



# UBC REPORTS

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**Mysteries, racy romances,** tell-all biographies. Every summer, the same old book picks make it into the beach bag. In search of more unusual reading, *UBC Reports* thought it only made sense to ask those who fill the UBC Library stacks what they'd check out of their own branches if they had a warm, lazy afternoon on campus to spare.

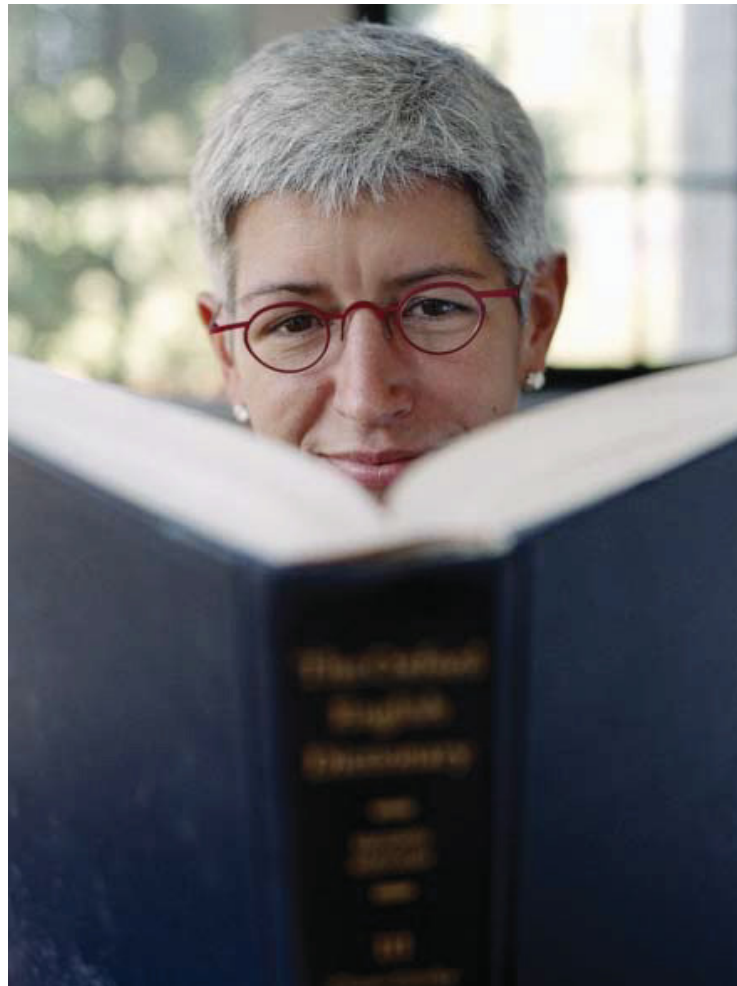
University Librarian Catherine Quinlan says she's gotten some "weird" looks in the past when she's recommended the *Oxford English Dictionary* (unabridged) but, given her druthers, it's still the tome she'd haul off the shelf on a summer day because "it's a fascinating source of information: how the definitions and usages or words have changed over time, word origins, new words. It's interesting to me that, in general, our day-to-day vocabulary is limited to a couple of thousand words when of course there are many, many more." And the best spot to read the hefty reference book? Given its weight, Quinlan says an outside reading spot is probably out of the question, so she'd choose a table and chair in one of the UBC libraries.

Law librarian Sandra Wilkins is another fan of Oxford reference books but her choice would be *The Oxford Companion to Law* by David M. Walker, a compendium on law and law-related topics, including legal systems, concepts, doctrines, principles, institutions and people.

Wilkins says it's highly readable, contains a wealth of information – making it a great starting point for anyone researching a law-related topic – and it readily lends itself to being put down and picked up again later – great for those who like a little nap between chapters. "It solves the mystique surrounding gowns and wigs, explains that a 'call to the bar' has nothing to do with libations, summarizes important cases such as *Donoghue v. Stevenson* (the ginger-beer case), and puts Latin phrases such as *res ipsa loquitur* into plain language." And her preferred reading spot? The Rose Garden because "it's

## What the Librarians are Reading

*Books the bookish boost.* BY MICHELLE COOK



UBC Librarian Catherine Quinlan's choice of "light" reading is the *Oxford English Dictionary* (unabridged).

close to the Law Library, near Sage Bistro where one can take a break for lunch, and has wonderful views when one needs a break from reading."

Tim Atkinson is UBC's assistant university librarian for arts, humanities and social sciences so it's no surprise that his top pick is a classic work of fiction, *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh. He likes the story, but also the way the words flow together. "There isn't a wasted word in the entire book and the author has chosen them to fit together in a really lyrical way." It's a book best read in the British countryside, says Atkinson, but a UBC alternative would be on a bench in the little grove of trees in front of Main Library and next to the Physics Building.

Chris Ball, head of the Education Library, suggests getting a good coffee, wandering down to the gardens outside the Asian Library (and, hopefully, scoring a bench in the sun) with the best seller *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson* by Mitch Albom. It's the story of a very busy young sports writer who has lost his way to some extent, in his quest for success in life. Reunited by mere chance with his favourite professor from years gone by, he finds himself re-examining what is important in life and exactly what success means.

"Whether it's because we boomers are getting older, because our parents are reminding us of our own mortality or because reflecting on the meaning of life is our privilege, this book hits home. How can it miss?" Ball says. "The professor as life mentor, the returning student looking back fondly on his years on campus, and courage in the face of a terminal illness? If you are at all curious about the psychology of death, the purpose of our search for meaning and happiness in life, or the potential importance of a single teacher in a person's life then this book will pull you in and leave you thinking."

If Jan Wallace, head librarian at  
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## SPECIAL ISSUE: SHARING IDEAS, RESOURCES AND INSPIRATION

UBC HAS A PROUD TRADITION OF PRODUCING AND SHARING PUBLISHED WORK – an intellectual and sensual feast of words, music and images. ☺ Almost 150 UBC authors have been published in the last year, many creating award-winning works. ☺ UBC Bookstore has been named Campus Bookseller of the Year. ☺ Since 1971, UBC Press, the publishing arm of the university, has published about 40 UBC authors a year. ☺ UBC's Main Library is being transformed into a unique centre of learning and our librarians use the latest in technology to support UBC staff, faculty and students. ☺ UBC's creative writing program started in 1946 with a single course and has become a destination for creative writing students in Canada and from around the world. ☺ This issue of UBC Reports is dedicated to the collection, preservation and transmission of ideas, experiences and inspiration.





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## Mustica Breaks Ground in Interactive Music Preservation

BY BRIAN LIN

**Roll over, Beethoven!** Step aside, Mozart! A new generation of composers is revolutionizing the classical music industry with interactive music that is both composed and played on computers.

Around the world, computer keyboards are replacing old-fashioned ebony and ivories. The computer itself has become an instrument and musicians literally "play" it by manipulating software as if it were strings and bow.

The result? Sounds that are unheard of, that both please and challenge the human ear. And no, we're not talking about the screeching of tires or the scratching of finger nails on blackboard, although in the realm of interactive music, they are viable "raw materials" that could very well be turned into the background of a new Sarah McLachlan hit or *Lord of The Rings* sound track.

Interactive technology has boosted the creative capacity of musicians, but it has also created two problems rarely-faced in centuries of music composition. Many of the techniques, manoeuvres and the end products of interactive musical activity are unscorable – there are no musical notations in existence to adequately record what is created or performed. Also, the authenticity of the digital documents and computer systems that substitute for scores is threatened by data corruption and media obsolescence.

Enter Jill Teasley, a graduate student from UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies whose love of music and enthusiasm for the preservation of digital material led her to a stint in Paris earlier this year, where she worked closely with composers to gather information

about their preservation needs that would eventually help them accurately preserve interactive music.

As a research assistant for Mustica, a study that is part of the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems project, Teasley is working to identify the kinds of documents generated while composing and performing interactive music.

"These composers write and perform music for unique instruments that become unplayable after five years," says Teasley. "Unless they have all the records that show how the instruments worked and what they were supposed to play, the composers lose the ability to play their own music."

For three months, Teasley interviewed musicians, software developers and administrators on current practices at two major French music research institutions, L'Institut National de L'Audiovisuel and L'Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (Ircam).

"At Ircam, for example, composers routinely work with musical assistants," says Teasley. "Often composers themselves, the assistants turn the composers' ideas into commands for the computer."

"As a result, the assistants understand aspects of the music that may be taken for granted, such as how the software components work together to create a certain piece," says Teasley, who recently presented her preliminary findings at the UBC e-Strategy Town Hall meeting.

"Unless this information is properly documented and preserved, the music, intended to be experienced as a live performance, may only be accessible as an audio recording. □

**61 two and three bedroom townhouses neighbouring a beautiful new park in the Hawthorn Place community of UBC.**

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