

Background

Music Librarianship is a very specialized subject discipline. Today in Hong Kong, there are many libraries providing music related library services, such as some academic libraries supporting the curricula of their own music faculties, some public libraries and some school libraries and special libraries serving an orchestra or a chorus, etc. However, it comes to our concern that whether the staff in these libraries are well equipped with knowledge both in music and librarianship or not. If not, do they encounter any difficulties in their daily works and what are they? Or do they need any specialized trainings and what kinds of trainings will they demand?

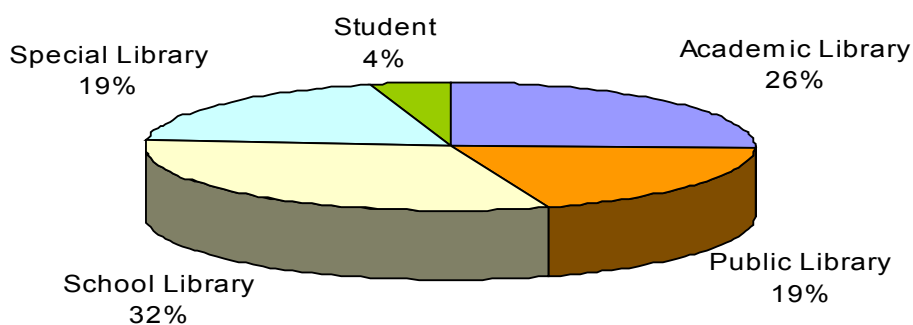
The Questionnaire

In order to know more about the needs of our members in this field, the Association has specially designed a questionnaire and invited all concerned or interested members to reply. The questionnaire is issued in late March and the sample is attached below.

Findings

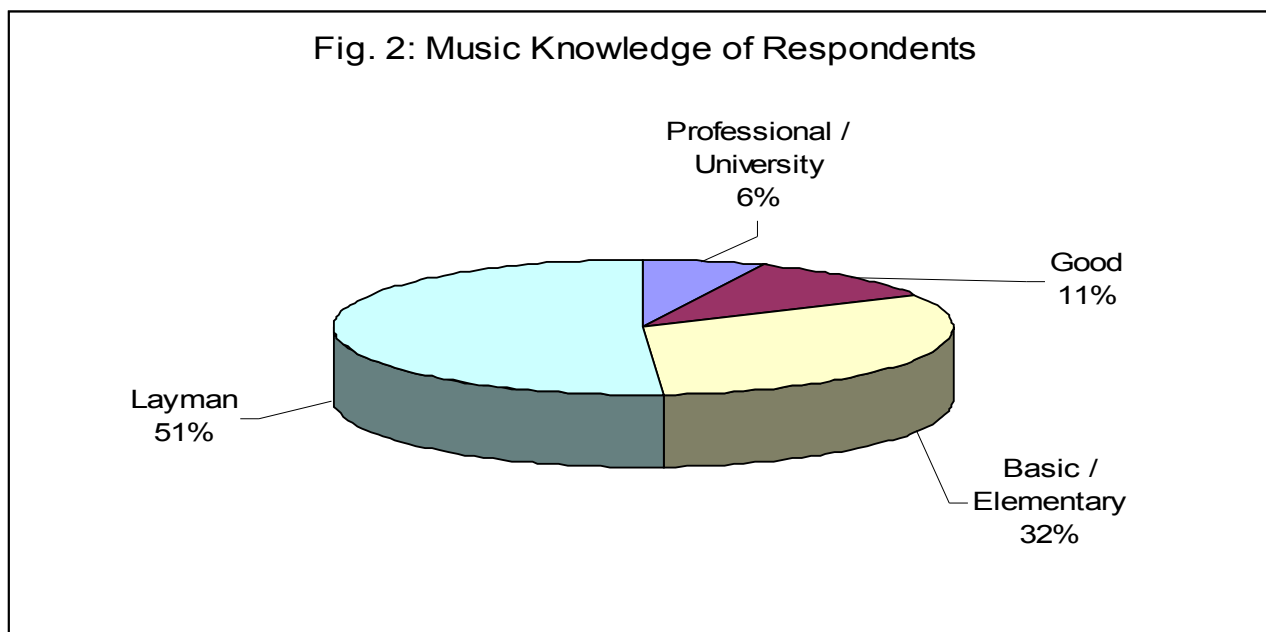
47 duly completed questionnaires were received by the deadline in early April. Except from some students (4%), the responses mainly come from school libraries (32%) and academic libraries (26%), which, however, do not differ much from the public libraries and special libraries sectors (each 19%). (see Fig. 1)

Fig. 1: Replies from Librarians



Below are some of the major findings of the survey:-

1. 22 respondents (47%) had daily library duties related to music.
2. 24 respondents (51%) had professional qualifications in librarianship.
3. 30 respondents (64%) claimed that they had no music training before.
4. 39 respondents (83%) rated themselves either as laymen of music or only got basic or elementary music knowledge. (see Fig. 2)



5. 37 respondents (79%) showed their interests in taking music librarianship course / workshop.

We further look into the types of music related works for those respondents and

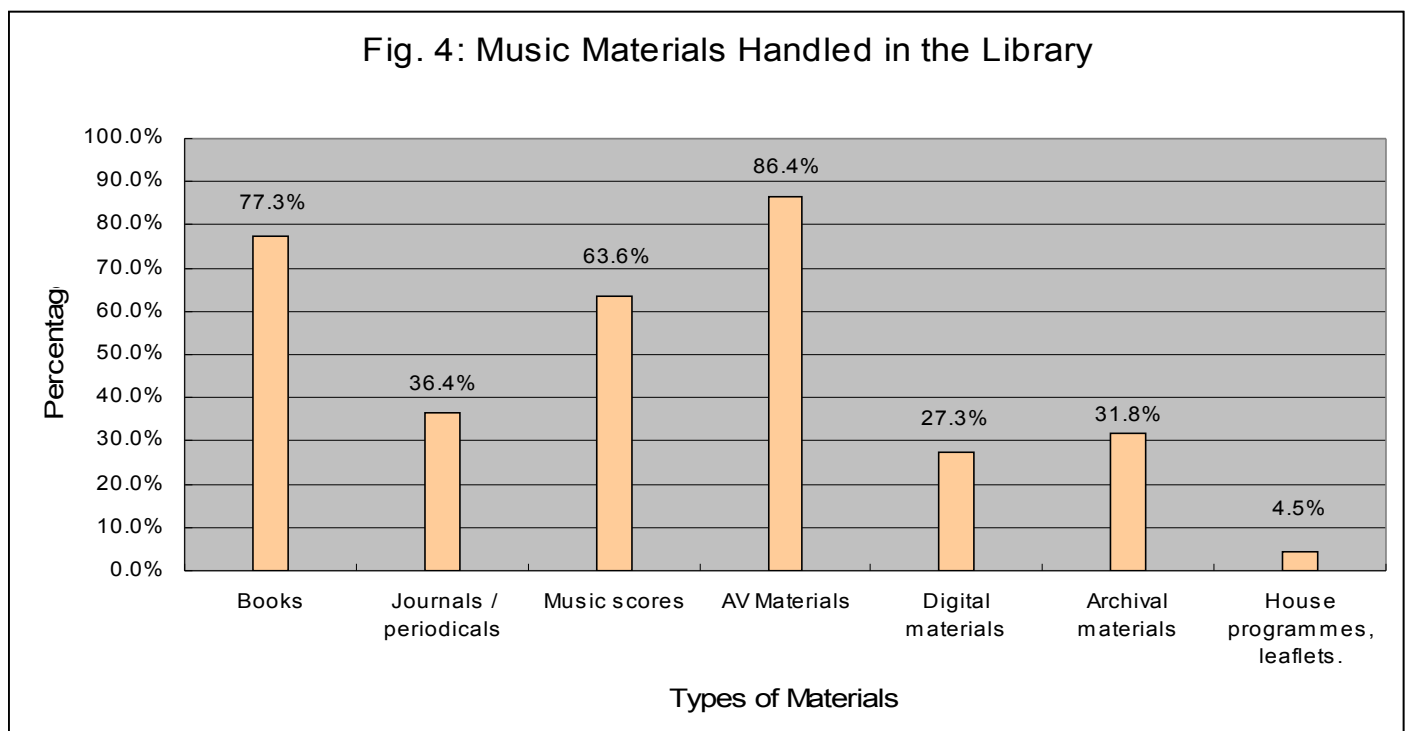
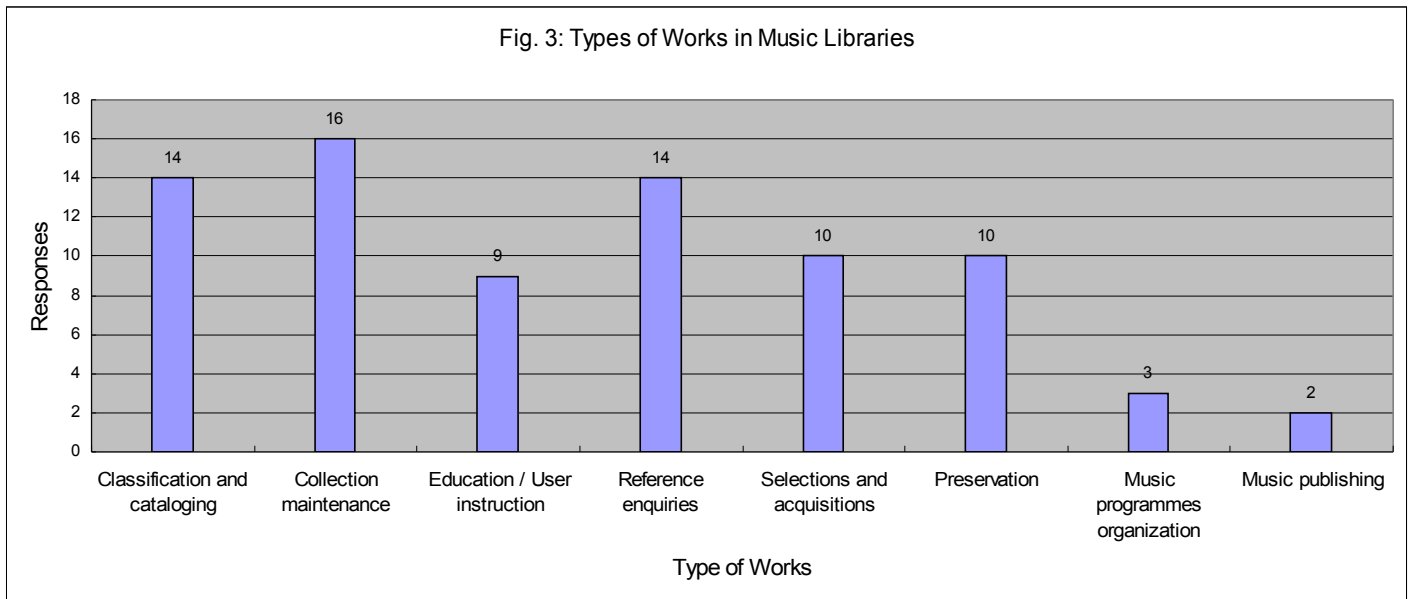
The 3 main types of music related works of the members are:

1. Collection Maintenance;
2. Classification and cataloguing; and
3. Handling of reference enquiries.

Acquisition of music materials, preservation and user education come at a second place. Details of the works are specified in Fig. 3 below.

Out of the 22 respondents who have daily music duties in the libraries, it is reported that most of the music materials they handled are in English (77.3%) and Chinese (72.7%). About 60% of them claimed that the size of the music collection in their respective libraries is over 5,000 items. The library materials included A/V materials

(86.4%), books (77.3%), music scores (63.6%), journals and periodicals (36.4%), etc., with details shown in Fig. 4 below.



Over 80% (18 out of 22) claimed that they have encountered difficulties in their music related duties. They were then requested to put down in the questionnaire what the difficulties were. The responses are herein summarized into 5 main categories as below:-

1. Classification and Cataloguing: Problems mainly occur in the classification and cataloguing works of the music scores, some in Chinese, and also A/V materials.

Sometimes, there are problems for them in finding out uniform title from OCLC, especially for Chinese music score. Technical problems in identifying the types of music, instruments, etc., during the classification process are also common.

2. Collection Maintenance: Special formats of music scores and A/V recordings induce most problems in their collection maintenance works. Problems in storage and preservation of these music materials are also mentioned.
3. Reference Materials and Services: The problems from answering reference enquiries are mostly generated from the inadequacy in their music knowledge, eg. when they are locating a particular music score with limited information provided by the readers. Some said that they are not familiar with some databases.
4. Music Knowledge: It is rather obvious that the deficiency in music knowledge is the main cause of the problems for the respondents in handling their music related library works. For example, problems often occur when they do not know the music terminology, the types of music and composers, etc. Some claimed that special musical terms, especially for those not written in Chinese or English, do cause them problems.
5. Others: Foreign languages and copyright issues are their most concerns.

Conclusion

The questionnaires have provided some basic information about the demand on music librarianship trainings for library practitioners in Hong Kong. When being asked whether they will be interested to join some related courses or workshop for this particular field, over 80% provided a positive reply.

The Association has summarized the findings of the survey and has already sent the survey result to the HKU SPACE for their consideration. It is the will of the Association that some courses may be devised some day to cater for the job needs of the members from all sectors of libraries in Hong Kong so as to further improve services in this particular field.

Hong Kong Library Association

June 2009