

PICTURING PERFORMANCE

Fenwick Gallery



August 17 - September 18, 2015

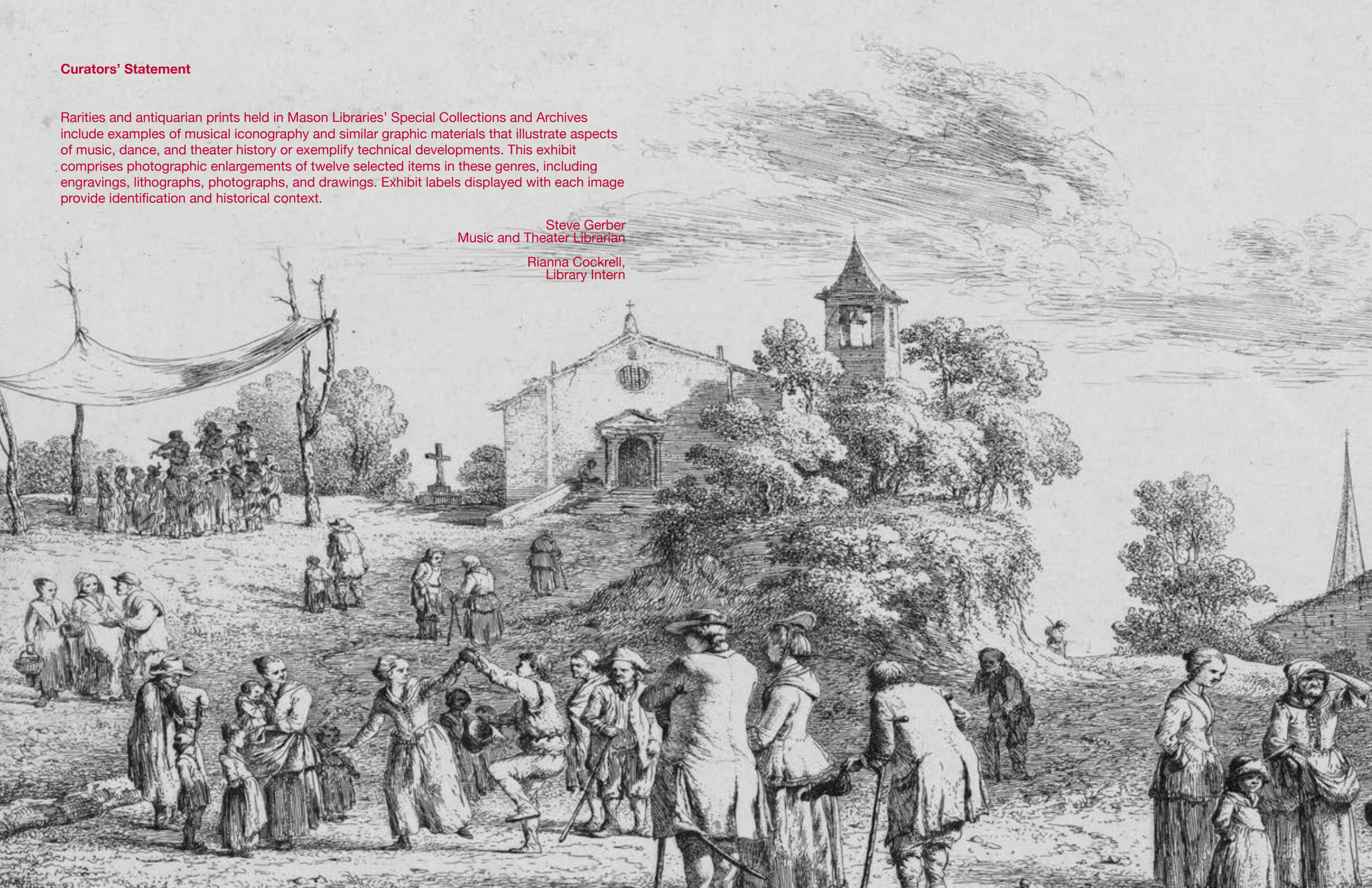
Fenwick Library, 1st Floor | Fairfax Campus

Curators' Statement

Rarities and antiquarian prints held in Mason Libraries' Special Collections and Archives include examples of musical iconography and similar graphic materials that illustrate aspects of music, dance, and theater history or exemplify technical developments. This exhibit comprises photographic enlargements of twelve selected items in these genres, including engravings, lithographs, photographs, and drawings. Exhibit labels displayed with each image provide identification and historical context.

Steve Gerber
Music and Theater Librarian

Rianna Cockrell,
Library Intern





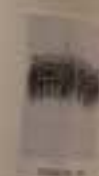
COVER: Costume for Electricity in MGM musical film *Madam Satan*, designed by Gilbert Adrian, publicity photograph, 1930. Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.

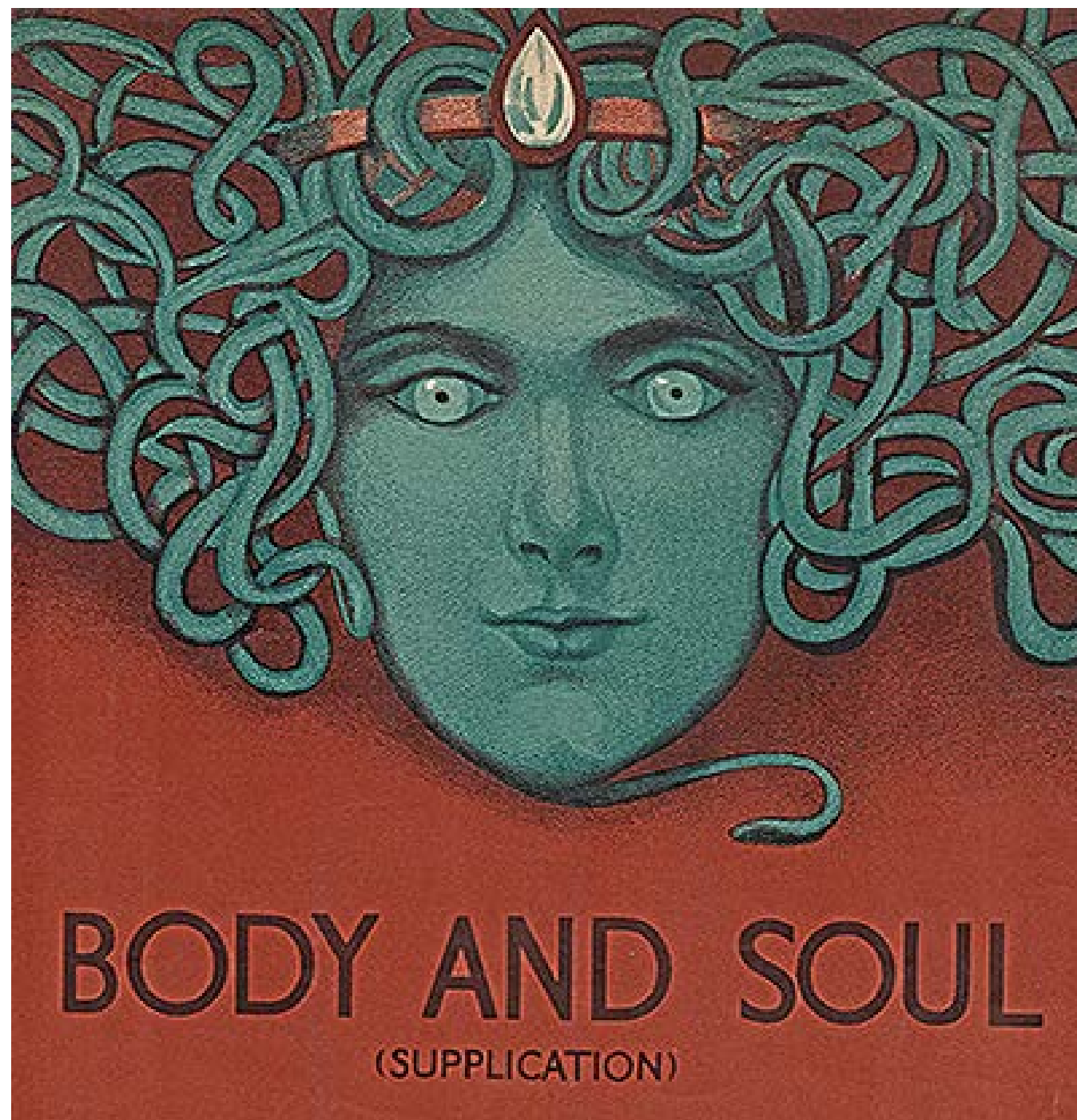
PREVIOUS PAGE: Detail: *Dancers and Musicians in Country Setting*, etching by Jean Jacques de Boissiau, 1773. Performing Arts Graphic Material CO215 Material C0215.

LEFT: Costume for Potiphar's Wife in Ballets Russes' production of *Legende de Joseph*, designed by Leon Bakst, lithograph, 1914. SCA GV1787 .B7 1922

ABOVE: Scene from opera *Il Pomo d'Oro* at Vienna, engraved by Mattias Kusel, ca. 1668. Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.

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FAR LEFT: Sheet music cover *Body and Soul*, lithograph by M.A.Rasko, 1930. SCA M1621 .G74 B64 1930

ABOVE: Detail: *Variations on the Dialectic between Mingus and Pithecanthropus Erectus* conceived by Lynn Sures & Rick Potts, 2005, Artist Book, 16 unnumbered accordion folded pages : illustrations ; 26 x 19 cm

LEFT: Title page *Douze Nouveaux Quintetti*, op. 37 of Boccherini, engraved by Charles-Nicolas Richomme, ca. 1798



Detail: Jerome Robbins and Young Ballerinas in *Circus Polka*, photograph by Costas, 1972.
Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.

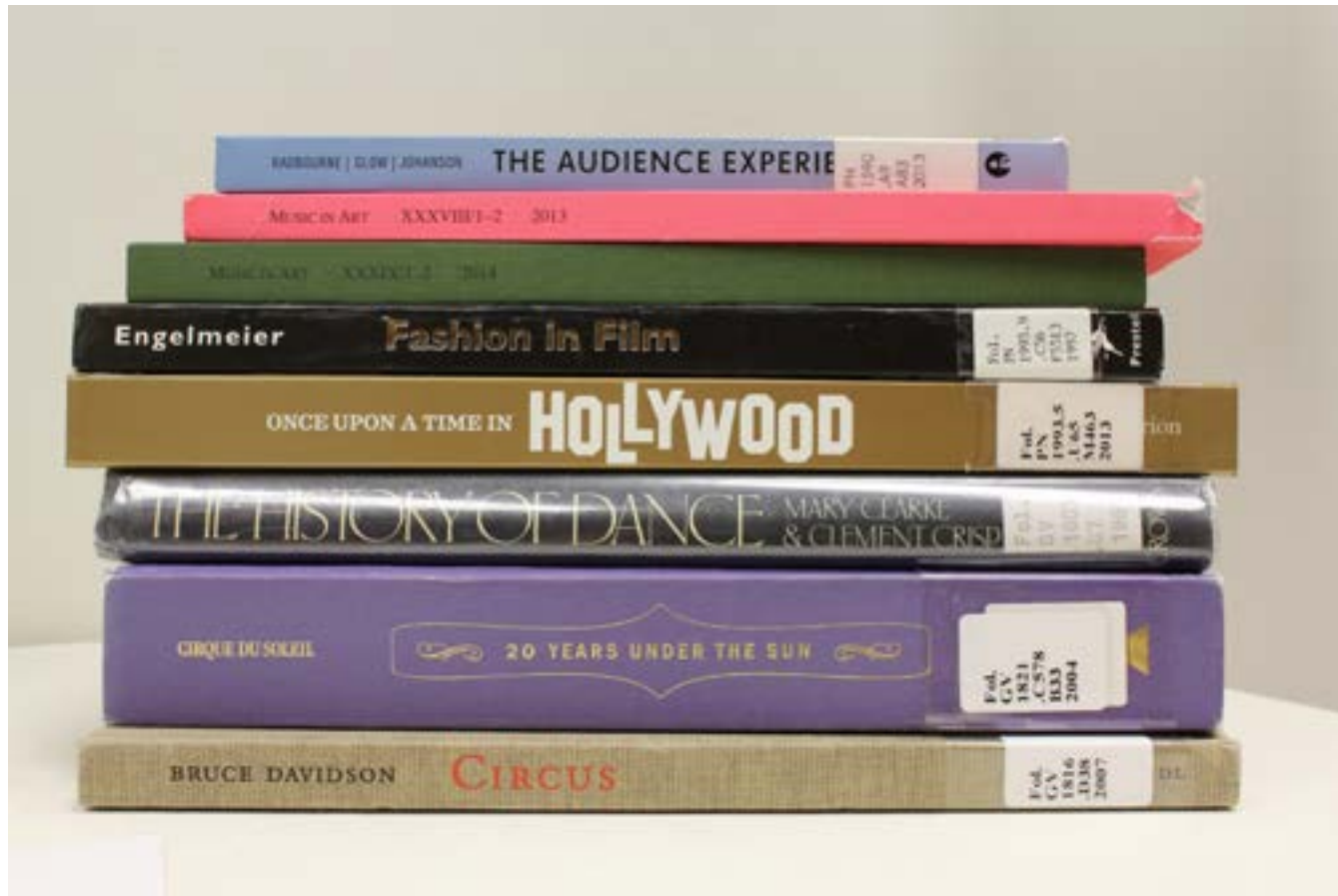


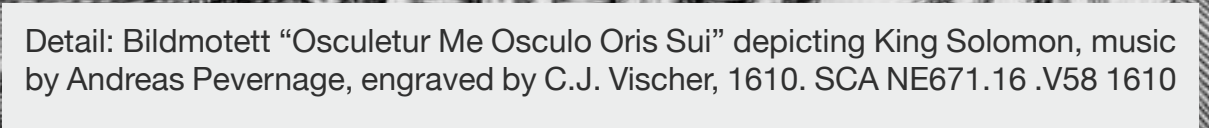
LEFT: Image of curated bookshelf in the exhibit

BELOW: Selected books from the exhibit

RIGHT: Selected Books and Exhibition Brochures.

BELOW RIGHT: Scene from comédie galante *La Princesse d'Elide* at *Versailles Palace*, engraved by Israel Silvestre, 1673. Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.







ABOVE: *Germania Musical Society*, lithograph by Sarony & Major, ca. 1850. Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.



LEFT: *Hitler Youth 1933*, photographer unknown. Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.

TOP RIGHT: Artists' Books from Special Collections on display in the exhibit

BOTOM RIGHT: *Rhythm Grid* by Thomas Parker Williams, 16 panels : illustrations ; 14 x 14 cm + 1 booklet (10 unnumbered pages ; 14 cm) + 1 audio disc (4 :30 ; 4 3/4 in.), in box (15 x 15 x 3 cm)



An Interview with Steve Gerber

By Sarah Irvin

Sarah Irvin: This exhibit features images of performances and performers throughout history. Can you give us examples of how the function of these images evolved over time?

Steve Gerber: A primary function, to document visually an ephemeral musical or theatrical event, perhaps hasn't changed much. Eventually, promotional functions were added to the commemorative, and ultimately, celebrity portraiture for its own sake. The latter now include glossy coffee-table books for fans of famed performing artists such as jazz trumpeter Miles Davis, or nostalgic milestone events such as Woodstock, or Broadway extravaganzas such as "Lion King" or "Rent." And speaking of Miles Davis, few know that he was also an artist, and I obtained a very rare, signed catalog from an exhibit of his work at a German museum for Special Collections, call # ND237.D3325 M55 1990!

SI: The exhibition ranges in medium from engravings to photography. What influence did the introduction of photography have to public perception of performances?

SG: Timely use of photography by newspapers and magazines made performance more vivid and increased general awareness of, and interest in, musical and theatrical performances.

SI: We see many examples of artwork responding to the visuals of a performance and serving to document the time-based activities of performances. Are there instances where artwork inspired a performance, musical piece or dance?

SG: Definitely. There is even a library subject heading related to this: "Art in Music." The most well-known example would be Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition," based on paintings by Russian artist Victor Hartmann. I know of a music scholar working on a book that identifies jazz compositions based on artwork; he says the Paul Klee's "Twittering Machine" has inspired more music than any other paintings or drawings, including Picasso's.

SI: These materials come from the University Library Special Collections and Archives. How can students access these materials to learn more?

SG: Staff in Special Collections will be happy to help students get started and show them how to scour finding aids for illustrative materials. Many of the images from the exhibit are in their own boxed collection, Performing Arts Graphic Material (#C0215), to which I add things from time to time. Many other separate collections contain illustrative material, such as Federal Theatre Project Photograph Collection, 1936-1939 (#C0205).

SI: Which works from the exhibit are your personal favorite?

SG: My two favorite pieces in the exhibit are the early-17th-century Bildmotett by Visscher that anachronistically shows ancient King Solomon's retinue singing from genuine Renaissance musical notation, and the innocent-but-ominous 1933 photo of young Hitler youth girls, happily playing recorders on a hillside hike. I will give a presentation on the latter to a gathering of music iconography scholars.

Image Detail: *La Menuet de la Cour*, pencil drawing attributed to Le Couteur, ca. 1775. Performing Arts Graphic Material C0215.

About Fenwick Gallery



A SPACE FOR INQUIRY

George Mason University Libraries provides a hybrid, walk-through exhibition space in Fenwick Library to enhance and enrich teaching, learning and culture at the University. This space highlights Mason Libraries' resources together with original visual and multi-media work.

Exhibit themes emphasize facets of the Libraries' collections, research interests of Mason faculty, students and staff, Mason's curriculum and local cultural initiatives. Fenwick Gallery is dedicated to exhibiting high quality works by students, faculty, staff and other emerging and experienced artists that highlight aspects of the Libraries' collections.

For more information, visit: fenwickgallery.gmu.edu

OUR GOALS

- Promote the Libraries' collections and encourage scholarly and cultural inquiry at George Mason University
- Focus on research and scholarship at/of George Mason University
- Collaborate and engage with relevant Mason faculty to incorporate and/or embed gallery exhibitions into course instruction
- Stimulate intellectual and creative reflection through visual and multi-media exhibitions, discussions, etc.
- Promote the Libraries' academic and cultural mission
- Support the Libraries' development program and goals