

What Systems User Groups Need to Hear from Music Librarians

Script for a Presentation to the Mountain-Plains Chapter
of the Music Library Association,
The DoubleTree Hotel, Albuquerque, N.M., May 16, 1997

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Good afternoon, everybody. First let me clarify that by "system user groups" I mean primarily anyone that attends a system user group conference. By extension, we could include those who participate in a user group by other means, such as electronic discussion lists. But I have in mind those who attend the annual meetings. As most of you will probably know, although most of you will probably not have attended such a meeting, issues are discussed at these conferences that range from system-specific technical ones such as how the computer manipulates bits and bytes, through practical ones such as how the catalogers manage their bibliographic records and how circulation staff deal with checkout procedures, through such humanistic concerns as providing reference service in the online environment.

I'd like to tell you briefly how come I got to go to a systems user group in the first place. I was music cataloger at Ball State University from 1990 till 1993. Ball State used the NOTIS system for cataloging and circulation. One day Dick Griscom posted a message saying that he'd been approached by the chair of the NOTIS Users Group's Cataloging and Authorities Special Interest Group asking if anyone would like to present on music cataloging in a session on cataloging at the NOTIS Users Group Meeting the following Fall. I had already wanted to go to NUGM in the hopes of learning more about the system. And I thought, "There are bound to be lots of folks far better qualified than me who will want to do it. But I really want the opportunity to go to NUGM, and so I'll volunteer anyway." Well, it turned out that I was the only volunteer, and so I got the job without any problem and much to my surprise. [1:40]

Between 1993 and 1995 I attended NUGM three times, and in each case I gave a presentation that was oriented to the non-specialist in music. In each case I wound up having a session mostly to myself, and I had about forty-five minutes in which to speak. The first two sessions were sponsored by the Cataloging and Authorities Special Interest Group, and for the third the NOTIS Music Users Group sponsored a session. I presented quite different talks each time, in the first two dealing with specifically cataloging issues such as music uniform titles and MARC tagging, and in the third, in which I received considerable assistance from Nancy Nuzzo who was chair of the NMUG that year, we dealt with a fuller range of music-related issues such as collection development, binding and circulation.

To outline what I'll be talking about this afternoon: first I'll talk about music and how it is present in libraries and library collections. I'll then discuss quite a number of cataloging issues, displaying overheads that I prepared for the second of my presentations. After that I'll consider some of the physical aspects of music such as how users handle the materials, and the implications for binding, and how that affects circulation. A substantial part of my talk today will be lifted directly from my third NUGM presentation, to give you a sense of the flavor of what I said. There is plenty more that could be said. And most of what I do say, you will already know yourselves. My purpose is to bring into focus how the systems user groups can benefit from hearing from each of us, and to show how great an opportunity these conferences are to provide a little education in musical matters and bring our concerns as music librarians to an appreciative audience.

On then to a few words about music. For many people, music is a fact of life which has a profound element of mystery about it. Like religion, music is "separate" or "set apart" in

some way from the rest of human experience. It has special "high priests" called musicians, who minister and intercede on behalf of ordinary mortals. Ladies and gentlemen, this should not be so! Music should not be an inaccessible, mysterious, mystical entity, but an ordinary, everyday matter, accessible by the general population with no greater difficulty than, say, a poem by Wordsworth or a novel by Agatha Christie. At the same time, some aspects of music will eventually require some kind of special attention, for example in cases where a bibliographic record needs adjusting to provide an appropriate added entry for the work on side two of an album, or when you need to ascertain whether someone wants to either study a work of chamber music or play it with a group. The generalist librarian should be aware of the special situations that we have to deal with, and know when to seek help. In this context, the music librarian's involvement with a system user group serves two purposes. We help to integrate the consideration of music in its rightful place as a humanities discipline along with all others; at the same time, we make available to other librarians the specialist knowledge that we can offer them. If you really wanted to get pushy, you could point out to your audience that if they don't read music then they are illiterate, but you may prefer to take a more diplomatic approach.

The primary manifestation of music is the sounds themselves -- and one can encourage other librarians to introduce music into the library building in the form of concerts. These can serve as a lure for a tour of the facilities and collections, as well as for bibliographic instruction in the use of the online catalog, and so forth. I recommend that you encourage generalist librarians to invite composers on the faculty to create works that will take advantage of the architectural features of the building, just as did the Venetian composers of the seventeenth century. This kind of activity can lead to competitions, festivals, and the like, and result in your institution netting foundation grant money for its

collections. In the interests of time, I must leave this idea to your creative imagination.

[5:00]

In the library collection, music is found in secondary manifestations: the notation, and sound recordings. Many librarians will not readily grasp the great variety in which each of these manifestations may be represented in the collections. Print and manuscript music comes in all shapes and sizes, from monumental sets to single sheets. Here is a question for you that can perplex someone without specialized knowledge: What is a "score?"

Music librarians know that this term has both strict and loose applications, as when on the one hand we discriminate between music written for one performer and that written for an ensemble; but on the other hand we refer to both types as "the scores collection." This usage can confuse the non-specialist working in a technical mode, and requires clarification. The term "part" can be even more confusing. Describing all the various editions in which notation for a musical work can be published is an important educational function. Doing so has particular relevance at a systems user group meeting, because attendees, once made cognizant of these various manifestations, can watch for them in their online system and determine how well the system handles this variety. Is it immediately apparent to the user, for instance, when a miniature score and a full score are displayed in an index or in brief records, which is which?

The same applies to recordings: we have the 33 1/3 rpm disc, which can come in mono, stereo, or quadraphonic versions. Some discs rotate at other speeds. Furthermore there are cassettes, cartridges, reel-to-reel tapes, compact discs, piano rolls, and so forth. Some sound recordings are published which deliberately omit one instrument so that someone who plays that instrument can play along with the rest of the ensemble. Items with a visual component can be packaged as motion pictures, video recordings, interactive multimedia; and these may represent visually either the onstage drama of an opera or

stage play with music, or the activity of non-acting musical performers, or a simultaneous display of the musical score. Dealing with this range of variety is second nature to music librarians, but if you present a list like this to those who attend a systems user group meeting, it may be the first time that an attendee has had this wide range of factors brought to his or her attention. [7:30]

In most online systems, the bibliographic record is at the heart. Consequently, cataloging concerns are of great importance. And since music has so many specific concerns, if you are a music cataloger then you should certainly consider attending your user group and bringing these concerns to the attention of your non-musical colleagues.

At this stage I'd like to run briefly through some of the overheads I prepared for my presentation in 1994 which was titled "Managing Music Records in NOTIS," and point out to you in passing why these represent situations that a non-music specialist could find confusing.

OVERHEAD 1

The author and title fields for an album containing several musical works. Tomita is indeed the author of some of the works on this album, but that's not why he gets main entry status. This is a case of principal performer as main entry. You might note that one could have added subfield 4 "prf" or "itr" to the 100 field. In some systems doing so can affect the display, for example by being translated into more user-friendly terminology, or in how titles are listed under an author's name in an index screen. Also note the "Vol. 2" designation, which might have been put in subfield n. Many institutions will have a policy of not providing separate bibliographic records for a

volume 2. But for music when you have a lot of individual works on an album, and wish to provide a contents note and/or analytical added entries, separate records may be preferable.

OVERHEAD 2 [9:10]

This overhead shows a specific problem in that you see the string of characters 33 p1 s/ b3 srpm. This is how the NOTIS system handled superscript and subscript characters! Of course it's completely meaningless to the users; but you don't have to be a user -- there's a fairly good chance a cataloger will see information in a record like this and simply give up hope of understanding about music. Systems people need to know to do some sort of conversion on data like this.

OVERHEAD 3

Many people working with music won't know what the significance of having two subject headings, one with and the other without the word "Arranged". Catalogers should know what music headings can be constructed in the LCSH system, following the guidelines in Instruction Sheet H 1917.5 of the Subject Cataloging Manual.

OVERHEAD 4

Here is an excerpt from a contents note. Bear in mind that the kind of lengthy contents notes that describe all the works in a musical album are rarely found for other types of material. This one mentions two works, the derived work by Tomita and the original by J.S. Bach.

OVERHEAD 5

Here is the first of two added entries - the analytic added entry for the work contained in the album. (Note the omission of the definite article in subfield t - a lot of people have to be told about that.)

OVERHEAD 6 [10:40]

And the simple added entry for the related work. This handout was made three years ago, and since then the second indicator value *i* has been made obsolete. Also, this field contains a subfield that is specific to music: subfield *m*. It also contains two subfields *n* that although they are not specific to music are nevertheless found more frequently for music than for most other types of material. In the first, we have the "BWV" number. This has been decided by the Library of Congress and recorded as a decision in the name authority record for the composer's name only (not the one for the name-title heading). Many generalist catalogers won't necessarily know where to find this information, nor what BWV stands for. The second subfield *n* contains the German abbreviation of the word for Number. Just reflect for a moment on how confusing this is for us, let alone for someone who knows no music librarianship! Furthermore, many of the decisions specific to music are recorded in the Music Cataloging Bulletin as Music Cataloging Decisions. Generalist catalogers are not likely to consult these. Library of Congress Rule Interpretations are as far as most catalogers are likely to look.

OVERHEAD 7

This field shows another example of something which, though it is found for other types of material, is more prevalent for music than for others. Use of subfield *p*. And instead

of designating the number of the movement, which is how the movements are colloquially identified, the record contains the tempo designation. Again, subfield n is used, but here there is only one subfield delimiter although there is clearly more than one numeric designation present. But is that as clear to the non-specialist as it is to us?

OVERHEAD 8 [12:30]

This one has all of the above and more: use of subfield o. And if you wish you can point out that the use of "arr." added to entries for musical works is the reverse of usage of the term "Arranged" in subject heading policy. You might have more success with your audience, however, by telling them that this means that the work played here is not in the medium for which the composer originally wrote.

OVERHEAD 9

Here we have a year in subfield n as a numerical qualifier. [But aren't years supposed to be put in subfield d, or f, or something?]

OVERHEAD 10

Here we have a number that's an integral part of the title rather than a numeric designation, so it doesn't get coded in subfield n.

OVERHEAD 11

Shouldn't this work be entered under the title "Mars", with a reference from the comprehensive work "Planets" with "Mars" as a subdivision? Here, AACR2 practice for

music is specifically opposed to treatment for other materials: Rule 25.6 is at variance with Rule 25.32. Music librarians all know that, but others could maybe use a refresher from time to time.

There are many, many instances in which music cataloging requires special awareness, the formulation of particular policies, and so forth, so that the catalog users can indeed access what they want. Uniform titles, for example. Many catalogs would not benefit by having titles collocated under, say, the Russian uniform title for Crime and Punishment:

OVERHEAD 12 [14:00]

But for musical works, as we know, they are quite essential. Smaller collections may manage to do without them, but if your catalog is to collocate works correctly then attention must be paid to uniform titles, together with any references that are needed to direct the user from variant forms.

OVERHEAD 17 (note: overheads 13-16 not shown)

And this applies just as much to the titles of parts of works:

OVERHEAD 18 [14:30]

Certain data that music librarians take for granted as essential, are viewed by non-specialists as peripheral or ancillary. The musical flat sign is an example. We know how important it is to discriminate between, say B and B flat. Furthermore, we know that the flat sign is used as a distinguishing element in a call number, to discriminate between

various works of the same composer. But place yourself in the position of a systems administrator who is performing the task of determining which signs and symbols will be legal in the display of a call number field. That person needs to know that the musical flat sign is not just to be found in printed music notation or musicological monographs. Among the options available are to have the flat sign display as such, or for its occurrence to be replaced by the spelled-out form of the word flat. [Personal communication]

The musical sharp sign has recently been admitted to the USMARC extended Latin set: MARBI approved it in March of 1994, but to my knowledge no further action to provide it in bibliographic records has been taken at this time. Sometimes the hatch sign has been used in its place. Hopefully it will eventually become possible for all hatch signs in subfield R in bibliographic records to be replaced on a global basis by musical sharp signs which will display either as the sign itself or the word "sharp" in displays in online systems. Music librarians should watch for an announcement from the Library of Congress, and if and when it happens, alert people both locally and within their systems group to make whatever modifications are recommended. [16:15]

I already mentioned subfield m as being specific to music. And one thing that music librarians need to watch for, and the participants of system user groups should be encouraged to look for as well, is that all the pertinent subfields for music do actually display as they are supposed to. I once encountered a situation in which subfield m did not display in the index of titles displayed under an author's name, and so Beethoven's 'cello sonata no. 4 displayed as "Sonatas, no. 4, op. 102, no. 1, C major." Many people won't see a problem with that because they will just assume that music catalogers have decided not to distinguish between the various media for which Beethoven wrote his sonatas -- which is quite an erroneous conclusion.

That concludes my section on cataloging concerns -- which, as you will have noticed, entails considerable interaction with systems librarians in particular, and is also of concern to librarians working in public service as they need to understand the MARC format as it applies to music and how to interpret bibliographic records for musical works. I move on now to the physical processing of musical materials, in particular, binding of musical scores and parts, and also barcoding of both printed music and sound recordings in preparation for circulation. I'm considering these both together, because of the close connection between the two, as well as the fact that music materials tend to get used in ways that are different from other types of materials. For example, for how many types of library materials does one person check out the item, then promptly disassemble it into two or three or four parts and distribute them to himself and his or her associates? Yet this is precisely what happens to performance parts of musical works. Furthermore, a performer will pencil in all sorts of annotations. Strictly speaking you could consider this as defacing of library materials, but for music materials such practices are to be expected as normal usage: and if the perpetrator goes on to fame and fortune the librarian will want to put the item in a special collection. Other instances of usage that systems user group attendees should know about is whether it will be held in the hand as with parts for a vocal chorus, or placed on a music stand as for instrumentalists; whether pages will be turned in mid-piece; and whether the entire item needs to be spread out for a synoptic view. Sometimes the pagination of a part is designed to minimize turning, with pages 1 and 2 in the centerfold and 3 and 4 on the outside (it certainly won't do to use conventional binding in this case.)

A work for one solo instrument and piano typically consists of one score, from which the pianist plays (the solo part is indicated above the piano part, often in a smaller type font); and one part, for the soloist. Binding is commonly done by binding the score and providing a pocket in which the part resides. The various parts of chamber music works

may be placed together in a folder (more recent practice is to do this), or may be separately bound (as is the older practice). Sets of small-scale vocal scores for choral works may be bound in a paper cover, or not at all, and are distributed to members of the choir.

Multiple copies of large-scale vocal scores for performance, such as Handel's Messiah, are more likely to be treated as such, but conceivably might be treated as a single monstrous entity, all thirty vocal scores checked out as one unit. Hopefully this isn't the case!

In each case, though, the question of the responsibility of the borrower for the safe return of the item must be addressed somehow. For example: suppose a pianist borrows a work for violin and piano, and entrusts the part to the violinist, who loses it. Who is responsible? Sometimes a faculty member checks out a work for a student to perform; what if the student loses the work? Circulation supervisors undoubtedly have a clear circulation policy for all library users; is this policy compatible with actual practice for music materials? If you provide separate barcodes and item records for the score and the part, then you can circulate each separately to each individual user, but your copy or volume holdings display will indicate two items rather than one. This kind of data and how it is displayed will vary by system, so it falls to the music librarian to investigate what is most appropriate for the local system and for local usage, and to make recommendations to systems people both locally and at the system user group.

Considering the physical processing of sound recordings: Some libraries may wish to split up "monster publications," for example, there is a single published set called "The complete symphonies of Haydn." All 104 of them, on 42 LP discs. Is your user to borrow the entire set? Actually this huge set is issued in ten boxes, each containing about four discs, and each box can circulate individually. Your circulation system may allow this to happen. But it still might be in your users' interests for you to subdivide a box containing

several disks and circulate each one separately. That's a policy decision for each library to make.

Some record albums contain several works, in some cases even by different composers. In such cases it used to be the case that separate bibliographic records were prepared for each work. So -- can one check out just side one of an album? The answer to this question, technically, is yes -- if you have separate bibliographic records! Side one can be checked out but not side two. (I've seen as many as five separate bibliographic records for one disc.) Two options are available to librarians here. One is to control circulation from an item record attached to just one bibliographic record and indicate, by means of a note in the records that represent each of the other works, that circulation status is to be found on the one record. Another solution is to purge your database of such situations by recataloging each case with one bibliographic record for the whole album. All these are solutions to problems that many librarians may just have put on the back burner for want of knowing whom to ask. [22:10]

To wind up this presentation, I have some thoughts on how my presentations have been received. On reflection I'd say that the most appreciative section of the audience was the catalogers. There is so much that one can say about cataloging music, and there are many generalist catalogers, in particular database management and authority control librarians, who very much welcome hearing about the details of music cataloging from an expert. And to them, anyone who is a music librarian is an expert! But we have plenty to offer to other specializations such as inter-library loans and community outreach, bibliographic instruction librarians and reference services, circulation supervisors and acquisitions personnel. A wide open field is out there waiting for music librarians to take advantage of these opportunities. If you can get a slot in a user group session in one of these areas to make a presentation on a musical

topic, people will get to hear you who would otherwise never consider attending a session that was designated as "about music."

Finally, it's not necessary to become a system expert in order to be a presenter at a system user group! In fact, with any luck, when you give a presentation to a user group, some of those experts will be present in your audience and will make comments during your question and answer period at the end, or have a quiet word with you afterwards. You can wind up knowing more when you leave the room than when you went in, about why a particular feature displays the way it does, and so forth. Which is yet another reason to speak at a user group. Also, I've noticed a tendency among the audiences for repeat attendees, and they have been not only appreciative but also very helpful. To benefit most from this fact, don't just go once to a system user group meeting! Go repeatedly to the user groups and get to know the people there. They'll get to know you too! If you work in an academic library, this is an excellent opportunity for service and scholarship, as well as to travel and meet people. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. [24:00]

Projections for presentation, "What Systems User Groups Need to Hear from Music Librarians"

OVERHEAD 1

100/10: #a Tomita, Isao, #d1932-

245/12: #a A voyage through his greatest hits, vol. 2 #h [sound recording] / #c electronically created by Isao Tomita.

OVERHEAD 2

300/1: : #a 1 sound disc : #b analog, 33 p1 s/ b3 srpm, stereo. ; #c 12 in.

OVERHEAD 3

650/1: 0: #a Electronic music, Arranged

650/2: 0: #a Electronic music

OVERHEAD 4

505/2: 0: #a ... -- The sea named Solaris (based on Three-part invention no. 2) / J.S. Bach-Tomita -- ...

OVERHEAD 5

700/2:12: #a Tomita, Isao, #d 1932- #t Sea named Solaris

OVERHEAD 6

700/3:11: #a Bach, Johann Sebastian, #d 1685-1750. #t Inventions, #m harpsichord, #n BWV 787-801. #n Nr. 2

OVERHEAD 7

700/9:11: #a Prokofiev, Sergey, #d 1891-1953. #t Symphonies, #n no. 6, op. 111. #p Allegro moderato.

OVERHEAD 8

700/5:12: #a Debussy, Claude, #d 1862-1918. #t Preludes, #m piano, #n book 1. #p Fille aux cheveux de lin; #o arr.

OVERHEAD 9

700/15:12: #a Stravinsky, Igor, #d 1882-1971. #t Zhar-ptitsa. Suite #n (1919). #p Final; #o arr.

OVERHEAD 10

700/10:12: #a Honegger, Arthur, #d 1892-1955. #t Pacific 231; #o arr.

OVERHEAD 11

700/4:12: #a Holst, Gustav, #d 1874-1934. #t Planets. #p Mercury; #o arr.

OVERHEAD 17

MUSSORGSKY, MODEST PETROVICH, 1839-1881. PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

*Search under: MUSSORGSKY, MODEST PETROVICH, 1839-1881. KARTINKI S VYSTAVKI

OVERHEAD 18

MUSSORGSKY, MODEST PETROVICH, 1839-1881. HUT ON FOWLS LEGS

*Search under: MUSSORGSKY, MODEST PETROVICH, 1839-1881. KARTINKI S VYSTAVKI BALET
NEVYLUPIBSHIKHSIA PTENTSOV