IRF 17th and 18th century sheet music (281 boxes)

Overview

The Information and Reference sheet music collection is undergoing treatment, rehousing, digitization, and re-cataloging in order to increase public access to library's music collection materials. Currently, the collection is housed in D-stack shelves in non-archival enclosures. They are organized alphabetically, separated by year. The enclosures are horizontal cloth-covered flip-top boxes that allow the music to be slid in and lie flat on the shelf. However, the sheet music is in fair to poor condition and needs treatment and rehousing prior to digitization and handling.

In order to preserve the physical object, prior to placing the sheet music on-line, the collection is first being conserved and housed in the conservation lab. Due to the large size of the collection, the sheet music will be sent to the lab 1 box at a time (approximately 50 scores/box), every two-three weeks and worked into the regular lab work flow. After conservation, they will be sent to Digital Services for digitization. Following digitization, they will be sorted and reorganized by title to better correlate to the card catalog.

Collection Condition Issues

- brittle tape repairs, paper tears and losses
- surface dirt
- papers grouped together with metal paper clips containing corrosion
- loosely housed in large boxes with excess space
- boxes are yellowed from their inherent acidity, and the lids are failing at the hinge
- no interleaving

Treatment

- surface clean to reduce loose dirt
- remove brittle tape to aid digitization
- repair tears in paper, fill losses for better handling
- graphite inscriptions (of the box # and date), located along the front cover's top edge are not important to retain, but are important for recording digital meta-data

Housing

- Corrugated clamshells, made in-house from buffered archival board. Boxes will be uniform in size and thickness.
- Temporary box labels:
  - Conservation will take photographs of the original labels
  - Photos of original labels will be attached as temporary labels to new boxes with double stick tape until they are re-organized and re-labeled
- Old acidic folders will not be saved unless they have important handwritten inscriptions
Surface cleaning  
Ashleigh Schieszer  
C  
390

Mend paper  
Ashleigh Schieszer  
C  
345

Corrugated clamshell box  
Ashleigh Schieszer  
C  
45

Treatment averaged approximately 15 minutes per score. The scores were surface cleaned overall with smoke sponges and vinyl eraser crumbs. Scores were guarded and mended with kozo tissue and wheat starch paste. Some paper losses were also filled with wheat starch paste and kozo tissue. Five music scores contained brittle and discolored tape that was removed. The tape adhesive was softened with methyl cellulose poultices and the carrier mechanically removed. One music score was treated to reduce tape adhesive staining by locally washing with blotters and fuller's earth saturated with ethanol.