GUITAR MUSIC IN COLLECTIONS: A New Web-based Index Is Launched. Copublished with “THE WAY WE WERE: A Review of Early Efforts to Find Classical Guitar Music in Collections.” (See www.guitarfoundation.org/page/SbS03)

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Is there any really good way to locate specific pieces of guitar music within published collections and anthologies? Might there be already a best way? Anyone who has taught or studied classical guitar is familiar with collections like Das Gitarrespiel or the Noad anthologies. But it is hard to remember with accuracy which pieces are in which of these editions or in dozens of others like them. Library and trade catalogs are not of much help. What is needed for this problem is in-depth indexing rather than traditional cataloging. As a music reference librarian, I have begun working on an online solution to this problem. If it is widely accepted, supported, and used, it should give us all precisely the tool we need.

Titled Classical Guitar Music in Printed Collections and published online at <http://guitarmusicincollections.com>, my index (hereafter CGMPC) is and will remain a free and open-access resource for any and all guitarists and students of the guitar and its repertoire. It is already up and running.

Background—Song Indexes

In the world of vocal music, there have long been published indexes to help performers and teachers locate particular songs hidden away in anthologies and collections. Minnie Earl Sears’ 1926 Song Index and its 1934 Supplement list the contents of 368 such volumes. Already in the 1920s, music librarians were devising ways for singers to locate—to make “discoverable” in library jargon—the songs they desired. Several decades later, in 1966, Desiree de Charms and Paul F. Breed indexed 411 other song collections, published after 1940, under the title Songs in Collections: An Index.

Thomas Goleeke’s 1984 Literature for Voice: An Index to Songs in Collections and Sourcebook for Teachers of Singing indexed a more modest 58 collections, but included the key and range of each song, along with a bibliography of instructional literature and a discography of particular relevance to voice students. Goleeke later produced a second volume covering 72 more collections published through 2000.

These efforts focused on art songs. A different area of the vocal literature was addressed by Patricia Pate Havlice in her 1975 Popular Song Index, indexing 301 collections of “folk songs, pop tunes, spirituals, hymns, children’s songs, sea shanteys and blues.” Havlice followed up with supplements in 1978 and 1984, adding 72 and 156 collections respectively.

Computerization

These print indexes of song anthologies and collections have more recently been supplemented by a number of Web-based resources that are designed to satisfy the same need. The online format has the obvious advantage that it can be updated as often as its creators may wish, and if properly maintained, it will never go out of date. Indeed, we may have already come to the end of the era of print indexes to the ever-expanding world of music scores in collections.

Margaret Kaus describes in a 2006 article how, as long ago as 1980, the University of Tennessee began creating its own local index with the help of a mainframe computer. The UT Song Index was later made available as a searchable online database, and is accessible in that form still. Her article also describes ten more online song indexes that had been created to fill the gaps left by the obsolescence of existing print indexes.

The “discoverability” of particular titles in an online database via Google (or other Web-based) searches is not 100% reliable. Search engines cannot “crawl” and index a database in the same way they do a static website. The page that displays the answers to a database query does not have an independent existence; it is dynamically generated in response to a unique request.

In response to this challenge, engineers have devised ways to systematically query online databases and index the results, which is one reason that results from the online vendor Amazon.com are so often prominent in the first page of results of a search executed with Google, the dominant keyword search engine today. However, not all database designs are compatible with this approach. For example, the UT Song Index described by Kaus is implemented in such a way that its content is discoverable with Google, as a simple query using the Google “site:” operator will confirm. A similar song index maintained by Arizona State University, the ASU Song Index, is not.
Background—Index to Other Repertoires

In addition to song repertoire, another area where indexing is relatively advanced is that of critical (scholarly) editions. These include both “collected works” editions devoted to a single composer, such as the *New Mozart-Ausgabe*, and so-called “monumental” editions like *Musica Britannica* or *Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst*. These large and imposing editions, along with the creation of scholarly thematic catalogs, formed the core of musicological endeavor in the first, or “positivistic,” phase of the discipline, as experts labored to bring to light the great music of the distant past in reliable critical editions. Later they applied the same critical tools and procedures to more modern music, bringing out performance scores typically called Urtext editions, based on the earliest available sources. Thematic catalogs, like Wolfgang Schmieder’s well-known *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* (“BWV”), were (and remain) the tools of choice in identifying those early sources.¹⁰

A genre closely related to these two is that of historical series and sets, devoted to shedding the same critical light on more narrowly circumscribed and less-known areas of the repertoire.¹¹ Though musicology has developed many new branches and subdisciplines in recent decades, this fundamental work still goes on. Many projected score series are not yet complete, and new ones are initiated from time to time.

These three types of critical editions together make up the non-circulating “reference” section of a typical music library score collection. They are a place where music students often fear to tread; such large collections can be quite difficult to navigate. Fortunately, there are tools available to help us find our way. “Collected works” editions are usually indexed at the end of the corresponding entry for the same composer in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. As helpful as this may be, the most recent edition of the *New Grove* is now sixteen years old, and its indexing of newer collected works editions is correspondingly out of date. Since the *New Grove* is now available as an online resource, it is unlikely that we can look forward to a third print edition. Unfortunately, the works lists are not always kept current in the online version.

Collected works editions are also sometimes indexed in the appendices of monographs on individual composers. Thomas Heck’s books on Mauro Giuliani published since 1995¹² contain an itemized catalog of every piece by Giuliani, with and without opus numbers, appearing in the Tecla edition of Giuliani’s complete works. This kind of indexing, however, is only included in some monographs, and is only useful for the minority of composers who have been honored with “complete works” editions.

All three types of scholarly editions—collected, monumental, and serial—are indexed in Anna Harriet Heyer’s *Historical Sets, Collected Editions, and Monuments of Music*, which was for years the reference tool of choice for accessing their contents.¹³ First published in 1957, Heyer’s index managed to stay on top of the growth of this literature in ensuing decades by bringing out new editions in 1969 and 1980. In the years since 1980, however, the landscape has changed considerably. Much exists now that was never indexed by Heyer, including dozens of volumes of the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe and more than half the extant volumes of Telemann’s *Musikalische Werke*, among many others.¹⁴

A successor project to the Heyer was George Hill’s and Norris Stephens’ 1997 *Collected Editions, Historical Series and Sets, and Monuments of Music*.¹⁵ Where Heyer was published in two print volumes—an “index-to-the-index” and a “text” volume that actually indexed the content of the collections—Hill and Stephens was planned for release in a hybrid format, with a printed bibliography and an accompanying CDROM database.¹⁶ The CDROM was never produced, however, and the project was instead recast as a searchable online subscription database, now called *Index to Printed Music*.¹⁷ The online format makes the data updatable, and the parent publisher, EBSCO, makes an effort to keep the resource current. One drawback is that it can be accessed only by persons associated with an institution that subscribes to it. Individual subscriptions are not available. Another is that it is still, regrettably, incomplete. Book I of Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*, for instance, is indexed for its location in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, while Book II, for no apparent reason, is not.

Background—Previous Indexes to Guitar Music

Having reviewed the literature of vocal music collections and the literature of historical and collected critical editions, a look at comparable indexes for classical guitar music in collections shows that our music has not fared very well. This may have something to do with the sloppy way that particular pieces in collections have come under what librarians call “title authority control,” reflecting a collective failure to establish uniform versions of the titles of each piece. How many times, for instance, have we seen a composition by Fernando Sor given the title “Allegretto” in one collection and “Etude” in another, with no reference to opus number or other identification?¹⁸

Songs have the advantage of fixed titles and lyrics, for the most part, which means it is generally a straightforward task to identify a song using a combination of the composer and the title or first line. This makes it relatively easy to
Classical Guitar Music in Printed Collections.

Guitarists have had access to incipits in collections since the 1970s. Since then, established catalog numbers or other unique identifiers have been less than satisfying. The urgency of the problem is aggravated by the fact that many pieces are difficult or impossible to find outside of collections. Ricardo Iznaola’s Miniature No. 1 and Miniature no. 2, for example, are only published in Robert Brightmore’s series, Modern Times; and in the case of many lesser-known composers of the past, like the Czech composer Hansmaria Dombrowski or the Danish composer Frederik Rung, the few works they wrote for guitar are long out of print and survive only in collections.

It is not that indexing of the repertoire has never been attempted. Since the 1970s, guitarists have had access to a number of well-meaning indexes of their music. These include general ones such as Classical Guitar Music in Print and its 1998 Supplement, as well as the older Guitar Music Index, Gitarre-Musik: Ein internationaler Katalog, Guitarist’s Resource Guide, and the more recent Guitarist’s Repertoire Guide. These general works, however, are of limited or no use in identifying pieces in collections. Many of them fail to list the contents of collections at all; those that include them list their contents only under the collection titles, making it impossible to efficiently look up a specific composition.

In addition to these past indexing efforts, there are also more specialized bibliographies of the guitar’s repertoire. They include such titles as (listed chronologically): La guitare en concert: Catalogue des oeuvres avec guitare du XXe siècle, “Instrumental Chamber Music with Guitar in the Late Twentieth Century: A Bibliography,” Guitar and Lute Music in Periodicals, The Guitarist’s 20th Century Repertoire Guide / Guida al Repertorio della Chitarra nel Novecento, Guitar Music by Women Composers: An Annotated Catalog, and An Annotated Bibliography of Guitar Methods, 1760–1860. Each of these works achieves its own particular importance by shining a bright light on a specific part of the repertoire, but like the general works already examined, none is especially useful for locating compositions within collections.

What this tells us is that the need is real for a current, updatable, comprehensive index to classical guitar music in collections. Today, fortunately, a catalog or index can be published online more easily than on paper, and can be updated whenever new information comes to light.

Project Design Elements for CGMPC

It was when I examined an online bibliography and index of the United Nations Centre for Regional Development publications at <http://www.virtualref.com/uncrd> that I found a potential design solution to indexing collections of guitar music. This index of UN publications was created by Christopher Brown, the librarian charged with managing U.S. Government documents and information at the University of Denver. In essence, the design uses database software and HTML tags to create formatted reports for screen display. The results can be easily viewed in a web browser.

My index, entitled Classical Guitar Music in Printed Collections, is based on this model and has a three-part structure: a composer index, a works index, and a publication index. Users may begin by browsing the alphabetical composer index. There are headings under each composer’s name for different performing forces; compositions are listed alphabetically by title within each of those categories. Or they may choose to browse the works index, where works are listed alphabetically by title, then sorted by composer when there are multiple instances of the same title.

Both indexes include the same “gold standard” for musicians: a musical incipit image for each piece, digitally photographed from the collection where it is found (see Figures 1 and 2). If the same composition appears in several different collections, each occurrence will have its own incipit. The inclusion of incipits is the main feature that makes this index altogether different from most print precedents. Musical incipits are a defining feature of thematic catalogs, so it is fair to call CGMPC a thematic index of guitar music in collections.

Because of the space they would require if printed, digitized incipits are considerably more economical when provided in an online environment. As with the critical-scholarly thematic catalogs found on library shelves, the incipits in CGMPC allow a user to identify every piece with specificity and precision—no small matter when dealing with a large number of compositions with similar or identical titles.

Along with the incipit, each entry includes the composer and title of the piece, and the title and editor of the collection where it is found. In both the composer index and the works index, the collection title takes the form of a web link pointing to a corresponding listing in a third index, the publication index. Here the user will see a full citation for the collection referenced, along with the titles of all the pieces in that collection. The titles of the pieces
also take the form of web links, pointing the user back to the entry for each piece in the works index.

In a traditional print index, the user would at this point need to search a local library catalog for the collection title in question, or try to find a copy for purchase. CGMPC takes advantage of its online environment to facilitate this part of the process. In the publication index, the citation for each collection takes the form of a web link that brings the user directly to the global database of library holdings, WorldCat, which in turn informs the user of the nearest locations of copies of that collection.

It is common for WorldCat to have two or more cataloging records for the same item. Cataloging quality varies widely among WorldCat records. The WorldCat references provided in the CGMPC publication index (as stable “permalinks”) have all been reviewed and chosen for their professionalism and wide acceptance by peer libraries.

Armed with a reliable WorldCat permalink, users can seek to borrow a copy from a nearby institution if they do not already have the volume, or request one from an institution farther away through Interlibrary Loan. If the collection is available for purchase through a major online seller like Amazon or Barnes & Noble, a link in the WorldCat record will also allow the user to go directly to the corresponding entry on the appropriate commercial website.

Earlier I mentioned a number of online indexes to vocal literature, as described by Margaret Kaus. These are all structured as searchable databases, returning an answer in response to a query. CGMPC is significantly different. It is structured as a browsable index, made up of static pages a user can peruse according to any method she may wish, with or without random keyword searching. The familiar search functionality of web-browsing software can be used to locate a particular title or composer (or even an arranger) within one of the pages, by pressing the “control” and “F” keys together and entering a desired search term. Alternatively, a user can scroll back and forth through the ordered listings on each page, just to see what is there.

A browsable index like this has two advantages over a structured database. The first, and most obvious, is one’s ability to browse in the first place. A searchable database will, in the best of cases, return the information sought. But it is generally not capable of leading users to make new discoveries, revealing to them pieces they would not have searched for in the first place. The second advantage is greater visibility to keyword search engines like Google. We saw earlier that visibility to search engines of contents in an online database can vary: entries in a song index created by University of Tennessee can be found through Google, while entries in a similar index created by Arizona State University cannot. The mass of information invisible to search engines because it is hidden away in databases has been written about extensively by authors like Maureen Henninger and William Scheeran. By contrast, a static webpage is easy for web-crawlers to index, minimizing this problem of invisibility. Knowing that the index pages of CGMPC are hosted by the University of Denver allows one to search Google for a work title in combination with the string, “site:du.edu,” and find relevant listings. Analysis of site analytics data for CGMPC indicates the majority of queries from some countries, notably China, bypass the home page and access the index pages directly—indicating that they are being searched in this way.

In conclusion, there has never been a systematically organized, reliable resource for discovering pieces of guitar music in published collections. The situation for the guitar is quite unlike that of other repertoires, whether for the voice or in scholarly editions.

I am offering Classical Guitar Music in Printed Collections, published at <http://guitarmusicincollections.com>, as a pilot project to fill this particular gap. Because it is being published online, it is continuously expandable and updatable, and can offer features like musical incipits and automated searching in WorldCat, which are impractical or impossible in a print index.

The content indexed in CGMPC is, as yet, modest. In July 2017, it included 2,273 compositions in 61 anthologies for guitar solo, guitar ensemble, guitar and voice, or guitar and other instruments. As the site has expanded from its original, pilot stage in late 2013 to something that aims to be of real use to guitarists, it has undergone a certain amount of evolution.

As an unfunded project, the development of CGMPC has generally been subject to the limitations of the time I can find to work on it outside of my professional responsibilities at the University of Denver. There are three possibilities for overcoming this limitation. First, I have been able to devote some DU Music Library staff resources to the project, particularly to improving the quality of some of the incipits captured when the project was in its initial phase. Second, as the project moves forward, it may be possible to obtain grants that will fund staff support. The third, and possibly most sustainable, option is to crowdsourced the content in CGMPC, developing a team of contributors that will collaborate to capture incipits and index composers, titles, and other information. This information will then be added to the “home” database and appear in what we hope will be frequent updates.

I strongly encourage anyone interested in contributing to such an effort to contact me through the email address indicated on the site.
CGMPC is far from complete as it stands, but it has
to be said that a work of this kind can never be complete.
As a result, it will always be a work in progress. The goal
of the project is to shine an ever-expanding light on this
important source of repertoire, and to make it gradually
more useful to guitarists. If teachers, students, and
performers are able to benefit from it in this way,
it will be serving its purpose well.
An earlier version of this article appeared under the title “Classical Guitar Music in Printed Collections: A New Index and a Model for Indexing Instrumental Music in Score Collections,” in Music Reference Services Quarterly 17, no. 3 (July 2014): 115–124.


7 Ibid., 32–34. The flaw in this kind of information, as with all information about online resources, lies in its perishability. Only two of the indexes listed by Kaus can still be accessed through the URLs she gave more than ten years ago. The Song Collection Index at Morton Grove Public Library seems to be gone forever. Others have all been migrated to new web URLs.

8 Search engine operators are subject to constant evolution and change as web search companies compete aggressively for market share. At the time this article was written, more complete information on how this played out in the guitar world was when Brian Jeffery published Mauro Giuliani: The Complete Works in Facsimiles of the Original Editions… (Paris: Editions musicales Transatlantiques, 1983).


15 Notes to this effect are still to be found in the original catalog records for this work used by many libraries. See, for instance, <http://iscat.uc.edu/catalog/472027>.


17 It is true that standards in this area are gradually improving. Consider the venerable Andrés Segovia edition of Sor’s studies. When this collection first appeared, immediately after WWII, the contents bore no indication of whence each piece was drawn. Identification of the compositions therein was made even more difficult by the fact that Segovia had revised every one of the tempo indications to suit his own artistic and pedagogical vision. However, when the collection was re-issued in a second edition in 1995, the publisher restored the original opus and number of each composition and referenced Sor’s original tempo indication (while still leaving Segovia’s in place). Many other modern collections reflect this more accountable approach to titles and other aspects of the composer’s legacy. Still, many do not, making the task of identifying pieces difficult and frustrating.


27 For a detailed survey of these and other works of guitar bibliograhy, please visit the SbS copublication site <www.guitarfoundation.org/page/SbS03>.


34 I again refer the interested reader to the SbS copublication site <www.guitarfoundation.org/page/SbS03> for more detailed descriptions of each of these bibliographical efforts.

35 Lists of libraries attached to WorldCat records are, by default, sorted by proximity to the user.

36 Believe it or not, librarians have a technical term for this: “serendipitous discovery.”