How Do Music Faculty Look For Library Materials?

Lisa Shiota, Library of Congress

Introduction

Abstract

How do university faculty members in the music department use the library's online catalog (OPAC) to find music materials for themselves or for their students? Interviews, done in February 2012, of four performance faculty members from the University of Maryland School of Music reveal the wide range of materials they search for, and the limitations of the system in being able to find like items in different formats. Faculty members' assumptions of the capabilities of a search provide insight into possibilities for how OPACs can be re-designed or re-configured for more accurate hits and better discovery of similar items.

OPAC

The integrated library system (ILS) for the University of Maryland is Aleph (http://www.exlibris.co.il/category/Aleph). WorldCat Local also exists side-by-side with Aleph at http://www.lib.umd.edu/. This study looked only at usage of the Aleph public interface ("classic" catalog).

Faculty members are not specifically given any workshops or tutorials on how to use the OPAC. There is in-class instruction for students, for which the faculty are almost always present.

Piano

Associate Professor of Piano

Looking for:

Scores, recordings, books, dissertations, online journals.

Search Strategies:

Advanced search by composer, title, specific work by opus number. Unsuccessful attempt at narrowing search by edition.

Method of Retrieving Items:

After searching in the OPAC, goes to the library and finds music by call number. Asks librarians for help if needed.

Thoughts on Improving the Catalog:

Would like to see duration of pieces on recordings, links from catalog to a digitized score or audio file to read/listen directly.

Violin

Associate Professor of Violin

Looking for:

Scores, recordings, books (biographies, theoretical works).

Search Strategies:

Advanced search by composer, title, specific work by catalog number. Although only 2 items were found on the OPAC, going to the stacks where these were located revealed several more titles on the shelf.

Method of Retrieving Items:

After searching in the OPAC, goes to the library and find music by call number. Also uses the university's portal (http://researchport.umd.edu) to look for journal articles, Naxos Music Library, YouTube, for sound recordings; and IMSLP (International Music Score Library Project- http://imslp.org) for scores.
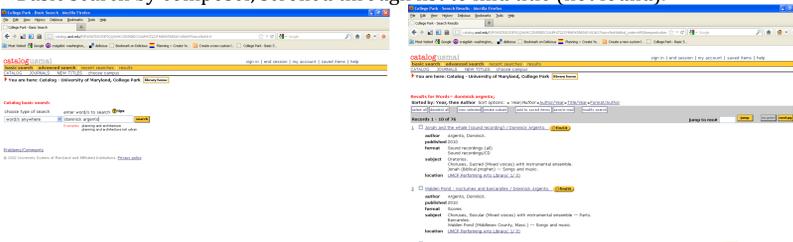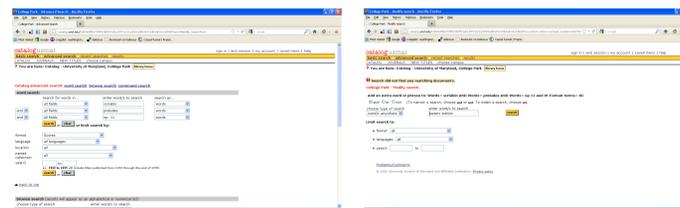
Voice

Professor of Voice

Looking for:

Vocal literature: scores, recordings, DVDs.

Search Strategies:

Basic search by composer, scrolled through list to find title (not found).

Method of Retrieving Items:

Asks library staff to retrieve and place on hold for herself or for her students. Will mostly buy her own materials and lend them to her students. Will also look for recordings on YouTube.

Thoughts on Improving the Catalog:

Would like to see contents notes, lists of performers, song subjects, direct links to recordings. Would also like to be able to search opera performances done through the School of Music and have them be available online.
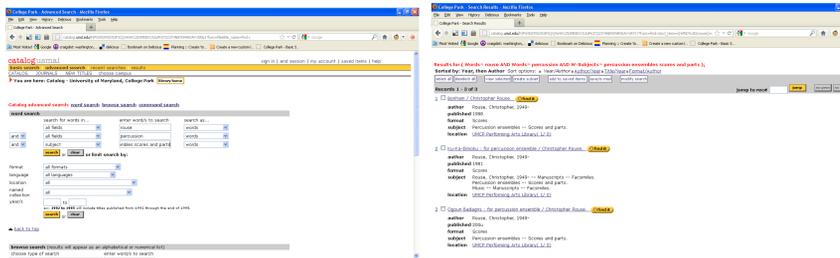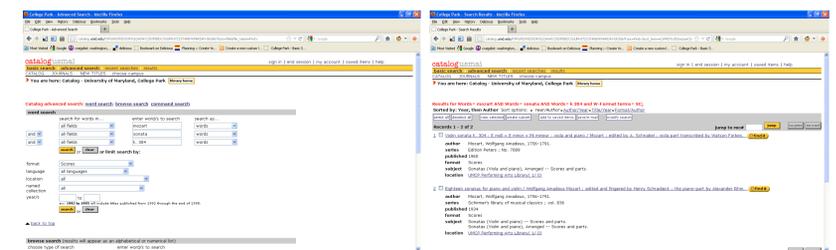
Percussion

Lecturer of Percussion

Looking for:

Music for percussion ensembles.

Search Strategies:

Advanced search by composer, title, subject heading search for scores and parts.

Method of Retrieving Items:

After searching in the OPAC, goes to the library and finds music by call number. Also goes to library to copy articles that are not online (mostly music education). Will buy scores for himself, and will also ask library to scores that are difficult to obtain. Also uses the university's portal (http://researchport.umd.edu) to look for journal articles, and Naxos Music Library.

Conclusions

❖ Music faculty look for specific items, knowing the title, composer, opus/catalog number, edition, and publisher, and thus will often use the advanced search mode in an online catalog.

❖ They will look for more than one type of format (score, CD, etc.) for the same work.

❖ They do not do broader searches for music within a particular genre.

❖ They rarely do a search for subject headings.

❖ They will use other sites (YouTube, Amazon, IMSLP, etc.) to find items.

❖ They would like the interface to provide as much detail as possible—contents, duration, performers' names, etc.

❖ Interoperability between formats is often desired.

❖ They will look for related materials, such as journal articles, concert reviews.

❖ They will often purchase music themselves rather than checking it out from the library.