ON 16 July 1946 the lovely garden of 10 Adams Road, Cambridge, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hirsch, was the scene of a party given for the seventieth birthday of Edward Dent, who had been Professor of Music in the University from 1926 to 1941. It was a happy and memorable occasion; for the guests had come from far beyond Cambridge, not only to honour the most distinguished English musicologist of that day, but also to join their hosts in tacitly expressing to him their gratitude for his inestimable service in helping to secure the Paul Hirsch Music Library for the nation. This garden party marked the final stage in the history of the library—a history which had begun nearly half a century before, in Frankfurt am Main.

Paul Hirsch was born on 24 February 1881 in Frankfurt, the eldest son of Ferdinand Hirsch, the owner of the firm of Hirsch & Co., Iron Founders. Paul’s younger brother Robert, later Robert von Hirsch, became a connoisseur of art, whose world-famous collection was sold by Sotheby’s in 1978. Paul Hirsch loved books as much as he loved music. He founded the Frankfurter Bibliophilen-Gesellschaft, and was its president from 1922 to 1933. Having begun to collect music in the late 1890s, he entered the family firm, and then his travels took him all over Europe. On his train journeys he regularly used to study and mark music-dealers’ catalogues. By 1906 he had built up a notable collection of Mozart, his favourite composer, and issued privately a finely printed catalogue of it which he compiled himself.

By 1909 he had acquired numerous great rarities of music and musical theory printed from the late fifteenth century onwards, and displayed some of it in an important exhibition. Hirsch was also a very good violinist, and after his marriage in 1911 to Olga Ladenburg (herself a great bibliophile), their home in Frankfurt—first in the Beethovenstrasse, later in the Neue Mainzerstrasse 57 (fig. 2)—was the scene of a long series of chamber-music concerts, in many of which Hirsch himself played. It was through music-making, by building up his superb library, and by making it available to students, that Hirsch won innumerable friends in many walks of life.

At about the turn of the century Hirsch played in a string quartet which performed Brahms’s clarinet quintet with Mühlfeld, its dedicatee, as the soloist. In 1947 when Richard Strauss, then 83, visited London, Hirsch went from Cambridge to see his old friend and enjoy with him and others a game of Skat, reminiscent of the scene in Intermezzo.
Paul Hirsch b. Frankfurt am Main, 24 February 1881;  
d. Cambridge, 25 November 1951

Between those two events lay the whole development and destiny of what was one of the finest general collections of printed music and musical literature amassed anywhere in the twentieth century. In 1929 Hirsch, assisted by Kathi Meyer, produced the first volume of his splendid catalogue, devoted to works of musical theory. The second, which listed operatic full scores, appeared in 1930, and a third, comprising rare vocal and instrumental music printed before c. 1830, followed in 1936.
But by then political circumstances made it impossible for Hirsch to remain any longer in Germany, and he decided to try to bring his family and his music library to Cambridge. He sent a letter of inquiry to Dent, who wrote on 5 March to A. F. Schofield, the then University Librarian, most strongly urging acceptance of Hirsch's proposal to put this collection on loan in the newly completed University Library. Further support came from the Reverend H. F. Stewart (Fellow of Trinity and sometime president of the Cambridge University Musical Society) who steered the matter through the Library Syndicate on 26 April. By the autumn of 1936 Hirsch was in Cambridge, and by December he had settled
in Adams Road, his collection of music and musical literature safely in the University Library, where it occupied nearly 1,000 linear feet on the fifth floor. Hirsch made his collection fully available to accredited members of the University and later to scholars elsewhere in the country.

Helped by Edith Schnapper, and by his two daughters, Irene Hartogs-Hirsch and Renata Schuster, Hirsch was able, in April 1940, to complete the manuscript of volume IV of the catalogue which he and Kathi Meyer had begun some years earlier. It included addenda to volumes I–III, a wealth of bibliographical material, and the first and early editions of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. The printing of the volume had been undertaken by the University Press, which, much to Hirsch’s pleasure, was able to match exactly the typography and style of the earlier volumes, but publication was delayed by the war. Vol. IV ultimately appeared in 1947, but even while it was in the press Hirsch knew that he would now have to sell his library. It was purchased in the summer of 1946 by the Trustees of the British Museum, with a special grant from the Treasury and a generous contribution from the Pilgrim Trust, for £120,000. At the end of the war, it was far from easy to raise such a very large sum of money, and the successful conclusion of the delicate negotiations was due in no small measure to Dent’s powerful advocacy, both in public and behind the scenes.

Hirsch knew that he might have obtained a higher price in the United States or by auction, but his greatest concern was that the library should be preserved intact in his adopted country. The Trustees granted him free access to his former collection in the Music Room and for this purpose approved that he should be issued with a house key—an unusual privilege at that time. Characteristically, Hirsch expressed his gratitude by purchasing from dealers, or at auction, rare music which he offered as additions to the library. He continued this generous practice, which was of great benefit to the Museum during those years of financial stringency, until shortly before his death on 25 November 1951.

In an article which he wrote in 1927, Hirsch enunciated his principles of collecting as follows:

1. Wissenschaftliche Bedeutung
2. Gute Erhaltung
3. Seltenheitswert
4. Typographie
5. Einband
6. Ausstattung (Bildschmuck usw).

He omitted to state whether he had arranged these principles in order of priority, but it is significant that ‘scholarly importance’ stands first. Though he had no training in musicology, he learned much from Johannes Wolf who advised him in his early collecting. Any book which was an essential part of musical history or shed light on problems of musical performance had a special attraction for Hirsch, whatever its other qualities. He enlarged on the question of ‘good condition’ by saying that if a book was of excessive rarity, he would purchase a poor copy, always hoping that he would find a better
one in time. Accordingly, because Gerson’s *Collectorium super magnificat* (Esslingen, Fyner, 1473) contained the first notes of music ever printed, and is extremely scarce, Hirsch bought a copy, even though it was heavily cut and lacked the ‘Register’. But he discarded it when, many years later, he was offered a perfect copy, in pristine state, with wide margins. In the field of ‘typography’, he secured examples of some of the earliest books printed by each of the four principal processes used for music: wood-block, movable type, engraving, and lithography. Such books, covering well over three centuries, reflected Hirsch’s enthusiasm for all aspects of the art.

Hirsch was rightly proud that he possessed so many very important works of musical theory from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Perhaps his choicest book in this field was the only known copy of Francesco Caza’s *Tractato vulgare de canto figurato* (Milan, 1492). The five major works by Pietro Aron, published between 1516 and c. 1550, were then not so scarce, but Hirsch had all of them. Likewise eight books by Franchino Gaforio, published from 1480 to 1520, were in his library, all in fine state and adorned with the splendid woodcuts that he admired so much (fig. 3). The books by Gaforio included the author’s autograph of the ‘Theoriae musicae tractatus’, a variant text of the book ultimately published in 1480 as *Theoricum opus musicae*. Another fine woodcut embellishes the title-page of Arnolt Schlick’s *Spiegel der Orgelmacher* (Mainz, 1511), one of the earliest printed books on the subject: only one other copy is recorded. Another very rare early book is *Von sant Ursulen schifflin* (Strasburg, 1497), which contains on fol. 13 recto ‘Das liede vber sant Ursulen schyfflin gedichtet vō meister iohanes gosseler’. The music was possibly composed by Gosseler, and is the earliest-known printed song in German.

The range of operas in score in Hirsch’s library was remarkable, and exemplified both his bibliographical and his musical taste. It began with Peri’s *Euridice* (Florence, 1600), and proceeded right up to his own times. He had some forty operas by Lulli, all Mozart’s in the first editions issued in full score in all important countries, and some Rossini rarities, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Il Guglielmo Tell*, *L’Inganno felice*, *Matilde Shabran*, *Maometto secondo*, *Mosè in Egitto*, *Ricciardo e Zoraide*, *Semiramide*, all printed in handsome oblong folio by lithography by Ratti & Cencetti in Rome, between c. 1816 and 1825. Equally impressive were the sumptuously bound folio scores of nine operas and ballets by Richard Strauss, *Ariadne auf Naxos* (in both versions), *Der Bürger als Edelmann*, *Elektra*, *Feuersnot*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Guntram*, *Josephs Legende*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Salome*. These and five dramatic works by Schreker were normally available for hire only. The same restriction had originally applied to the full score of the younger Johann Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, one of Hirsch’s most cherished operas, and to another rarity, Glinka’s *Ruslan and Ludmilla*.

Hirsch had an equally catholic interest in music of other types, from the earliest period of its printing onwards. His copy of the superius part of Petrucci’s *Motetti C* (Venice, 1504) is in an immaculate state. So too is Luther’s *Deutsche Messe* (Nuremberg, 1526). In some respects, the most precious of all the sixteenth-century publications is a volume containing four collections of *Chansons* in lute tablature, issued by Phalèse at Antwerp in
Fig. 3. A woodcut from Gaspario’s Theorica musicae (Milan, 1492). Hirsch I.191, sig. B[vi’].
280 × 195 mm.
1546 and 1547. Two of them are unique. There is a splendid group of eight books of music by Lassus, one of madrigals of 1567, two from the *Magnum opus musicum* (Munich, 1604 and 1625), and five of the *Patrocinium musices* (1573–6). From the same period come two fine volumes of German organ music—Jacob Paix’s *Ein Schön Nutz-und Gebreuchlich Orgel-Tabulaturbuch* (Laugingen, 1583) and Bernhard Schmid’s *Zwey Bücher. Einer Neuen Künstlichen Tabulatur auff Orgel und Instrument* (Strasburg, 1577). Among some fine Italian music of the early seventeenth century may be mentioned a tablature by Benedetto Sanseverino, *Intavolatura facile deli passacalli, ciaconne ... & altre varie suonate composte, & accommodate per la chitarra alla spagnuola ... Libro terzo* (Milan, 1620), a unique copy, immaculate in its original wrappers.

There is other rare German music from the seventeenth century, such as Simon Brancovius’s *Musicalische christliche Einbildung eines recht beweglichen Clag- und Trost-Gesprächs uff das fruezeitige ... Absterben ... Agnae Elisabethen von Breitenbauchs*, etc. printed in 1651 at Jena, in ten parts, all of which are present in this unique copy. Among the engraved music of this century Hirsch owned three books by Kapsberger, beautifully printed in Rome in 1612 and 1623, and six of Nicola Matteis’s various *Ayres*, and his *Songs*, which are all specimens of the finest musical calligraphy produced in London in the 1670s and 1680s. From Brussels came Francesco Corbetta’s very important and exquisitely engraved *Varii scherzi di sonate per la chitarra spagnola. Libro quarto* (1648), one of two recorded copies.

Undoubtedly the choicest items in Hirsch’s collection of J. S. Bach are the *Glückwünschende Kirchen Motetto*, the composer’s earliest published work printed in nineteen parts at Mühlhausen in 1708, one of only three known copies, and a copy of *Clavierübungen* which was Bach’s own and has his autograph corrections. With the music of the later eighteenth century, Hirsch was entering the period of music which he loved best—the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. On all of them, especially on Mozart, he lavished infinite pains and attention to bibliographical detail which he knew to be often of considerable musicological significance. In 1951 the Trustees published the special Accessions Part of the Hirsch music which included well over 1,500 ‘miscellaneous’ items in the uncatalogued part of his library, many of great rarity, and including much secondary Mozart. A similar Accessions Part, including a large quantity of previously uncatalogued books on music, was published in 1953. Only in the Accessions Part of 1951 can there be seen the full tally of Hirsch’s accumulation of the first and early editions of the Viennese classics. Haydn has some 180 entries, Mozart 800, Beethoven 570, and Schubert 350. In lighter vein, the next generation of the Viennese composers is represented by numerous first editions of the dances of Lanner and Johann Strauss, father and son. Many of them have beautifully engraved vignettes on their title-pages.

Indeed, engraved and illustrated music and decorated editions of all periods were, as Hirsch himself indicated in 1927, among his particular—and most enduring—interests. He had fine copies of Bickham’s *Musical Entertainer* (1737, 38), of Laborde’s exquisite *Choix de chansons* (Paris, 1773), and of the three elegant songbooks *Sperontes Singende Muse an der Pleisse* (Leipzig, 1736–47). One of the treasures in this category from more
recent times is Elgar’s *May Song*, with decorations by Walter Crane, one of five copies on vellum.

This outline of the range and riches of this fine library must necessarily be very selective, and can only extend to some of the books in which Hirsch himself took special pleasure. As a tail-piece, it may not be inappropriate to mention a few of the prized rarities among his beloved Viennese classics, which were briefly enumerated above.

Among Haydn’s works were the editions of the Quartets op. 1, issued in Amsterdam by J. J. Hummel. In the extensive Mozart collection, which included some 350 books about the composer, mostly not in Hirsch’s published catalogues, there were two items that were specially dear to him. One was the libretto of *Don Giovanni*, issued in Vienna in 1788 when ‘Die Oper aller Opern’—as E. T. A. Hoffmann called it—was first performed there. The other was a rare vocal score of *Die Zauberflöte* issued by Hummel of Amsterdam in 1792, with a delightful title-page vignette of Tamino and Papageno (fig. 4). True to one of his own principles, Hirsch acquired this in August 1951, as a replacement for a sadly imperfect copy which he had bought in 1945. This perfect copy was the last addition of importance which he made to his former library before his death.

There were two Beethoven items which Hirsch esteemed particularly. One was a mint copy of the first edition of the Trios op. 1, nos. 1–3, bought for 20 pfennig in 1900 at an Augsburg fair. The second comprised the two sets of the parts of the Fifth Symphony in C minor, op. 67. Hirsch valued them highly because they led him to a remarkable discovery regarding the opening bars of the first movement:

![Musical notation](image)

perhaps the most famous Beethoven ever wrote. From a minute collation of the two sets of parts, which appeared to be duplicated, Hirsch found that one, since recognized as probably unique, was of an earlier issue, in which both pauses were on a single minim.

![Musical notation](image)

He showed that the lengthening of the second pause, as in the first bars illustrated—the version universally known—was due to a correction made by Beethoven himself at the time of the first performance. The composer must then have realized that a longer second pause would add emphasis to the phrase.

Of all his Schubert, Hirsch treasured particularly the earliest printed work, the little song ‘Am Erlafsee’, which appeared as a supplement to the *Mahlerisches Taschenbuch*, vol. vi (6 February 1818). Among music published elsewhere during this Viennese period,
Fig. 4. The title-page of a vocal score of Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (Amsterdam, 1792, 93). Hirsch IV. 205.c. 332 × 223 mm.
Hirsch's greatest pride was the first edition of the 'Marseillaise' (fig. 5), in what is now
known to be one of two copies.

It is not easy to give a precise total for this collection, because of the difficulty of
establishing a unit in music. But it amounts to between 18,000 and 20,000 items, including
all the very important 'miscellaneous' music and the additional musical literature—some
6,000 volumes—mentioned above. The collection was augmented by Hirsch's cor-
respondence with some 700 scholars, librarians, publishers, and performers, all over the
world; by the record of most of his purchases from 1917 to 1935; by a visitors' book dating
from 1926 to 1935. These, and a quantity of other papers, were added in 1962-3 by Olga
Hirsch.
The nature of Paul Hirsch’s prolonged, totally dedicated work as collector and connoisseur was perfectly expressed by Dr. Laurence Picken in the first of the two addresses given at the funeral, on 28 November 1951:

I have said little of the place of music in his life. Properly speaking, it filled his life. He was not a bibliographer strayed into the domain of music, but a musician who found he could best serve the art which had absorbed him from youth onwards through the pursuit of musicology—of musical bibliography. It was not the material basis of music which was his primary concern, but music itself. Music was for him a perfecting correlative of life.  

3. The 400th concert took place on 24 November 1933. The programme is in the Hirsch papers, B.L.
4. I am grateful to Mr. John Oates, Acting Librarian of the University Library at the time when this article was written, for kindly allowing me to see the file of correspondence and the minutes of the Library Syndicate relating to the acceptance of Hirsch’s music library.
5. Dent contributed to The Times of 26 April 1946 a cogent article entitled ‘Need for a central music library. Value of the Hirsch collection’. It was reprinted in The Times Educational Supplement of 4 May. Together with Sir Arnold Bax, Sir Adrian Boult, Sir George Dyson, Dame Myra Hess, Sir Stanley Marchant, and Vaughan Williams, Dent was a signatory to a letter which appeared in The Times on 9 April. A further letter from Seymour Whinyates, Director of the Music Department of the British Council, appeared on 20 April. Besides Dent, others who worked to secure the interest of the Treasury and the Pilgrim Trust were Professor Patrick Hadley (Dent’s successor in the Cambridge chair), Lord Baldwin, and Lord Macmillan.
8. Wolf, a distinguished musicologist, became librarian and curator of the music section of the Prussian State Library in 1915, and succeeded Wilhelm Altmann as its director in 1928. Wolf and Hirsch were the editors of the first series of Veröffentlichungen der Musik-Bibliothek Paul Hirsch, which comprised editions, partly in facsimile, of rarities in the collection. Wolf himself was responsible for four of them.
9. Hirsch had no pretensions to be a manuscript collector. Apart from an interesting English lute tablature, a few liturgies, and some full scores of operas, his manuscripts—some seventy-five in all—were mostly of bibliographical or calligraphic interest. Nearly all, apart from the tablature, are entered in Hirsch’s four-volume catalogue, and all, except the liturgies, are included in Pamela Willetts, Handlist of Music Manuscripts Acquired 1908–67 (London, 1970).
11. From Two Addresses Delivered at the Funeral of Paul Hirsch 28 November 1951 (Cambridge, privately printed, April 1952). The passage is quoted by kind permission of Dr. Laurence Picken, Fellow Emeritus of Jesus College, Cambridge. The other address was given by the late Percy Muir, the eminent bookseller and bibliographer.