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Title

Many Pathways for Discovery: Describing Music Resources Using Faceted Vocabularies

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8g48z798>

Journal

Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print)

ISSN

0163-9374

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Publication Date

2024

DOI

10.1080/01639374.2024.2420075

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Peer reviewed



**Many Pathways for Discovery: Describing Music Resources
Using Faceted Vocabularies, by Casey A. Mullin.**

Journal:	<i>Cataloging & Classification Quarterly</i>
Manuscript ID	WCCQ-2024-1527
Manuscript Type:	Book Review

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Manuscripts

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3 ***Many Pathways for Discovery: Describing Music Resources Using Faceted Vocabularies***, by
4 Casey A. Mullin. Middleton, Wisconsin: Music Library Association and A-R Editions, 2024. xii,
5 156 p. ISBN: 978-0-89579-911-1. \$125.00
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9 *Many Pathways for Discovery: Describing Music Resources Using Faceted Vocabularies*, part
10 of the Music Library Association's "Technical Reports and Monographs in Music Librarianship
11 Series," is primarily a manual for applying faceted terms to music materials, written by one of
12 the experts on the topic, Casey Mullin. Most of the book is in a handbook style, outlining
13 guidelines for applying the Library of Congress faceted vocabularies (chiefly the Library of
14 Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT) and the Library of Congress Medium of Performance
15 Thesaurus (LCMPT)) to all kinds of music materials. It also touches on the Library of Congress
16 Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT) and chronological and geographic data, but the focus is
17 more on the music-specific situations.
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20 Appearing frequently throughout the handbook-style chapters are the valuable "LCSH
21 comparison" and "Retrospective implementation note" asides. These additions point out the
22 differences in practice between the way music has been described using the Library of Congress
23 Subject Headings (LCSH) and the "new" (now ten years old!) faceted vocabularies; as well as
24 the things that must be taken into consideration when automatically generating faceted terms
25 from existing legacy data. The focus on retrospective implementation is imperative—as
26 catalogers, we are often required to reckon with our older data, and this is one of those cases. As
27 Mullin puts it, "the faceted approach to content analysis [is] complex and disruptive enough that
28 the mere toleration of older practices, and the intermingling of new and old, will not sufficiently
29 serve user outcomes." Mullin's perspective on this is refreshing; he threads the needle between
30 an overly detailed pursuit of perfect metadata and an overly simplified pursuit of "good enough,"
31 with the apparent goal of making this all actually work *well*.
32

33
34 The chapters on instrumental and vocal music (i.e., art music) are comprehensive,
35 building on the foundation of existing best practices and adding context, analysis, and dozens of
36 examples. The reader is guided through describing music for one solo instrument, chamber
37 music, instrumental ensembles, solo voices, and vocal ensembles. There is substantial guidance
38 on term choice, MARC coding (especially of the complicated 382 field), and special cases that
39 come up frequently in music cataloging.
40

41 A chapter on popular and folk music is less detailed. It would have been interesting to see
42 a deeper dive into these idioms, especially since popular music tends to bring up thought-
43 provoking quandaries that are not addressed here. (When does an emerging subgenre become an
44 established genre? Is medium of performance still important for access when nearly everything is
45 synthesized and processed?) Metadata practitioners who primarily work with popular music may
46 not find answers to their questions here.
47

48 The final handbook-style chapter goes over content type aspects, a topic that overlaps
49 somewhat with descriptive cataloging. This section is short but has an especially helpful table
50 comparing RDA terms, genre/form terms, and fixed field codes for format of notated music.

51 The last two chapters (co-written with Kevin Kishimoto) shift gears; they are less
52 prescriptive and more exploratory. Mullin and Kishimoto give a short overview of non-MARC
53 encoding standards and outline how this faceted data works in Linked Data applications,
54 including the Performed Music Ontology. (Spoiler: somewhat easily for most aspects; with great
55 difficulty for medium of performance!) The book ends with a discussion of discovery
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possibilities, notably the impressive work that the Orbis Cascade Alliance has done to implement faceted access in their Primo VE implementation.

Being mostly practical, the book does not lean in too far to the philosophical and ethical aspects of assigning categories to works—instead it guides users through application of vocabularies, coming from a clearly experienced and knowledgeable perspective. Packed with examples and tables, it is an excellent addition to the literature, and should be a helpful guide both to experienced music catalogers and those newer to the task. The attention to retrospective implementation throughout is especially valuable—future-focused but mindful of our duty of continuing stewardship for our legacy data.

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