

Paddock Music Library Review

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Nestled on the New Hampshire side of the Upper Connecticut River Valley is Dartmouth College. Founded in 1769, this Ivy League school excels in a number of professional areas such as medicine, engineering and business. It is also arts program and degrees are offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Course offerings include performance practice, music theory, music history and criticism, non-western music instrumental and digital music composition. There is a multidisciplinary approach to the curriculum and the scope of departments involved with at the graduate level is diverse, including the engineering school, as well as the art and physics department.

The quirkiness of Dartmouth is legendary. A Google reviewer notes the lack of tomatoes at the library, and complains that it is filled with books, computers and librarians instead. Someone else replied that they found a lot of tomatoes during their visit. While no fresh produce was visible on campus outside of the dining halls, the campus green was filled with ice sculptures from the recent Winter Carnival.

Situated across the street from the green, The Hopkins Center for the Arts is a major artistic hub, featuring a large auditorium, two theatres, classrooms, galleries, studio space, and the Paddock Music Library. Designed by Wallace Harrison, the same architect who designed Lincoln Center in NY, the exterior of “the Hop” resembles the fabled New York City performance hall but on a smaller scale. The modern aesthetic continues into the lobby, with a curved box office and a spectacular ceiling of exaggerated acoustical architecture.

The center is connected, via a glassed-in walkway adjacent to a courtyard on one side and an art gallery on the other, to the Hanover Inn, described as an historic boutique hotel. The library is accessible through the same corridor. At the end, to the left, there are glass doors with interesting, and probably handmade, copper handles leading to the stairwell that goes downstairs to the woodshop, jewelry studio and Paddock Music Library. There are also two other entrances to the building where the library is located, and there is an elevator. The Hop and the Paddock Library are open to the public and visitors are free to walk around.

The library is small and extremely quiet. It is nicely equipped and furnished, but having only been in its current home for 30 years, it does not have any of the same antiquarian elements that the main library has. There are reading areas, tables, workstations and chairs throughout the library. It is brightly lit and this helps with the fact that there are no sources of natural light. Interior windows and glass partitions promote a sense of spaciousness between the various sections. The facilities include study carrels with audio/visual equipment with LP, CD and cassette capabilities. There is a separate listening room with 5.1 surround sound where groups or individuals can listen to one over 29,000 sound recordings. There are multiple computer workstations featuring musical notation software Finale and Sibelius, the digital audio editing package Garage Band, the ear-training software Practica Music 5, as well as a digital keyboard.

The entire physical collection is arranged utilizing the Library of Congress classification system. There are audio CDs beginning just past the circulation desk. These

extend just past the beginning of the large gray movable stacks where many of the 75,000 plus volumes are shelved. This includes numerous full orchestral scores, vocal, and piano scores in standard sizes as well as oversized scores and miniature practice scores, all shelved in different sections. Some of these are in their original binding, particularly the hardbound scores. However, a number of the softbound ones have been rebound for preservation purposes.

The monographic collection includes a large number of items on music theory and musical literature. There are approximately 300 print-based serial titles that are classified and the bound volumes are shelved with the rest of the collection. These are both on moveable shelving. The reference collection is on fixed shelving that runs along one wall. This includes numerous specialized dictionaries, directories and encyclopedias. Additional materials such as manuscripts, LPs, archives, and other materials are housed in three different areas depending on their item type.

Judging from the position of the movable shelving, the stacks containing the scores see the most use. Also observed was the popularity of the CD collection. This is in keeping with one of the missions of the library, which is to support the recreational listening needs of the student and faculty populations; the others are to support the curricular ones both within the music program and across disciplines.

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