Music Companion to the Framework for Information Literacy

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Background

Music is inherently interdisciplinary, multimodal, and collaborative. Within music, subdisciplines have varied approaches to inquiry, research, evidence, and communication. Researchers are often expected to be familiar with a range of methods, including: musical analysis, performance and creative exploration, fieldwork, historical research, as well as quantitative and qualitative research. Additionally, musicians—including scholars, performers, composers, and teachers—draw on a wide variety of sources and expertise, or musico-information, to inform artistic decisions and interpretations, discoveries, and analyses. Because music is interdisciplinary and has multiple forms and formats, this document is necessary to translate the writing-centric Association of College and Research Libraries Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education into music-specific practices.

This Companion offers concrete ideas for those implementing the Framework in music contexts with an emphasis on music practices that are not captured or well-represented in the Framework. While it builds on a document focused on higher education, it has applicability outside the college or university environment, including reference services and outreach.

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2 This Companion is primarily for music librarians. A shorter, generalist version is forthcoming in Teaching Information Literacy by Discipline: Using and Creating Adaptations of the Framework.

3 This list of research methods is not exhaustive. Many disciplines and subdisciplines involve music including theater, dance, music business, music therapy, and music librarianship.

activities in all kinds of libraries, K-12 education, and beyond. Each Frame in the Music Companion includes a music-centered description as well as a list of knowledge practices, dispositions, and sample learning outcomes. The knowledge practices and dispositions are suggested starting points, from which readers can create their own learning outcomes and assessment measures. The learning outcomes (which assume the prefatory phrase “Learners will be able to”) may be more applicable in certain types of instructional spaces than others, specifically one-shot library instruction, embedded instruction, or credit-bearing course assignments. Given the interconnected nature of information literacy knowledge and skills, there is overlap or reiteration of some content and learning outcomes.

To inform their work, the authors of the Music Companion administered a survey to members of the Music Library Association on their impressions and utilization of the Framework, conducted a review of other Companion documents, and consulted music scholarship. A driving force behind the creation of this document were the 2018 MLA survey results that indicated music librarians wanted practical support in implementing the ACRL Framework.

Inspired by the methodology of the Politics, Policy, and International Relations Companion, the authors conducted interviews with music faculty about their perception of music students’ information literacy skills. Major themes from the interviews include: discovery, use, and evaluation of non-textual sources; the use of people and embodied experience as sources; copyright and intellectual property; interdisciplinarity and the variety of scholarship; and disciplinary shifts, especially around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These themes are woven throughout the Music Companion.

The concept of embodied ways of knowing challenges norms in music by questioning notions of authority, information creation, inquiry, and even searching. It considers movement and the use of the body as a significant and necessary source of information—a form of musico-information. J. Murphy McCaleb states: “Skilled musical performance relies on a fundamentally different form of knowledge from that which is created through academic research.” Considered alongside Christopher Small’s idea of “musicking,” which he defines as “taking part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing,” embodied knowledge in music has many potential applications for information literacy.

Bridging library praxis and more recent DEI efforts, critical music information literacy can be helpful for understanding and confronting authority and value within the fields of music by “awakening learners to the oppressive power structures and systems we inhabit in order to smash the hegemony of capital, materials, and methods involved in the study of music.” The study of music in the academy has historically been Euro-centric, which affects the ways in which authority and value have been and continue to be established, as well as how scholarly

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6 A dedicated article reporting the results of the qualitative study is currently in process.
conversations and practices around discovery, inquiry, and information creation have been formed and shaped over time.

As musicologist Susan McClary wrote in 2002, those who “inhabit a world that resounds with rock and rap—even as we focus primarily on classical music—find it increasingly difficult to ignore or denigrate the music surrounding us. The universe of ‘Western music’ contains all these rich cultural strands, and understanding the music of our own time demands that we attend to much more than what traditionally belonged in the academy.” The music curriculum, repertoire considerations, and the kinds of questions musicians ask are changing. More recently in 2019, Loren Kajikawa noted that while these other strands are increasingly incorporated into higher education, music schools continue to maintain a "possessive investment" in classical music at the core of curricula and institutional cultures. Music information literacy skills have an important role to play in helping students to adapt to the changing music curriculum and to advance the field in their careers. It is our hope that the Music Companion will provide both focus and inspiration to all who are engaged in shaping new ways of thinking about and making music.

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

The concept of authority within the field of music is complex and multi-layered, and questions of authority are central for practitioners in all areas of music.

Musicians must orient themselves within their discipline or subdiscipline. Sources do not exist only in a “popular versus scholarly” dichotomy, and the markers of an authoritative source may look different depending on disciplinary orientation and topic. Performers and creators work to develop their own artistic, authoritative voice. They must recognize that even the creative sources they rely upon, such as musical scores and sound recordings, contain markers of authority that will vary in significance depending upon the information need.

Knowledge Practices

- Acknowledge that authoritative content in music includes sources in all formats, including articles, books, musical scores, and sound and video recordings.
- Recognize markers of authority in allied disciplines relevant to a subdiscipline of interest, such as education or medicine for music education or music therapy.
- Understand the role that artistic authority, such as the contributions of well-known performers or conductors, plays in music and how creative practitioners challenge, engage, and respond to this artistic authority.
- Understand the ways in which authorities in music connect with one another and expand and limit disciplinary knowledge through the development and transmission of performance practices over time in the studio, practice room, or recital hall, as well as musical scores and recordings.

• Understand that music in the academy has historically focused on Western classical traditions, leading to a defined repertoire widely considered standard, while recognizing that scholars and creative practitioners can challenge the authority of this canon.

Dispositions
• Recognize that a musician’s intended use of music materials factors into source selection and the relevant markers of authority may vary in a given situation.
• Value the role that music learners can play in defining disciplinary authority and expanding the canon, whether as scholars, performers, or creators.
• Value the artistic contributions of others. Understand that the ability to situate one’s own contributions in relation to those of others can be a marker of authority.
• Consider whose voices and perspectives are not reflected in the discipline of music currently and as historically conceived.

Sample Learning Outcomes
• Articulate the markers of authority present in a freely available online recording, such as a YouTube clip, versus those present in a published sound recording, such as a CD with liner notes. Select the most authoritative recording for the need at hand.
• Describe how sources that convey lived experience, first-hand accounts, or aesthetic judgments can be considered authoritative.
• Develop an annotated bibliography for a popular music topic that includes a range of sources.
• Develop a recital program featuring works by underrepresented composers.
• Articulate the differences among edition and source types for musical scores, such as manuscript or facsimile, performance edition, critical edition, and urtext edition. Select the most authoritative score for the need at hand.

Information Creation as a Process

Musico-information comes into being through a variety of processes which are impacted by the contexts of its creation, the role of the information creators, and the intended audience.

The creation processes for music information reflect the values and social structures of their communities of origin. Social and economic factors impact access to these processes. Because music is both interdisciplinary and multicultural, music information users encounter and may use diverse formal and informal processes of creation. The creation process includes steps like peer review, performance practice research, copyright registration, distribution, and a panoply of other elements. Experts evaluate and select from the processes relevant to the work they are creating such as publications, performances, new music compositions, and other creative work, understanding that these processes also underlie the musico-information they use.

Knowledge Practices
• Seek information from appropriate sources to solve creative or artistic problems or to answer scholarly questions.
• Consider information needs for a music project and employ appropriate processes to create a new composition or artistic interpretation for a performance.
• Examine the processes of creating and sharing music in various communities and cultural groups.

Dispositions
• Recognize that the processes of creating *musico-information* reflect the structure and values of the community that created that music information.
• Reflect on the experience of music making to support the performance of music.
• Value different musical traditions and modes of transmission.
• Discover satisfaction in one’s personal reception of a genre of music by considering the ways it developed.

Sample Learning Outcomes
• Describe how a commercially-released song developed from beginning to distribution.
• Write job descriptions for personnel in a recording studio.
• Track the steps involved in writing a review of a live performance for a general audience.
• Chart the steps necessary to lawfully use a recording in a soundtrack for a film.
• Demonstrate melodic ornamentation in a specific performance practice.
• Describe how different intervals feel in the hand (instrumental) or notes with the voice (vocal).
• Analyze and document the process of recording and distributing their own music composition.
• Describe the process used to make choices for an element of performance technique.

Information Has Value

The value of music as an information source is established and reinforced by historical practices, cultural traditions, socioeconomic factors, and laws and regulations.

The value of music as a source of information is defined by performers, composers, publishers, consumers, and researchers and can be established by music performances, music festivals, ticket sales, streams and downloads, awards, as well as books and articles on music-related topics. Monetary costs can be a barrier to those who do not have the means to fully participate in consuming, researching, creating, and sharing.

A teacher of music also possesses value as an information source. As an embodiment of their lineage, they share their knowledge through courses, lessons, workshops, and masterclasses. Additionally, the teacher has a responsibility of transmitting their expertise in an ethical manner that honors their lineage.

The practices and priorities of Western music studies have traditionally determined what music has value and reinforced the narrative of so-called “genius” and “master” composers. Institutions including libraries and archives participate in the process of defining value through what they collect and how access is provided.

Legal practices, including national and international copyright and licensing laws, determine how music materials can be disseminated and how creators are compensated for the use of their works. Attribution of musical works and *musico-information* is an ethical and respectful way of acknowledging the creator of the musical work.
Knowledge Practices

- Decide where and how to publish and share their original compositions, sound recordings, or performances.
- Make informed choices when selecting sources, such as repertory for a performance or sources from medicine, psychology, education, or other allied disciplines.
- Examine their own privilege in terms of access to music scores, books on music, music technology, and consuming music.
- Recognize how copyright, fair use, open access, and the public domain apply to music in unique ways, such as public performances, recordings, royalties, and licensing.

Dispositions

- Understand how and why some performers, composers, and music industry professionals may be underrepresented or systematically marginalized within the systems that produce and disseminate information.
- See themselves as contributors to the music industry.
- Value the labor involved in creating, composing, performing, recording, publishing, and studying music.
- Respect and acknowledge the original musical ideas of other musicians.

Sample Learning Outcomes

- Give credit to music sources using the appropriate citation style when creating a musical work, liner notes, website, article, presentation, or other product.
- Compile a list of musical works for a concert, recital, or playlist with the intention of valuing specific composers, cultures, and/or genres.
- Explain how US and international copyright laws support and can also be a barrier for the sharing and dissemination of music.
- Demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity when performing, arranging, or composing works based on the experiences of underrepresented groups.

Research as Inquiry

**Music research and creative practice require iterative inquiry and problem solving.**

Inquiry in music requires flexibility in methodology and expression. Music information experts understand that research encompasses many forms of inquiry, not only those that result in scholarly papers or publication. They formulate questions about music to inform composition, performance, or scholarship based on artistic problems or gaps in knowledge, while recognizing that these questions may not have definitive answers. Pursuing answers may involve drawing information from written, oral, and recorded sources, as well as the researcher’s own embodied creative experience. Experts recognize that different questions may be approached through different research methods, within and outside music studies, and are able to select appropriate methods and information sources. They demonstrate intellectual curiosity and self-motivated inquiry as an integral part of their creative or academic practice.

Knowledge Practices

- Select from and use various research methods as appropriate to the research question, keeping in mind that these approaches may derive from humanities, social science, or other methodologies.
Formulate research questions based on gaps and problems in existing knowledge, including problems related to creative work.

Synthesize information from a variety of source types, including recordings, scores, digital scholarship, oral communication, and scholarly writing, to inform creative and scholarly work.

Organize findings in appropriate ways for their intended audience, such as artistic collaborators, scholars, concert audiences, and donors.

Draw conclusions and make decisions based on research for artistic and scholarly purposes, understanding that creative and scholarly input may be in tension while both offer valuable perspectives.

Dispositions

- Consider information gathering and inquiry as part of the creative process, and artistic work as an information product.
- Demonstrate an impulse to enrich creative or scholarly work through open-ended exploration of information.
- Seek multiple sources and perspectives, understanding that much artistic work is a collaborative and iterative process.
- Value intellectual curiosity and the self-motivated inquiry as qualities of a music professional.
- Recognize the value of applying inquiry to a wide range of musical traditions, and the potential of inquiry to address historical imbalances in disciplinary knowledge.
- Understand practice and rehearsal as methods of gathering information toward solving creative problems.

Sample Learning Objectives

- Formulate a research question about historical performance practice to inform preparation of a performance.
- Demonstrate flexibility and curiosity by exploring databases from adjacent fields that are potentially relevant to a research project, such as education, history, or business databases.
- Respond to a course reading, master class, or guest speaker with questions that further understanding.
- Explore existing works in a genre as inspiration for a composition project.
- Assemble an annotated list of repertory for their instrument written by composers from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Work with other members of a chamber ensemble to make decisions about performance practice, and then articulate their reasoning by citing evidence.
- Create a research paper or research-based program notes about a work by an underrepresented composer.
- Write a proposal for a practice-based, creative-scholarship research project.

Scholarship as Conversation

Music is an inherently participatory and collaborative field in which musicians of all kinds work within and across music's subdisciplines to learn, interpret, contextualize, and create.

Music is created in community, and both creative and scholarly music products engage in and
build on existing conversations. A musicologist or music theorist may publish an article or book and present a paper at a conference, a performer gives a recital or records an album, a composer writes (or makes) music and collaborates with performers, a music producer uses technology to create and improve recorded sound, music teachers use and document pedagogical methods and techniques, and music critics listen and respond. All are forms of music information that exist in conversation with each other and can be understood as scholarship. Music experts often practice in and across subdisciplines as learners and scholars and understand what scholarly and artistic conversations are already underway.

Music experts also recognize that musicians participate in these conversations when they collaborate on performances, attend lessons and masterclasses, or respond to the creative decisions of others. They are aware of the myriad of types of information available and consult a variety of materials to inform creative decisions. Recognizing the privileges needed to study music, they understand the benefits and limitations of learning music through different avenues.

**Knowledge Practices**
- Articulate the impact of music’s contexts—historical, cultural, financial, ideological—on understanding, engagement, and enjoyment.
- Audition for or participate in the activities of emerging musicians such as juries, recitals and concerts, festivals, competitions, and conferences.
- Seek appropriate permissions prior to using copyrighted material such as sampling, setting text to music, using field research, or reproducing archival materials.
- Recognize different approaches to the process of learning music (e.g. schools of performance, schools of thought) and their impact on musicianship and performance.
- Engage with information sources across music’s subdisciplines and audience types.

**Dispositions**
- Value and evaluate music and accompanying criticism, commentary, and scholarship of all kinds.
- Understand there are as many artistic interpretations as there are musicians and that experts are continuously discovering new ways of thinking about and understanding music.
- Understand that particular traditions, styles, genres, practices, and bodies of works are often privileged at the expense of others.
- Acknowledge the utility of music information literacy skills beyond the academic environment.
- Recognize the importance of written communication and oral tradition in the study of music.

**Sample Learning Outcomes**
- Using appropriate scholarly, popular, and primary sources to contextualize and analyze a piece of music, develop a thesis statement and paper that engages with recent discoveries, scholarship, and criticism.
- Curate a playlist or recital program and write accompanying commentary for a particular audience.
- Write a blog post for a general audience explaining the history, theory, or importance and impact of a piece of music.
- Credit collaborators and influences in program notes or introductory remarks for a performance or in a recording’s liner notes.
Consult authoritative human, textual, and musical (score, audio, video) sources to inform artistic interpretation and performance.

Searching as Strategic Exploration

**Music is multifaceted and requires researchers to navigate a complex information landscape. Curiosity, reflection, and strategy are effective practices that support the process of building context for an information need or creative endeavor.**

With multiple subdisciplines and methodologies involved, the practice of searching in music is both systematic and creative. Novice learners may encounter traditional materials while building vocabulary and specialized searching skills to navigate the landscape of scores, recordings, books and articles, and oral traditions. Developing learners will likely encounter music-specific sources including discographies, named catalog numbers (e.g. BWV, Köchel, WoO), thematic catalogs, and complete works edition indexes. Complementary knowledge is often necessary to identify and select sources, including technologies of recording formats, language facility, and familiarity with notational styles. An expert music searcher uses specialized references such as uniform titles and subject and genre headings to navigate search tools such as the native interface of databases and licensed or free digital resources.

The embodied act of music performance is simultaneously a creative and a *musico-information* literacy endeavor. Considering the body as a source of information provides ways of knowing through both individual practice and shared social performance. Reflective practice allows both novices and experts to consider what is known and estimate information that would enhance the context, adjusting the strategy as necessary given sources available.

Knowledge Practices

- Brainstorm the types of sources that could be used to meet the information need.
- Seek guidance from experts in relevant subdisciplines of music study and practice.
- Prepare strategic questions as a basis for searching and serendipity.
- Develop the necessary vocabulary and language skills to understand the information ecosystem of your search.
- Understand that knowledge description and construction change over time, impacting search terms and strategies for non-text sources in particular.

Dispositions

- Utilize reflection as part of the search strategy, especially when developing new vocabulary or encountering unfamiliar subfields or methodologies.
- Understand how musicianship skills support and enhance search strategies.
- Understand how search strategy is impacted by subdiscipline and choice of methodology.
- Recognize that embodied knowledge is a source of information.

Sample Learning Outcomes

- Identify sources in different modes for different information needs.
- Apply search terms and strategies that align with methodology that will produce materials that meet the information need. Consider allied disciplines that may enhance the search results.
• Identify and estimate missing information from gathered sources to formulate and conduct new searches for materials to answer remaining questions. Recognize some information may not exist yet or may not exist at all.
• Use specialized music tools within and outside the library to find music sources.
• Locate different versions or editions of a source or performance to consider historical context, the scope and range of editorial choices, notational style, and performance techniques.
• Reflect on and explain how the body functions in order to generate musical sound.