A-R Editions, *Online Music Anthology.*
https://www1.areditions.com/

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Teachers of music history often experience frustration when constructing course listening and score lists. Selecting one of the numerous available package deals (in which a text, anthologies, and recordings are sold together) has been the most convenient option. After that decision, however, the teacher faces another: whether to accept the selections made by the author, editor, and publisher, or to augment the anthology with additional resources. For those wanting to augment, this means putting additional scores and recordings on library reserve, employing multiple anthologies, or both. Another issue complicates the problem: it seems as though an increasing percentage of students take the easiest path to learning, and teachers must take steps to ensure that students go the extra scholarly mile. Otherwise, a thorough study of works beyond the textbook anthology is not very likely. Finally, a few music history textbooks do not come with a package of scores and recordings (such as Douglas Seaton's *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition,* also reviewed in this issue of *JMHP*) and instructors must either use an anthology designed by another author or create their own.

For instructors seeking better solutions to these problems, A-R Edition's *Online Music Anthology* might be an attractive alternative. Under the direct management of veteran staff member and musicologist James Zychowicz, A-R Editions put their online resource on display during the 2009 Philadelphia meeting of the American Musicological Society.

Conceived as a digital resource, A-R Edition's anthology utilizes Adobe® Flash® technology, and the result is a product that moves from mouse click to screen in short order. As of the Philadelphia meeting, the list of works available to users totaled 350 pieces comprising 2,400 pages of music, with another 4,500–5,000 pages soon to be added (much of this content from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century repertoire). Thus, the anthology is currently a work "in progress." In addition to having the significant resources assembled as a part of their *Recent Researches* series, numerous other compositions have also been added, including works found in existing print anthologies. Additionally, A-R holds the licenses for works included in editions published by the American Institute of Musicology.

Much of the discussion during the Philadelphia presentation focused on issues involving opera. For publishers, opera seems a particular challenge: the libretto and its translation (if provided) require space, and piano reductions are often substituted for orchestral scores. As a result, students may struggle to gain a complete appreciation of the sophistication and complexity that opera possesses. A-R seems interested in accommodating those not satisfied with available print options, offering an impressive list of opera excerpts both currently available and in preparation. A-R is also very receptive to the idea of continuing to expand the number of available works, suggesting that it would accommodate requests from instructors. Essentially, their response was, "If you do not see it on the list, contact us and we'll do our best to accommodate your request." Obviously, those hoping to take advantage of A-R's offer should submit "wish lists" long before the materials are needed.

For faculty, access to the website is easy and free via a simple registration process. Once logged in, the construction of a course anthology is a fairly straight-ahead process. Selecting works from A-R's available holdings into an instructor's course anthology is as easy as clicking an "add" link. Repertoire lists are easy to assemble and augment or reduce. Finding individual works is made convenient via the site's advanced search engine. All scores are in concert pitch.

When students log in, those works selected by the instructor appear in the menu. At this point, A-R Editions is basing student access on a six-month paid subscription ($50). Feedback from several instructors at the Philadelphia presentation included numerous suggestions with respect to student access. A-R responded immediately, showing that many possible options are being contemplated. The online anthology team also seemed willing to provide information about the sources used for scores, including available facsimile edtions.

The site itself presents the scores in high quality images; even when magnified, the notation is very clean. Scores can also be printed in fairly high quality. In fact, for those who would prefer to use a hard copy of their assembled anthology, A-R expressed a willingness to provide shrink-wrapped printed copies, provided they are given suitable time to prepare the materials. Flash® files present some limitations: they cannot be saved as a separate document on the user's desktop, nor can images be immediately altered to highlight themes or structural points. An instructor wanting to highlight something on the score would need to find another option, such as projecting the image on a whiteboard, or printing the page and then using a document projector. In response to a query about this, A-R replied that they might consider sending PDF files to instructors. Dr. Zychowicz also mentioned that A-R is exploring the possibility of pairing their scores with available audio files.

As an experiment, I spent about ninety minutes reassembling my upper-level survey on Medieval and Renaissance music on the A-R website. I was impressed: of the sixty-nine items on my semester listening list—the vast

majority drawn from anthologies including Norton, Bonds, Stolba, Atlas, and Yudkin [*Music in Medieval Europe*] with a half-dozen or so additional works taken from collected editions or other resources—I found just eight compositions not already available through A-R. In some of those cases a clear substitute was available. Additionally, A-R agreed to add three works after I submitted a request. Clearly, the A-R anthology would be a viable option for my Medieval/Renaissance class right now, and the expansion of the common practice period repertoire that is now underway will make the resource appropriate for classes concentrating on the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras. At this time, however, the twentieth century seems "a bit further away." If A-R reaches that mark, though, it might receive my upper-level twentieth-century survey business as well. One other thing I would like to see: zooming in on individual pages is very easy, but there are times (for example, when teaching from a laptop) in which displaying a complete page of an orchestral score requires some extra steps. I had to use my internet browser's "zoom out" command to get "in the neighborhood," then employ A-R's "zoom in" to get maximum screen size.

A-R seems to be doing their best to offer what printed anthologies cannot provide: flexibility. What must be seen is how flexible A-R can become while also striving for an adequate profit margin. Additionally, the company will face the same challenges all online publishers are confronting—security of the site and its materials, pirating of content, and so forth. The ultimate success of the A-R online anthology might not be apparent for some time.

As someone who has long championed the concept of students working with a printed copy of a score, I freely admit to being impressed by A-R Edition's *Online Music Anthology*. In this time of financial constraint, libraries are doing all they can to reduce costs, and this includes not only limiting the acquisition of new materials, but also reducing the time that facilities are available to students. With my students becoming ever more nocturnal and the multimedia room often closing before they stop studying, I am certainly considering adding my students to A-R's patrons.