

**Lincoln City Libraries**  
**Polley Music Library Annual Report 2022**  
**Submitted by Scott Scholz, Polley Music Librarian**

The Polley Music Library completed 40 years of service to the public in September 2022. This document will highlight services provided in 2022, and describe plans for services in 2023. Similar to last year, 2022 continued to present unusual challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, though conditions inched closer to pre-pandemic norms. Polley Music Library services continued to expand and adapt to the times with new programs and lending concepts this year.

**Highlights FY 2021-22 (September 2021-August 2022)**

**Public Service/Staffing**

The Polley Music Library catalogued music collection remained available to the public throughout the 2021-22 year, with direct access to the shelves any time Bennett Martin Public Library (BMPL) was open. As in previous years, Polley offered twenty hours of public service per week provided by the Polley Music Librarian, but I assisted the public as needed during any other hours I was in the library. In-person visitors to Polley were up slightly from last year, but remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. Patrons continued to request materials in large part by telephone, email, social media, and through the Lincoln City Libraries (LCL) website at pandemic levels, probably due to a combination of several COVID surges during the year and new habits formed in the previous two years. Similar to other years, many holds were delivered to other branches for more convenient pickup.

**Collections**

The major change to the Polley lending collection this year was implementation of a guitar lending program, building on the success of ukulele lending over the last seven years. On April 1—April is International Guitar Month—we started the program with 11 acoustic guitars (1 donated from librarian Garren Hochstetler and 10 purchased from Dietze), and added some beginner guitar books to branch library collections for patrons who pick up holds in other branches. I produced an instructional/informational sheet to be included in the guitar cases, with basic “getting started” help and a link to a video showing proper playing positions and tuning. The program was an immediate success, with 15-18 patron holds waiting to borrow guitars ever since. For the first several months, guitars were routed back to me between circulations to check on them, but having found no significant issues, they’re now circulating like any other library item, with the same checkout period as books.

I ordered just under 250 new books and scores for Polley this year, with a continued focus on new titles and some consideration of materials to emphasize musical practices and demographics somewhat underrepresented in Polley’s current collection. The supply chain interruptions caused by the pandemic continued to cause delays in book publications, and many books that have been ordered continue to have publication dates pushed back. In particular, a global paper shortage that started in 2021 continues to contribute to these problems in the book industry. Periodical subscriptions, and our subscription to the Music Online databases remained the same.

Donations to Polley leveled off somewhat compared to last year. A few titles were added to the collection, but most were passed through for eventual use at the annual book sale (which was also cancelled again this year due to the pandemic).

### **Outreach/Collaboration**

In September, we tried something new in collaborating with Lincoln Calling. For the last few years, we hosted a recording studio discussion panel in the library or via livestreaming, but when the festival was converted to an all-outdoors event due to COVID concerns, it became clear there wasn't a practical way to present the panel outside. Instead, Lincoln instrument designer and improviser Jay Kreimer and I held a discussion about the nature of experimental music at the outdoor Tower Square stage, and I made a booklist of Polley resources that approach the topic from multiple perspectives (performing, designing instruments, historical precedents, approaches to listening). We also performed as Irregular Verbs, a librarian-appropriate name for an experimental ensemble.

I presented at two BooksTalk events in September, at Bethany branch on September 24<sup>th</sup> and at South on September 30. We had 5 attendees at Bethany and 4 at South.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, I spoke in person to the Sigma Alpha Iota alumni group about the history and current activities of the Polley Music Library. We had 10 in attendance, including an additional Zoom participant. Many members of this group are active users of Polley, and they had great questions.

In December, I wrote an article for KZUM about some favorite recordings and music books from 2021, which led the 2021 recap coverage on their website.

I researched music books for young audiences and compiled a list that was turned over to Youth Services Librarian Garren Hochstetler toward expanding the music nonfiction children's book offerings throughout the system.

In August, I wrote an article about upcoming events and recent innovations at Polley for the Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries newsletter.

I continued producing the weekly Polley Music Library show which debuted in August of 2019, which airs twice each weekend on 89.3 FM KZUM and is archived on Mixcloud:

[https://www.mixcloud.com/Polley\\_Music\\_Library/](https://www.mixcloud.com/Polley_Music_Library/). I focused mostly on booktalk show formats this year, featuring books from the Polley collection about a diverse range of musical styles and backgrounds, followed by relevant listening examples. We passed the 150 program mark this year. In April, a patron told me that they were signing up for a library card as a direct result of listening to the show, which was great to hear! Additionally, a radio program I produced about the musical traditions of Ukraine is now featured in the audio/video section of a Ukraine Libguide at the University of Colorado: <https://libguides.colorado.edu/ukraine/video>.

Throughout the year, I continued to contribute 3 recommended reading book reviews for the LCL Staff Recommendations website each month, adding to a nice body of Polley-related recommendations. We received some attention from authors this year who found these recommendations when searching for press on their books. In September, You Nakai, author of a new book on pianist/composer David Tudor, said "I want to thank Scott for this extremely insightful and encouraging review. This is the best response I have received so far from someone who actually read the book." In January, author Curt

Bianchi, who wrote a new book about the jazz fusion band Weather Report, called me in gratitude for writing about his book.

I produced 1 or 2 e-newsletters most months, highlighting new radio and video programming, events, our new songwriting club and guitar lending programs, and new book arrivals.

One frustration with outreach this year relates to social media. Effective at the beginning of 2022, the City of Lincoln implemented a new Social Media Policy that allows for only one social media account per department per platform. For Lincoln City Libraries, this meant discontinuing the use of the Polley Music Library Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as accounts for several other library programs. With our new procedures to conform to this policy, I'm able to direct posts to Amy, our LCL Public Information Specialist, to be posted on the primary Lincoln City Libraries social media accounts. In the past, I tried to post 3-4 times per week, mentioning relevant music events in the news, new book arrivals, and radio programs, as well as passing major information onto Amy. Now, I'm mostly able to send info on radio program topics and occasional events to be posted on the main LCL page, a more limited post frequency of once a week among lots of other library posts. While these posts are seen by more eyes overall, they're not necessarily seen by the same audience who liked or followed the Polley account, simply due to the way social media algorithms create information bottlenecks in an increasingly content-dense environment. I hope the city reconsiders this policy in the future.

### **Programming/Events**

We had percussionist/sound artist Tatsuya Nakatani perform at Polley on September 22. Due to COVID concerns, I was able to make arrangements with the Lincoln Community Foundation to co-sponsor the event, so that it could be held outdoors at the Community Foundation Gardens across the street from BMPL. It was a lovely evening with perfect weather, and we had about 25 attendees. Nakatani performed, and then gave a presentation demonstrating the personal approaches to percussion that he has developed over the course of his career.

In February, we ran an online contest, asking patrons to submit themselves playing something on ukulele. Two winners received two tickets each to the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain in March (tickets were provided to us by the Lied Center as part of advertising through them).

On March 3, we held the first meeting of a new Songwriting/Composition club. The club has met monthly since then. It's been a slow build—a couple of dates had inclement weather that kept participants away—but little by little, a core group of participants is forming. This program has potential for both mutual support for local songwriters and composers, and creates the opportunity for musicians to meet one another and work on future collaborative projects.

Trying to book live performers in the library in spring/summer proved to be difficult due to COVID concerns, but more performances finally started happening regularly again in September 2022, which will be covered in next year's annual report.

### **Technology/Facilities**

Video production continued to play a role in promoting Polley events and as a component of outreach this year. Videos produced this year included a how-to video for producing "spooky soundtracks" for Halloween, a social media video about books related to the cassette tape, a booktalk video about Hip

Hop History Month in November, a video promoting new listening/songwriting club ideas to launch in 2022, two promotional videos for the ukulele contest (one of me playing the Super Mario Bros theme on ukulele as an ice-breaker to get people to participate), a “getting started” video for the guitar program, two promotional videos for the launch of the guitar lending program, and promotional videos for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Polley, which will be detailed in next year’s annual report.

I attended October discussions with the central library planning architects regarding the new central library’s possible floor plans as related to the Polley and Heritage Room areas. I think both of the main designs they’re working toward could be fantastic.

In July, I chatted with local company Nanonation, who make digital kiosk displays, to see how such displays could be used with unique library collections. Long term, I’d like to create a digital resource for Nebraska music with both online and unique in-person presentation components. As this technology continues to evolve, there may be fun ways to present archival materials like scores, recordings, and ephemera this way.

Also in July, I attended two meetings to get the latest information on upcoming changes to the downtown area toward the development of a music/arts district. The first was held by the Lincoln Arts Council, who held a Creative District Stakeholder Focus Group. They updated us on progress toward an eventual creative district (plans were delayed because of COVID), and asked for updates on what stakeholders’ needs look like toward its development. This overlapped nicely with the Downtown Corridors project’s open house. This project is making plans for development all along O St from the O St viaduct to roughly the Antelope Valley project around 21<sup>st</sup> Street, with various plans to improve adjoining streets along the way. Both of these groups are making plans for informal performance stages and lighting effects near the library, on the other side of O St along 14<sup>th</sup> Street between O and P Streets, with additional signage and streetscaping denoting the larger area as a creative district.

### **Plans for FY 2022-23**

As the pandemic subsides, I hope to continue to increase our in-person programming at Polley over the coming year, which has already begun with a few September 2022 programs that fell just outside of the scope of this report. At the same time, the pandemic has expanded public expectations for the possibilities of interaction to include more online and internet-mediated events, and I will continue to pursue those avenues as well. This kind of broad approach to programming will not only benefit patrons, but it also models the kind of flexible approach that contemporary musicians will have to take going forward.

I plan to continue building on the possibilities of groups meeting in the library for musical purposes as well. We’re off to a good start with the songwriting club, and I plan to build on that concept further with a listening club based around monthly themes. Anything we can do to help bring musicians and music lovers together will help to create the kind of community around Polley that will keep it relevant for future generations.

Even though the new Central Library project is on hold for the immediate future, I will continue meeting with various shareholder/planning groups about new downtown music and arts districts in the coming year, to assure that Polley will be an active and visible participant in music district plans.