

I am a music librarian at a college/university who has been asked to teach a class on the basics of score finding for a freshman music course. I will give a brief overview of how to search for scores in the library catalog, one of the library databases—Classical Scores Library, and the public domain site IMSLP.org. The overview will include creating search terms, how to perform a Boolean search, brief “tours” of each site, and example searches. I will provide a handout for each student with information on each resource as well as my contact information and the library hours.

Where to Begin

- Know what you need:
 - The title of the work/piece?
 - The Composer’s name and how to spell it?
 - If you are unsure of the spelling, remember, Google is your friend. ☺
 - Instrumentation?
 - Orchestral, single instrument or ensemble, voice, etc.
 - What type of score you’re looking for?
 - Conductor, piano accompaniment, solo instrument, arrangement, etc.

Start with the Library Catalog

The best place to start is your library’s online catalog. (For the purposes of this lesson, we will use the UNCG catalog.)

- 1.) Go to the library homepage: library.uncg.edu
- 2.) Find the search bar at the top of the page and choose advanced search.

- a. Unfortunately, you cannot choose the music library right from the start, but using the advanced search, you can.
- 3.) Type at least the title into the “Title” search. If you know the composer, type his/her name into the “Author” search.
- 4.) Go to the “Narrow Your Search” box.
- 5.) Select “Schiffman Music Library” in the “Limit to” box, and choose “Musical score” as the format.
- 6.) Search for your score.

If UNCG’s music library has a copy of the score, either in print or electronically, it should show up near the top of the results pool. If you cannot find it, you can play with the parameters on the left side of the screen, e.g. language, year, format, etc. If you still have an issue, you may go back to the search bar at the top of the page and change the “Libraries to search” parameter to “Libraries Worldwide.”

*You may find a copy in another library searching “Libraries Worldwide,” and you can try to Interlibrary Loan it. However, many institutions do not loan music materials. You can still try, but it may be difficult to obtain. If there is a copy in the UNC library system, and they are unwilling to lend it, you can go to the library in person to use the score.

Example Search:

We will use the above method to search for a piece entitled, *Adagio for Strings*. For now, let’s assume that we do not know the name of the composer. I ask the students to guide me through the steps I have given them to find the piece. Assuming they guide me correctly, we should reach a results page with *Adagio for Strings* held by UNCG Libraries as the first option. Here I

will point out the composer, Samuel Barber, and the call number they would use to find it in the music library: M1145.B25 OP.11.

Now a Database

I will then move into using an online database, to which UNCG has access, for a second way to find scores. We will use Classical Scores Library.

- 1.) We will start with the Music Research Guide, which you will find useful throughout your course of study. <http://uncg.libguides.com/mus>
 - a. This can also be found by clicking the “Research Guides by Subject” link on the bottom of the search bar on the library homepage. Then scroll down and choose Music.
- 2.) Click the “Scores” tab.
- 3.) The first link is to the database we want, “Classical Scores Library.”
- 4.) When you have arrived on the page you will see a search bar at the top, a list of what we have access to through UNCG, and what has been recently added to the database. On the left side of the screen you will see ways to narrow down your search: Browsing, Time Periods, and Composers.

Let's jump right in!

Example Search:

Let's say you want to find Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*. You only remember the name, not the number. Let's start with the search bar. Here we will do a Boolean search. In a Boolean search you can put “AND” in between terms to narrow a search, or “OR” in between terms to broaden a

search. “AND” will find the specific work by the composer where “OR” will look for the title or anything composed by or about Beethoven.

I guide the class through the search, “Beethoven AND Eroica.” We get a list of three results. I ask the students to tell me which one we should choose. The correct answer is the second result. The first result is a piano reduction of Beethoven’s 3rd arranged by Franz Liszt, and the third result is a different Beethoven work that happens to be in the same key. I then point out that the students can further narrow down their searches using the drop-down categories on the left side of the screen.

Finally, a Public Domain Virtual Library

Lastly, I will show the class IMSLP or Petrucci Music Library. I explain that IMSLP is a virtual score library filled with mostly classical music that is in the public domain.

- Public domain is defined as something that is available to the public as a whole and is therefore not subject to copyright.

We can either go to www.imslp.org, or Google “IMSLP.” On the left side of the screen you have browsing options for both scores and recordings. The search bar is in the center of the page; however, we will not use the search bar this time. For future reference, IMSLP uses Google as its search host, but the results will take you back to the website.

Example Search:

You want to find an overture by Felix Mendelssohn, but all you can remember is that it shares a title with a Shakespearean play. You are also unsure how to spell Mendelssohn.

- 1.) Choose the “Composers” link under the Browse options.
- 2.) Find the M’s and choose “Maz” as “Me” comes before “Mi,” which is the next option.

- 3.) Scroll until you see “Mendelssohn, Felix” on the bottom of the left column; choose his link.
- 4.) You see he only has one page of works, so scan through until you see “A Midsummer Night’s Dream, overture, Op. 21.”
- 5.) Click on the link, and you will see a list of what is on the page: Full scores, arrangements and transcriptions, and recordings.
- 6.) Choose the type of score you need and click the link.
- 7.) Once you click on the score, you will need to agree to the disclaimer.
- 8.) Wait 15 seconds, unless you want to buy a subscription to IMSLP (which is unnecessary), and your score will appear in pdf form.

To Sum Up

There are many ways to find scores, and these are just a few. These resources are explained and on the handout I have given you, and I have provided the URLs for you. If you want to learn more about these resources, or need any help in the future, please stop by the reference desk in the music library or contact me or any of the other music librarians.

References

Classical Scores Library. Accessed April 5, 2016. Alexander Street Press.

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