding of these cultures will be required. Western research and consequent understanding had often been hampered by the barriers of different languages and the Cyrillic script. This volume is therefore most timely,