Giacomo Meyerbeer at the Yale Library

Giacomo Meyerbeer (Jakob Liebmann Meyer Beer), the Berlin composer known for his Parisian French Grand Operas, was born September 5, 1791. In Berlin and Paris, his bicentennial year, September 1991–September 1992, is being celebrated with special exhibits, symposia, a new biography, and new productions of his operas. A bicentennial display currently mounted at the John Herrick Jackson Music Library exhibits items from its holdings such as rare first-edition piano/vocal scores of Meyerbeer's operas, prints of his compositions for unaccompanied chorus, a manuscript of a fugue written as an assignment during his student days, volumes from his personal library and even a brief eleven-note autograph musical incipit and signature.

French Grand Opera is an operatic genre that brings together complex orchestration and vocal writing, spectacular scenic effects, and extensive ballet scenes in operas around four hours long. Dissertation research in progress at Yale examines the large-scale musical structure devised by Meyerbeer to create a sense of gradually increasing musical and dramatic momentum in these huge compositions. Rare and unique items from several Yale libraries support this research. These include complete runs of the nineteenth-century critical periodicals Journal des débats and Revue et gazette musicale in Sterling Memorial Library, manuscripts and first editions of operas by Meyerbeer's forerunners Cherubini and Méhul in the Beinecke, publications about operatic acting performance practice in the Drama Library, and rare recordings of French opera in Historical Sound Recordings.

Yale holds first-edition scores for both Meyerbeer operas important to this study: Robert le diable of 1831, Meyerbeer's first Parisian opera, and Les Huguenots of 1836. In Robert le diable, the special musical form evolved partially by accident, as a result of a revision from one genre to another. Meyerbeer had nearly finished composing Robert le diable as a three-act comic opera with spoken dialogue on a topic—the devil—then in vogue in popular Parisian theater, when the spectacular successes of the first two French Grand Operas, Auber's La muette de Portici and Rossini's Guillaume Tell, inspired him to rewrite Robert le diable in this new genre. The “splicing” in this revision is obvious, with light comic scenes and serious dramatic scenes jumbled together. The juxtaposition of contrasting musical styles contributes to a sweeping musical momentum which compensates for the stylistic awkwardness of the score. Premiered in 1831, Robert le diable was the greatest critical and popular success at the Paris Opera in decades. Three more French Grand Operas followed: Les Huguenots of 1836, Le Prophète of 1849, and L'Africaine of 1865.

Meyerbeer's operas were a crucial influence on the operas of Verdi and Wagner, both of whom utilized Meyerbeer's formula for overall musical structure, and expanded on the Meyerbeerian techniques of thematic recall, continuous melody, and linked ensemble scenes. Ironically, however, Wagner and his adherents...
engineered the decline of Meyerbeer’s reputation. Wagner was an obscure and impoverished young composer in Paris while Meyerbeer’s popularity was at its zenith. Jealousy and antipathy motivated Wagner's subsequent anti-Meyerbeer polemic which found acceptance in the nascent field of musicology. Wagner asserted that Meyerbeer, as a Jew, was incapable of creativity and that his operas are full of “effects without causes;” Wagner claimed to have been influenced only by German composers. Verdi, in contrast, acknowledged his debt to Meyerbeer.

In other ways Meyerbeer’s work contributed to the shape of modern opera: the demand for tickets to his consistently sold-out operas actually inaugurated the practice of ticket-scalping in Paris, and Meyerbeer invented the press conference with refreshments.

—KKO’B

Electronic Resources at Yale

Virtually everywhere in the Yale Library, information, texts, images, and “meta-information” (information about other information sources) are being acquired in electronic formats to complement traditional print and microform publications. Librarians consider it important to buy them even though the purchasing power of the “book budget” is increasingly limited. The reasons for selecting such resources illustrate the advantages of electronic media.

Librarians judge whether an electronic publication broadens the array of information sources at Yale. Nexis, for example, makes many resources not usually found in research libraries easily available. New modes of exploiting old information are another consideration. Most electronic indexing and abstracting services search rapidly for words and phrases throughout their entire text. Key-word searching and searching for truncated words vastly expand the utility of such tools as the Oxford English Dictionary and Dissertations Abstracts International (1861—), both available on CD-ROM.

In addition, the Library supports the new modes of scholarship that have arisen in classics, patristics and biblical studies, for example, from the conversion of existing collection of texts to machine-readable form. The corpus of ancient Greek literature in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, the Greek and English-language versions of the Bible incorporated in CD-WORD, and old and new editions of church fathers beginning to appear in the Cetedoc Library of Christian Latin Texts can now be explored, compared and manipulated in new ways. Finally, there is the convenience factor. It is easier to search through the Social Science Citation Indexes on CD-ROM than in the paper version. Users can save valuable time formerly invested in mechanical, repetitive steps.

Electronic information resources and text files are definitely here to stay. The Yale Library invests in them carefully and cautiously as their cost may displace other purchases. The proof of such prudence is that these resources are indeed well used, and the Yale community is clamoring for more. More will come, but librarians remain attentive to the need for balance in our resources, favoring substance above all. —MAK

Elizabeth Deering Hanscom was the very first woman to receive a Yale Ph.D. diploma due to the alphabetical arrangement of the names of the women candidates. The seven women who received degrees in 1894 made up one third of the doctoral degree recipients. This portrait is in an exhibit Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Admission of Women to the Yale Graduate School in Sterling Memorial Library.

Visitors study the exhibit Renovating an Edifice of Beauty: Sterling Memorial Library which opened in SML’s Memorabilia Room to coincide with the May 2nd launching of Yale’s $1.5 billion fundraising campaign.
Nexis Now Available

The University Library and Computing and Information Systems are pleased to announce the availability of the Nexis service to all Yale faculty and students. Nexis provides access to the full text of more than 600 newspapers, journals, and wire services including the New York Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, Africa News, Soviet Press Digest, and Xinhua (New China) News Agency. Abstracts appearing in an additional 1,000 sources are also available on Nexis.

The value of the Nexis service derives from the sheer size of its database and its power to search through vast amounts of text for specific words or phrases. A user could, for example, search the last eleven years of the New York Times and fourteen years of the Washington Post for a personal name, an event, or the title of a book or play. The results of the search can be viewed and printed or downloaded in a variety of formats, including the complete text of the article.

Nexis is currently available to all Yale faculty and students through various campus networks, dial access via modem, and selected Orbis terminals in Sterling Library and other Yale libraries. There is also a Macintosh workstation dedicated to Nexis in Sterling's CD-ROM Reference Center, available on a sign-up basis. Detailed access and searching instructions are available at the Sterling Library reference desk.

Nexis for Academic Courses: To use Nexis as a resource for a course you plan to teach, please contact Alan Solomon, Reference Department, Sterling Library at 432-1778 or Solomac@Yalevm.

Training and Documentation: For additional information about Nexis, including training, please contact Paul Constantine, Reference Department, Sterling Library at 432-1783 or Constan@Yalevm. —ACS

Robert Osborn Drawings at the Beinecke

American politics, the Vietnam war, aviation history, music, and the Connecticut landscape are some of the topics covered in the Beinecke Library's spring exhibition, Serious Whimsy: The Drawings of Robert Osborn, which will be on view from April 2 until the end of June.

Calling Robert Osborn "one of the very few masters of illustrative cartooning," Garry Trudeau says, "Propelled by a deeply moral sensibility, Osborn used his pen to sort out the good from the bad." This moral sense is abundantly demonstrated in the exhibition by numerous works that point, with dazzling precision, to the violence of war, the banality of human pretense, and the disasters of environmental pollution.

For many years, Robert Osborn supplied trenchant political cartoons to The New Republic, while his drawings and illustrations appeared widely in books and in magazines such as The Atlantic Monthly, Harpers, Life, and Vogue. Known for his firmly held opinions, Osborn has offered a sustained commentary on American life and times, his unerring line assessing types as well as individuals: the senator, the D.A.R., the bird-watcher, Joseph McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Dan Quayle, Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Calder.

The Beinecke exhibition includes nearly 100 of Osborn's original drawings in watercolor, charcoal, and pastel. Also on view are a selection of Osborn's earliest work, his posters designed to train naval aviators during World War II, and examples of published drawing.

Robert Osborn was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and after graduating from Yale in 1928 taught briefly at the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Connecticut. He spent much of the 1930s in Europe, studying art in Rome and Paris. His career as a cartoonist began during the Second World War: as a member of the Navy Aeronautics Training Program, Osborn developed a
series of humorous training brochures, in which the misguided doings of the pilot Dilbert taught new fliers what not to do.

As a Yale student, Osborn was on the staff of the Yale Record and drew caricatures for the New Haven Register. But his humor and originality were not always appreciated: he tells an amusing story of being thrown out of a prestigious drawing class at Yale for turning a practice sketch into a caricature of George Bernard Shaw. Years later, the university made partial amends, awarding Osborn the Yale Arts Association medal for distinction in the visual arts.

In his autobiography, Robert Osborn describes himself “as a drawer” who aims to express “not so much how things look as how they feel.” His drawings, he says, attempt to represent subjective sensations; he has tried to capture the essence of fear, joy, terror, music, or aggression—to name a few examples—by drawing them from the inside. “I draw what I feel,” writes Robert Osborn, “it is as simple as that, and the stronger the feeling the better the picture. The drawings I like best seem to come right out of my unconscious—full blown and no changes made—and they are, of course, what I am.”

Robert Osborn’s drawings have come to the Beinecke Library as a gift from the artist. —CAS

Designing Art:
The Bradbury Thompson Exhibit
A summer exhibit in Sterling Memorial Library will commemorate the career of Bradbury Thompson, Adjunct Professor of Graphic Design in the Yale School of Art. At the close of the exhibit, its contents will find a permanent home in the Library’s Arts of the Book Collection, thanks to the generosity of the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company (Westvaco). Many of Thompson’s notable works stem from his long association with Westvaco, including twenty-four years of designing the magazine Westvaco Inspirations for Printers, and the annual limited edition Christmas volumes.

Born in 1911 and educated at Washburn University, Thompson has built a distinguished reputation through his innovative work in graphic design. From his contributions as art director of Mademoiselle to the 95 United States postage stamps he designed, Thompson’s work has permeated American print. Among his notable achievements have been his designs for Smithsonian, Harvard Business Review, Art News, and Art News Annual. Additionally, sixty-one issues of Westvaco Inspirations utilized his skill for melding disparate elements into a cohesive whole, while lauding the importance of the printed word.

Some of his innovations consist of adapting old-world paintings and other non-traditional artwork for use as illustrations, using different colored printing inks to create distinct images and the illusion of motion on paper, and designing layouts that cover two pages instead of one. His Washburn College Bible introduced a more readable style of uneven line lengths corresponding to the natural cadence of speech, interspersed with reproductions of old-world paintings and frontispieces by Josef Albers. Thompson’s contributions to Westvaco’s American Classic Books Series, composed of selected writings from an earlier America, are designed with meticulous attention to unity of format and content.

The exhibit, which includes examples ranging across the spectrum of Thompson’s work, will run from July through September. —KTH
Preservation Grant for Social Sciences

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded a $1.66 million grant to the Yale University Library to preserve 20,100 brittle volumes important to research in the history of political science and the history of economics. This is Yale Library's second consecutive three-year preservation grant from NEH; the first project, to preserve 18,700 volumes in European history, concluded successfully on December 31, 1991.

The current preservation project, Yale's largest to date, began January 1, 1992, and will continue through December 31, 1994. With this grant Yale Library joins the University of Michigan Library in focusing on the social sciences and ensuring that significant materials in political science and economics are available to future generations of scholars nationally and internationally. Yale's social sciences collections are among the oldest and strongest in the United States. These materials, some of which were written by Yale's nationally acclaimed early social scientists like William Graham Sumner, Francis W. Coker, Irving Fisher, and Harold D. Lasswell, laid the groundwork for social studies ever since. The project will support scholars working on a wide array of topics including economic history, legal history, 18th and 19th-century social and political history, labor history, women’s studies, diplomatic history and international relations, political philosophy, and the history of the social sciences.

Titles published in continental Europe and the British Commonwealth between 1850 and 1950 will be treated along with those published in the United States between 1850 and 1875. All materials are reviewed on a title-by-title basis by the Social Sciences Bibliographer, Martha Brogan, to determine the priority and need for preservation through microfilming. Books and serials selected for treatment are microfilmed following national preservation microfilming standards. A negative master, duplicate negative, and positive service microfilm copy are produced. Where intrinsic value or patron use warrant additional formats, a copy film is made from the film or the original is retained and returned to the library stacks. All titles, both monographs and serials, receive cataloging in the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) database. This makes it possible for libraries to avoid duplicate filming and for scholars across the country to obtain copies at a minimal cost. In addition, all records are converted into machine-readable form and will appear in Yale's online catalog, Orbis, many of them for the first time.

Marcia Watt, Preservation Librarian, directs the project, with a staff of twelve who identify and search titles, convert catalog records, prepare volumes for filming, and process the completed film. A faculty advisory committee, chaired by Martha Brogan with Marcia Watt and Susanne Roberts, Humanities Bibliographer for European History, serves to guide the project. Its members include: Joseph Hamburger, Pelatiah Perit Professor of Political and Social Science; Charles Lindblom, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Economics and Political Science; Harry Miskimin, Professor of History; William Parker, Phillip G. Bartlett Professor Emeritus of Economics and Economic History; and David Weiman, Associate Professor of Economics and American Studies. —MLB
## Calendar of Exhibits

### BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

**The Cartoonist and Artist Robert Osborn (Yale '28)** through June

**From Hebraica to Judaica:** Three Centuries of Collecting at Yale
July through September

### MEDICAL LIBRARY

**Nurse Specialist: Modern Nursing at Yale** through September

### STERLING MEMORIAL LIBRARY

**The Vladimir and Wanda Tiscanini Horowitz Archives** through June

**Celebrating the Hundredth Anniversary of the Admission of Women into the Graduate School** through June

**Bradbury Thompson: Innovative Designer**

**Restoring an Edifice of Beauty: Sterling Memorial Library**
through December

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This bookplate designed by German engraver Johann Martin Bernigeroth (1713–1767), best known for his engraved portraits of German royalty and nobility, is from the Bookplate Collection.

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