

The Gresham Music Collection at Guildhall Library

Originally put together by Edward Taylor, who was appointed Gresham Professor of Music in 1837, the Gresham Music Collection belongs to Gresham College but has been on deposit at Guildhall Library and been in our care since 1958. The collection contains both printed and manuscript scores from 16th to 19th centuries and is, in part at least, of international importance. Amongst the more important manuscripts are Thomas Tallis's *Spem in Alium* and an autograph manuscript of Henry Purcell. A printed catalogue was prepared in the 1960s but this does not match modern standards of music cataloguing. Some the material is listed on the international union catalogue of musical resources called RISM (**Répertoire International des Sources Musicales**) but only around 2% of the collection is represented here. Given the collection's importance it remains somewhat low profile.

Guildhall Library would like to make the collection better known both to the world of music studies and to the general public, and, through a full conservation project, safeguard the collection's future. But, of course, before starting out on this we would like to obtain the blessing of the Committee.

What do we want to achieve?

Guildhall Library would like to commission a re-cataloguing of the material to fully establish the status and importance of the collection. Alongside this we would carry out a complete conservation survey of the manuscripts and commission any remedial work to ensure the collection is preserved in a fit state and remains fully accessible to the public. Finally, given the importance of some of the manuscripts, we would also like to investigate digitisation of at least part of the collection to protect the most vulnerable material at the same time as providing remote access to the resource.

Ideally, we would also like to celebrate the project with a series of events, talks, possibly even performances, and an exhibition to raise the profile of the collection. It would be marvellous if as part of a future City of London Festival we could organise a performance of some of the Gresham music.

How will the project be funded?

Following a survey of the material carried out by Guildhall Library conservation staff and a cataloguing survey paid for by Guildhall Library, we intend to seek external funding for the full cataloguing and conservation of the material. We intend to approach a number of grant making bodies who have funded similar projects, including the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.

How can the Committee help with this project?

First and foremost we would like the committee to give the project their blessing so that we can begin the process of establishing what is required, what the costs will be and where we can seek funding. Secondly, although the collection is cared for by Guildhall Library, it belongs to Gresham College and we wondered, should the project meet with your approval, whether the College/the Committees/the Mercers' Company would consider being involved in part with the funding of the project? The project

would not be reliant on this type of involvement, but naturally we felt it important as its custodians to ask the committee if they would like to be involved in the project.

I am unable to attend the committee meeting myself, but my colleague Jo Wisdom will be present to answer questions and will bring along some examples of the treasures to be found in the collection.

Dr Peter Ross
Principal Librarian
Guildhall Library