

Denis Herlin, *Catalogue of the Hanson-Dyer Music Collection, The University of Melbourne* [*Catalogue de la Collection Musicale Hanson-Dyer, Université de Melbourne*]

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Reviewed by David Tunley

It is not surprising that Australian libraries lack the large and important collections of early music publications and manuscripts held by many libraries overseas. This is partly because it is only since the 1970s that musicology has made its remarkable progress in our country and at a time when the acquisition of valuable early sources had become scarce and very expensive after the Second World War when the discipline of musicology took hold in many universities around the world. Then it seemed that only the wealthy campuses of the United States could afford to purchase early editions of music from collectors or dealers. Fortunately, the provision of beautiful facsimile editions, to say nothing of microform copies of important materials, has at least helped overcome the shortage of primary sources in Australian universities in recent years. In any case, it would be largely true to say that the days of enthusiastic collectors (often knowledgeable amateurs) amassing rare works for their private libraries—as they did in the 1920s and '30s and earlier—are probably over. It was during this period, 1929–1931, that Louise Dyer put together her private collection, now housed at the University of Melbourne. Only one other private collection of importance had been given to an Australian university: that of Robert Dalley-Scarlett (1887–1959), which was bequeathed by his widow to the University of Sydney shortly after his death. Comprising many thousands of items (not all of which are yet catalogued), its major significance lies in its collection of early prints of Handel's music, including some fifty operas and thirty oratorios. These collections in Sydney and Melbourne now make up the two major early music holdings in Australia.

After playing a leading role in musical Melbourne, Louise Dyer (1884–1961) left Australia in 1927, eventually settling in Paris where, having made contact with leading French musicians and musicologists, she founded the great publishing house of Oiseau-Lyre (Lyrebird Press). Perhaps her most outstanding publication was also one of her earliest: the complete works of François Couperin in an edition which is arguably still the most beautiful production of its kind. It was in her early days in Paris that she began a short period of buying early prints and manuscripts that were to establish her private library. She had married a wealthy Melbourne businessman, 'Jimmy' Dyer, who enjoyed indulging his wife's musical interests (her collections, her publishing business and other entrepreneurial activities). She was also fortunate in her second happy marriage. Soon after her first husband's death in 1938 (at the age of almost 80) Louise Dyer became Louise Hanson-Dyer, having married a young man Joseph ('Jeff') Hanson, English-born, but Australian-educated, who had just received his doctoral degree from Oxford, and whose scholarship, love of music and wise guidance was to support her future publishing projects. Thus, even after her death Oiseau-Lyre was able to continue along the same lines as before—as it was also able to continue under the guidance

of Jeff Hanson's second wife Margarita Hanson when he died in 1971. Mme Hanson formally agreed to transfer her ownership of the Library to the University of Melbourne, which received it in July 2005. The present *Catalogue of the Hanson-Dyer Music Collection* was commissioned by the University of Melbourne in 1991, in anticipation of the eventual arrival of the library to its final home in Australia.

It is gratifying to see that those qualities of excellence in production and content that have been a hallmark of Oiseau Lyre since its inception, are strongly evident in this the first publication from the University of Melbourne under the imprint of Lyrebird Press, made possible by a grant from the Hanson-Dyer Bequest at that University. It is indeed a most handsome volume, appropriately dedicated to Margarita Hanson.

The Collection had been catalogued twice before. The first—a card index file—was undertaken in 1930 by Hélène Frémont of the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal in Paris; the second was carried out 47 years later by Jean-Michel Nectoux. The present catalogue is more in the nature of a *catalogue raisonné*, complete with bibliographic information resulting from painstaking research by Denis Herlin, a leading French musicologist and Director of Research at the Institut de Recherche sur le Patrimoine Musical en France, associated with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. Amongst his many publications are critical editions of music by Debussy (he is the Chief Editor of the Complete Works) and Rameau, and he has published catalogues of the music library of Versailles and other important holdings. He was thus the ideal choice to catalogue the Hanson-Dyer Music Collection.

As well as the catalogue of works, the book contains, in both French and English, a brief biographical sketch of Louise Hanson-Dyer and her creation of Oiseau-Lyre, a general description of her music library and the editorial principles adopted by Denis Herlin for cataloguing its holdings. Six pages of facsimiles of Devices, Bookplates (*ex libris*) and Inscriptions offering evidence of previous ownership of some of the volumes, and thirty-five facsimile pages of extracts from a number of works give tantalizing glimpses into the treasures of this precious library. A concordance list of call numbers and entry numbers, a provenance index, and a select bibliography provide further documentation. The Catalogue itself is in French.

The Hanson-Dyer Collection consists of printed music: (a) under the composer's name, the earliest being Cipriano di Rore (*Il Primo Libri De Madrigale Cromatici*, 1552), the latest being Gaetano Donizetti (*Parisina Opera Seria*, c. 1838); (b) anonymous and collected music; (c) theoretical writings from 1499 (Boethius, *De Arithmetica* ...); (d) anonymous writings from 1540; (e) four libretti. **The manuscripts are significant both for their uniqueness and their contents**, perhaps the most valuable being a collection of extracts from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French operas written out by Louis XIV's official court copyist André-Danican Philidor and his assistants. While the whole library is catalogued under 245 main entries, some of the works in the manuscript collections contain many sub-entries. Thus, the Philidor manuscripts alone consists of 508 operatic extracts—airs, recitatives and choruses. For a private library created over such a short period, the Hanson-Dyer Music Collection is, indeed, an impressive achievement.

Herlin's *Catalogue* brings together as much bibliographical and musicological information about each work as seems possible. As well as his own definitive numbering of each item, the *Catalogue* includes the original (1930) numbering of the items and their position on the

shelves and bays (*rayons* and *travées*) in the apartment in rue Franklin. It also includes the later numbering system devised by Nectoux. Herlin has called the first system 'D', and the second one 'H', and it is interesting to compare those two earlier numbering systems with his. Herlin has placed the items in a similar order to the lists in *Répertoire Internationale des Sources Musicales* (RISM), that is, first the printed works by individual composers, then the printed theoretical works and so on, as listed above. For the printed works under the composers' names, and published before 1800, there is an additional reference: the item numbers as they are listed in the RISM series *Einzeldrucke vor 1800* (1971–).¹ For reasons mentioned later, none of the items in the Hanson-Dyer Collection appears in the early volumes of RISM. Following each item are found Herlin's interesting annotations. These include details of any idiosyncrasies of the copy, as well as information about from whom or through whom Louise Dyer purchased the item, and its original price. Every possible reference that might throw light on each work seems to have been followed up meticulously. The *Catalogue* is thus not only a listing of items in the collection, but also a work of scholarship at the highest level.

As with all collectors, Louise Dyer was limited by what was available for purchase at that time—in her case, over the very short period of three years when she was building up her library. In her search for interesting books and music she was helped immeasurably by the musicologist Henri Prunières (who also encouraged her to publish the complete works of Lully which, due to Prunières's ineptness as editor, turned out to be her only disaster). Louise Dyer's private library reflects her eclectic interests in early music: theoretical treatises, music from France, England and Italy, with a few glances towards the nineteenth century. Herlin draws attention to the relatively important number of eighteenth-century French comic operas by composers such as Duni, Grétry, Monsigny and François-André Danican Philidor. In that short period it was remarkable that she was able to collect so much of interest.

At first sight it seems strange that so interesting a collection was not included in the RISM survey and listing of musical materials held by music libraries around the world, its first such volumes appearing in 1971. But at that time, the Hanson-Dyer Collection was a private library and therefore did not fall within the sweep of the RISM enterprise. There are now supplementary volumes of RISM in which the Hanson-Dyer Collection is listed as one of the contributing libraries (presumably in anticipation of its eventual transfer to a public institution in Australia), its *siglum* being F[rance] p[aris]hanson (obviously necessitating a change now that the collection is finally in Melbourne). So far only five works from it have made their way into the supplementary volumes of RISM (additions and corrections). These are: the tenor part from the first and second books of Lassus's *Madrigali a cinque voci* (1559)—only the Bavarian State Library appears to have most of the parts but could be missing this tenor; the second, third and fifth books of Marenzio's *Madrigali a cinque voci* (all slightly later editions) and the fifth book of Monteverdi's *Madrigali a cinque voci* (1608 edition). It may be hoped that the list of its entire holdings will find its way into the now on-line RISM listings. Like almost all the rest of the collection, these five works in their particular editions are also found in other libraries. But it is worth pointing out that one work in the collection is possibly unique to the

¹ There are no RISM numbers associated with the other items in Herlin's *Catalogue* because RISM does not provide the same kind of reference numbers for theoretical works, anonymous publications, anthologies, manuscripts etc.

Hanson-Dyer Collection: the first book of motets by Bartolomeo Lombardi.² (The complete second book of motets is held only in Kassel, dated 1578.)

It was mentioned earlier in this review that facsimiles and microform copies have come to the rescue of many musicologists in Australia. Now there is an ever-growing proliferation of sources available through on-line access to library holdings around the world, sometimes making it possible to compare different editions of the same work at the click of the mouse. It is all coming to our fingertips. Yet for many of us, nothing can replace the indefinable satisfaction of our fingertips handling an original publication or manuscript. It is part of the aesthetic pleasure that scholarship can bring to one's work. With the Hanson-Dyer Collection now in Melbourne and with Denis Herlin as guide that pleasure is now available for musicologists in our own country.

² In the *Catalogue* and in the entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001) the composer is listed as Lombardo, but on the title-page of the motets and in Herlin's annotations the name of the composer is given as Lombardi.