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# Fanfare for the Conservatoire

Robert Allan

*Faculty Librarian, Conservatoire Library  
Library and Learning Resources, University  
of Central England (UCE) Birmingham*

Tel:

E-mail:

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The refurbishment of the Conservatoire Library took place during the summer of 2006, and the library reopened that October. The extensive work included the creation of an extra floor over part of the library, making use of what had previously been just a void. To achieve this all the stock had been removed to a remote storage location and the library staff relocated to temporary offices in the Conservatoire over the summer. It was always recognized that it would be a tight schedule to complete everything by the beginning of the autumn term and as it turned out it was only possible to open the immediate counter area for return and issue of stock in late September, while considerable fitting-out work went on beyond that. However, staff and students were very understanding of the situation and very impressed when our full service resumed.



Additional funding was made available from within the university to supplement the original £600,000 from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Without that funding, completion by October would have been doubtful. It also meant that the desired re-equipping of the library with new computers, audio equipment and furniture could take place. One of the new features on ground floor level is a seminar / group study room which can be used by students working together, but also can be used by library

staff for meetings and training, and for providing information skills sessions to groups of students. These had been difficult to undertake previously in the library, without a suitable seating area and a large screen.



The stock of the library is always expanding to meet the ever-widening repertoire and study needs of students, ranging from the Junior Department right up to research level. The way this has been handled in the space available is partly by the provision of a public compact storage system – moveable shelving that now contains all the back runs of journals together with all the study scores and full scores.

At the same time, it has been possible to bring the large collection of vocal scores of operas and choral works and so on into more prominence near the new central enquiry desk. New storage racks have meant that the collection of over 6,000 compact discs can be displayed more attractively, and the new audio room has a upgraded suite of equipment for listening and recording purposes, plus two separate cubicles for listening and viewing.

While music libraries still tend to be among the most traditional in their dependence on printed sources for performance needs, the computers for student use in the Conservatoire Library are predictably proving more and more popular for many purposes, including connecting to the two online listening services that we subscribe to. A wealth of information about music can now, of course, be reached via the internet (including New Grove online) but the book stock is still heavily used by students for their written assignments and it becomes very apparent to library staff when these are due!



The official opening of the refurbished library took place on 19 April, after various additional work had been completed. The unveiling ceremony was performed by Jeffrey Skidmore, artistic director of one of the most notable Midlands choirs, Ex Cathedra (and a regular user of the library). This occasion was also marked with a specially composed fanfare by a second-year Conservatoire composition student, Sam Bordoli, performed by three student trumpeters.

