

Chapter 40

The Trial of Searching for Musical Works Using Resource Discovery Tools

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ABSTRACT

It is not possible to perform a complete or efficient search for musical works using current resource discovery tools. Using examples from Encore, EBSCO Discovery Service^{TM1}, Primo^{®2}, and WorldCat^{®3} Local, the author shows the limitations inherent in using the latest generation of discovery tools for music searches. Music searching is problematic in these tools for three reasons: inadequate use of authority information, displays which do not use uniform titles, and systems that do not recognize that results appearing in a single field have a higher relevancy. They cannot fulfill a basic catalog objective of finding and displaying what works a library has by a composer. Music librarians must band together to tell vendors the needs for music searching. Librarians must be vigilant to present catalogs and discovery tools in the most useful way to patrons.

INTRODUCTION

The recent advent of discovery tools as an adjunct to classic catalogs in libraries is an attempt to simplify and broaden the search process. In providing a search experience that is more Google-like, the

goal is to be all things for all people. But, just as the laws of Newtonian physics fail at the edges of time and space, so the discovery tool fails at the edges of searching. Music is one such edge.

A straightforward catalog objective, suggested by Ralph Papakhian in the article “Music Librarianship at the Turn of the Century: Cataloging” (Papakhian, 2000, p. 587), is to be able to find

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and clearly display what works a library has by a composer. Are discovery tools able to fulfill this objective? Using four discovery tools, Encore, EBSCO Discovery Service™ (EDS), Primo®, and WorldCat® Local, the present chapter explores why music is challenging to search and what kind of searching will make the process most efficient and complete. It finds that discovery tool interfaces are not able to find and clearly display what works a library has by a composer.

Discovery tools make searching and finding music problematic for three major reasons:

1. An incomplete or nonexistent use of the authority file
2. A display by the title published on the item, not by the uniform title
3. Search results that connect information from different fields when the patron needed the information to appear in one field

BACKGROUND

For the present topic it is important to understand both the theoretical basis for the uniform title and, more pragmatically, how the uniform title has been used by music cataloging librarians over time. Sherry Vellucci and Richard Smiraglia address these areas in a number of publications. Vellucci has focused on relationships in music catalogs and on the future of music metadata, though she was writing before the advent of discovery tools. In 2001 she noted:

Research has shown that because of the complex nature of music and the documents in which music is represented, there is a high proportion of relatedness among musical bibliographic entities, and the bibliographic families created by this relatedness are complex. Authority control is needed, therefore, in order to help users understand the relationships among musical works and their many instantiations and to facilitate

the discovery and retrieval of related items and works. (Vellucci, 2001, p. 551)

Vellucci continues “With the traditional success factors now mitigating against successful authority control in the global metadata environment, the collective information organization communities must work together to develop new methods to ensure the success of authority control” [(Vellucci, 2001, p. 553)].

Smiraglia taught a generation of music catalogers with his book, the most recent edition of which is entitled *Describing music materials: a manual for descriptive cataloging of printed and recorded music, music videos, and archival music collections: for use with AACR2 and APPM* (1997). A recent book, *Bibliographic control of music, 1897-2000* (2006) gives a bibliographic overview and an essay on more than a century of music cataloging. Earlier Smiraglia (1989) noted that “The history of music cataloging is essentially the story of the search for solutions to the problems of identifying, collocating and distinguishing musical works” (Smiraglia, 1989, p.98). In this article, he counted the multiple manifestations of musical works in a sample (over 80% had multiple manifestations) and the variation of titles in the sample. “Works with distinctive titles averaged 15 manifestations that carried 3 different titles proper. Works with generic titles averaged 35 manifestations on which 11 different titles proper were found” (Smiraglia, 1989, p.106). He concluded that “an authority-controlled collocating device is necessary for musical works” (Smiraglia, 1989, p.97).

In an article in *Notes* entitled “Music Librarianship at the Turn of the Century: Cataloging,” Ralph Papakhian wrote, “the music library community has been unsuccessful in communicating the difficulties or requirements of music cataloging relative to books or periodicals” (Papakhian, 2000, p. 584). Looking to the future, he said “I predict that this new Babel of metadatabases and ILSs will eventually lead to a renewed call for

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