Classifying Diversity: Composer identities and the Composer Diversity Database

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ABSTRACT

A growing movement for diversity in classical music is pushing public discourse and aiming for more people of diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual diversity to be represented in concert programming, educational institutions, and on stage. Music libraries have a role to play in this transformation by providing access to music composed by these underrepresented groups; however, traditional library cataloguing & descriptive standards have many historical shortcomings in representing minorities as well as describing musical scores. This paper presents an overview of issues in minority representation in traditional knowledge organisation systems, an overview of the new Library of Congress controlled vocabularies and their application to musical scores, and a presentation and evaluation of the Composer Diversity Database project produced by the Institute for Composer Diversity at SUNY Fredonia, which aims to serve as a searchable index of composers of diverse identities.

A growing movement for diversity in classical music

In discussing classical art music, often described as Western art music, the canonical representation of a composer normally takes the form of a white, cisgender male European. Of all the compositional masters part of the cultural zeitgeist surrounding classical music, the most recognizable names adhere to this combination of identities, with longstanding systems in place to maintain that status quo. Beyond composition alone, these systems move beyond to institutionalize those who can study, teach, perform, and critique music as well.

Over the past twenty years, significant efforts have been made to find approaches in increasing racial, gender, and sexual diversity within all aspects of the classical music world, contemporary music, and music research. These efforts have been taken up by individual musicians, performing ensembles, educational institutions, and non-profit organisations (Devenish, 2020). This momentum has also been supported through academic and industry reports, media articles, and conferences and public discourse. Strategies such as requirements for gender-balanced concert programs, diversity quotas, and diversity statements required for grant applications have been used to help foster this shift towards a more diverse and equitable system in Western art music (Devenish et al., 2020; Johnson & Dewey, 2020).

Despite concerted efforts in this area, racial, gender, and sexual diversity within classical music is still far from normalized, especially when examining higher-level music educational institutions and professional composers and performers (Devenish, 2020; Ward, 2020). A study analyzing the concert programming practices of major American orchestras showed that only 8% of works programmed were by women or female-identifying composers, 6% by those of underrepresented heritages, and 16% were living composers (State University of New York at Fredonia, n.d.). With contemporary music especially, its incorporation alongside more

canonically appreciated works is a struggle and often considered unpalatable among audiences, and within this subset of programming, the lack of diverse voices still exists (Gotham, 2014).

Music libraries, archives, and other knowledge organisations have a role to play in supporting this push towards a more equitable and diverse landscape for Western art music. The most important element in this issue of social justice is through the provision of appropriate and ethical descriptive practices for music in libraries and should be seen as a moral imperative for such institutions (Farnel et al., 2018). Though libraries have been viewed traditionally as neutral institutions which do not incorporate any given value system, library description is inextricably linked to the judgements and biases of those creating and applying the systems but also those of the users interacting with them, and the way materials are categorized works to illustrate those biases and judgements (Farnel et al., 2018).

Regrettably, institutions responsible for the creation of descriptive standards like cataloguing and subject access like the Library of Congress have been historically lacking in accurate and equitable representation of minorities of any type, as well as having limited scope in describing musical resources. Evaluating previous and current shortcomings, new strategies in improving in these areas, as well as independent projects tackling these issues is an important step in ensuring the ability for music libraries to adequately support the communities they serve, but also to become agents of change in moving towards a more representative and equitable musical world.

Catalogued at the margins: minority representation in catalogues

Criticism of how library classification is devised and applied has been a long-running conversation among information science professionals, with the earliest criticism in professional literature dating back to the 1960s. This paper focuses on cataloguing and classification

standards created by the U.S. Library of Congress due to their ubiquity in many North American libraries, particularly academic libraries; this is not to say that similar problems do not arise in other schemes. At the heart of issues in these systems is that they, as described by Hope Olson, maintain "the exclusionary cultural supremacy of the mainstream patriarchal, Euro-settler culture" (2000, p. 69). This supremacy is exemplified in the essence of the application of classification, where the heading that should be applied is the one that the searcher is most likely to use, working to reinforce cultural and societal norms and favouring the majority at the expense of the minority (Knowlton, 2005).

The practical application of knowledge organisation systems for indexing involves different degrees of "aboutness" or describing the content of a work. These include a subjective aboutness (representing an individual's experiences), an objective aboutness (what an someone might use to search, based on individual behaviour), and retrieval aboutness (what a group of searchers would use to search in a catalogue or database) (H. Olson, 2013). Approaching these different forms in a mindful way is crucial for ethical knowledge representation, yet the retrieval aboutness is favoured to create smooth functioning systems to the detriment of individual understandings and expressions of aboutness and identity. Critical cataloguing therefore strives to interpret subjects and schema with a social justice lens and evaluating the potential harm or benefit offered by each term to the community of users of a system (Watson, 2020).

Challenges for representation of minorities

Gender and sexuality are particularly difficult for accurate representation in knowledge organisation systems. Historically, homosexuality and gender non-conformity were classified under subjects like social deviance or mental illness, a legacy which has been difficult to shake (Bullard et al., 2020). Similar struggles are currently taking place with the representation of

transgender or gender non-binary people. Sexual minorities outside of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people frequently do not see representation; asexuality and asexual people became authorized Library of Congress terms only in 2016, for example (Watson, 2020).

Frequent conflating of gender and sexuality has found transgender people included under umbrella terms like "Sexual minorities", though an authorized term for "Transgender people" has now been established (Roberto, 2011). This new entry is not without issue, as narrower terms linked to it include female and male impersonators, transvestites, and transsexuals. This creates an inextricable association between transgender individuals with gender impersonation meant for entertainment, comedy, or psychological gratification (Roberto, 2011). Describing gender is further complicated with the incorporation of new standards for gender as part of the Resource, Description, and Access (RDA) bibliographic standard. This provision includes markers for fixed categories of female, male, or not known (Billey et al., 2014). This approach is problematic because it means discretion is left up to a cataloguer who likely does not possess authoritative information or must make personal judgements based on available sources, but more importantly it reinforces regressive binaries which are not conducive to representing modern understanding of the fluidity of gender identity, where sex and gender are negotiated and constituted on social context (Billey et al., 2014). This prevents meaningful description of the contemporary lived experiences and histories of gender non-binary or transgender individuals.

Racial biases and confusion in the application of existing terms is also a frequent issue. A commonly seen example is the use of the terms "Black" and "African American", with confusion between or conflating of the terms on the part of cataloguers but also a lack of delineation for users about the scope of each term, especially when the definitions outlined by the Library of Congress may not align with those in colloquial use or those used as identities by particular

communities (Howard & Knowlton, 2018). Similar lacking in clarity or precision in describing indigenous peoples exists, with previous blanket terms like "Indians of North America" applied (Hobart, 2020). Lack of terms for individual nations, regional descriptive language (e.g., First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), and misunderstanding of terms leads to confusing mixes of terminology which fails to accurately represent different identities and complicates searches for users (Bone & Lougheed, 2018).

This type of disenfranchisement through discriminatory, pathologized, or out-dated language is a reality facing libraries striving to create and describe more equitable and ethical collections.

Diversity in metadata

This historical representation of minority groups has been lacking in nearly all knowledge organisation systems, not only due to inaccurate, outdated, or offensive subject headings and classification, but also a lack of metadata standards designed to accommodate information about the diverse and intersectional identities of creators. In conducting a scan of 13 metadata schemas and evaluating the provisions for metadata about diversity, Clarke & Schoonmaker found that most included values for gender, occupation, geographic region, audience, and age. This contrasts the lack of effective tools for resource access for racial, ethnic, and national or cultural identity (Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2019). A common strategy among different schemas is what Clarke & Schoonmaker refer to as "basketing", where groups of identities are combined into larger, broader groupings to make it easier to categorize people; these baskets tend to lack clear delineations, often because many identities may overlap or be in direct competition with one another. This approach often results in a suppression of personal identities expressed, but also

hinders effective retrieval within information systems as more detailed and precise searches are not possible without appropriately robust metadata (Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2019).

Music Bibliography and expanding the vocabulary

Subject Analysis and Aboutness of Scores

Providing meaningful and accurate subject access to musical scores is an issue plaguing libraries for many decades. The ability to determine the subject or aboutness of a musical work is not only a technical challenge for music cataloguers, but also a philosophical conundrum that has yet to be solved. Theme or topic analysis of a textual work is a relatively straightforward and well documented process, but any kind of imposition of what a musical work is about is immediately weighed down by personal perception and bias, and subsequently rendering the consistency of a controlled vocabulary for subject access essentially useless (Lee, 2008, p. 18). Because of these difficulties with traditional subject analysis, subject access for musical scores in libraries has traditionally been relegated to the role of representing form and genre (Smiraglia, 1985).

Pre-coordinated subject indexing systems like the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) are widely used in academic music libraries across North America, and while these rigid, hierarchical structures are often well suited to the retrieval of textual materials, some frustrating challenges arise when applied to musical scores. Much of these problems arise from the situation libraries face which requires the bibliographic description of both textual works and musical scores as part of their collections, with textual materials almost always existing in larger number (Mullin, 2018). These mixed library collections can introduce ambiguity in the interpretation of subject headings in whether they describe the aboutness or the genre/form of a resource; the heading *Sonatas* leaves uncertainty whether it refers to a monograph discussing the

theoretical structure of the sonata or if it indicates the musical form attached to a score (Iseminger et al., 2017). The hierarchical nature of LCSH also poses challenges for library users attempting to collocate scores based on a specific musical element like form, genre, or medium of performance; the conflation of these different elements into single subject headings or creation of long strings of subdivided subject terms limits the browsability of a collection and requires an advanced knowledge of subject heading syntax to effectively retrieve all of the relevant scores (Blough & Jurgemeyer, 2015).

Because of these challenges, the use of a post-coordinated subject indexing system in regard to form and genre, (and medium of performance for musical works) has been identified as the preferred method in developing standards for bibliographic description across all library resources to allow for faceted searching of these fields (Scharff, 2011). Faceting offers advantages in searching and browsing through library databases by allowing repeated and ongoing filtering of results, allowing users to dynamically build search strategies in a progressive manner compared to more expert search strategies required for effective retrieval using traditional advanced searching interfaces (Iseminger et al., 2017). Early attempts to apply this faceted approach to musical scores was through the application of USMARC codes with 3 dedicated fields (045, 047, & 048) for common features of scores useful for faceted searching, being date of composition, form or genre, and number of instruments or voices (McBride, 2000); however, due to inherent limitations in this approach like restrictions in expressing more complicated instrumentations like doubled instruments, the relative unfamiliarity of cataloguers with these frequently unused fields, and special requirements to render them in useful manners within library catalogues stymied their widespread adoption (Mullin, 2018).

When considering the personal identities of composers and the relationship of their identities with their artistic output, a limitless universe of possibilities emerges between how lived experiences and tangled, intersecting identities might implicitly or explicitly impact their work, and the degree to which the composer may disclose these relationships. Because of these complications, the notion of using a composer's identity to describe the subject or aboutness of a work quickly becomes problematic, with demographic information normally applied to authority records rather than to individual works. Such additions to authority records are possible through some of the new controlled vocabularies created by the Library of Congress.

Applying New Controlled Vocabularies to Music

In response to the growing demand for effective and systematic implementation of faceted cataloguing practices, three new controlled vocabularies were developed by the Library of Congress (LC) in conjunction with various professional library associations: the Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials (LCGFT), the Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus (LCMPT), and the Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT).

Genre/Form. The Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT) began as a project focused on creating terms for applications with moving image materials, though the scope of the vocabulary has expanded greatly to include artistic and visual works, cartographic materials, legal resources, literature, music, non-musical sound recordings, and religious materials (Bitter & Tosaka, 2020). "Genres and forms may be broadly defined as categories of resources that share known conventions. More specifically, genre/form terms may describe the purpose, structure, content, and/or themes of resources" (Library of Congress, 2020b, p. 3) and inclusion of terms is based on literary warrant, much like other LC controlled vocabularies, allowing them

to expand to respond to changes in the literature. The implications for musical scores regarding faceted cataloguing are not to be understated; not only does the implementation of this vocabulary help to decouple these terms so they can operate within searches independently of existing subject headings, but the attention given to each of the disciplines in the development of the vocabulary has greatly expanded the types of musical forms and genres represented, especially for non-Western music, allowing them to be properly or more precisely described through cataloguing (Iseminger et al., 2017). Provisions for the incorporations of the LCGFT within bibliographic records have been made through the adoption of the MARC 655 field reserved for the vocabulary (Mullin, 2018).

Medium of Performance. The Medium of Performance Thesaurus (LCMPT) is the vocabulary most specifically designed for application to musical materials, with the scope of the thesaurus defining musical mediums of performance as "the voices, instruments, and other entities needed to perform a piece of music," currently containing nearly 900 terms (Library of Congress, 2020c, p. 1). Following the lead of the genre/form terms, the LCMPT has been greatly expanded to include a variety of instruments from global music traditions, a noted improvement from the counterpart terms within LCSH (Blough & Jurgemeyer, 2015). The positive effect specifically on retrieval of musical scores using LCMPT is perhaps even more impactful, as within LCSH, medium of performance was nearly guaranteed to be subordinate within a precoordinated heading, often appearing at the trailing end which makes its usefulness diminished, especially when browsing by instrumentation (Library of Congress, 2020c). Expressing the LCMPT through MARC bibliographic records is possible by using the 382 field to which it is assigned, with provisions for individually coding each instrument or medium of

performance with an indication of the number of performers for that instrument, as well as the total number of performers required for the entire work (Mullin, 2018).

Demographic Group Terms. Of the three newly developed LC faceted controlled vocabularies, the Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT) is undergoing the most expansion and development, beginning with 387 authorized terms at the point of its initial introduction in 2015 to a total of 1,117 in 2020 (Library of Congress, 2020a). While LCSH does already contain many headings for the description of differing demographics or groups of people, it was deemed that the discontinuing application through LCSH and developing a faceted vocabulary would facilitate improved access points and discoverability for library materials (Iseminger et al., 2017). This increased potential for resource discovery should be balanced against the ability to accurately, efficiently, and ethically apply these terms, especially due to the lingering biases which exist in LC controlled vocabularies and authority files for historically marginalized or oppressed groups (Willey & Yon, 2019). "A demographic group may be defined as a subset of the general population, and refers to the group's age, gender, occupation, nationality, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc." (Library of Congress, 2020a, p. 1). These demographic terms are also repeatable to allow for representation of multiple personal identities and their intersectional relationships. The use of these terms for musical score retrieval is linked to the indexing of composer demographics, with nationality of composers existing as a classic choice, but also includes potential for identifying of scores composed by gender, sexual, or racial and ethnic minorities, especially with the growing momentum for an increased diversity in the programming and public presentation of music (Johnson & Dewey, 2020). Special attention should also be applied to the LCDGT and its ongoing development, as there still exist many groups that are traditionally marginalized in bibliographic description that remain so with this

new faceted vocabulary (Hobart, 2020) as well as ensuring that the demographic information encoded in this manner is gathered from authoritative sources (Willey & Yon, 2019). The implementation of the LCDGT in MARC bibliographic records is realised through encoding the metadata in the 386 field.

While the LCDGT is still under development and expansion, and protocols exist for the proposal of new terms, it is worthwhile to note some important absences from the vocabulary. There are racial and ethnic demographics still absent from the list of approved terms, most notably concerning Indigenous Peoples and Nations. Only 15 approved terms have been created to represent different Native American Nations while 573 tribes are recognized by the United States federal government. Additionally, no terms exist for First Nations in Canada or Métis people. Special attention should be paid to the fact that Indigenous groups represented are also classified as ethnic/cultural groups rather than nationalities, further working to impose a colonial, assimilationist lens to the classification (Hobart, 2020).

Beyond racial and ethnic description, notable absences concerning gender and sexual diversity can be observed. There is a lack of terms to represent those identifying as gender-fluid, non-binary, or elsewhere on the gender spectrum, while no authorized terms exist to represent sexual minorities such as aromantics, asexuals, and pansexuals.

Among the music librarian and cataloguing community, there has been widespread adoption and enthusiasm for these new faceted vocabularies and their potential for expanding discoverability of musical resources. One of the largest hurdles left to overcome is the process of retroactive application of these vocabularies to existing bibliographic records and library collections. This mammoth undertaking is one that has yet to have a clear path forward, but there are efforts being made to create automated processes to help the wider implementation (Mullin,

2018). These efforts are especially important to avoid the creation of split file catalogues, where one portion includes robust, faceted metadata search capabilities while legacy records work only with existing subject headings, both complicating the search process for users but also hampering the maximum potential offered by post-coordinate indexing (Iseminger et al., 2017).

The Composer Diversity Database

Introduction

A project led by the Institute for Composer Diversity housed at the State University of New York at Fredonia, the Composer Diversity Database is the Institute's flagship resource. The Institute's goal is to "encourage the discovery, study, and performance of music written by composers from underrepresented groups" (State University of New York at Fredonia, 2021) and the Diversity Database, alongside other database projects, contribute to this goal by providing an index of composers of contemporary music with the capability of faceted searches based on various demographic criteria. The project began as a small database project created by the Institute's director as part of a composition course taught at SUNY Fredonia initially only including women composers. This searchable spreadsheet was then published publicly in 2017, subsequently expanded to include composers of underrepresented groups of all genders and launched as a standalone website. Upon the formation of the Institute for Composer Diversity at SUNY Fredonia, the database was incorporated into the Institute. As of May 2021, the Composer Diversity Database includes 1,901 entries.

Accompanying databases exist which complement the Composer Diversity Database, such as a database of musical works by composers represented in the composers database, a database devoted solely to choral music by diverse composers, and forthcoming individual databases devoted to orchestral works, wind band, chamber music, and art song. Alongside the

database work done by the Institute, they also offer research and analysis of the diversity of orchestral concert programming across North America, repertoire lists which feature works by diverse composers corresponding to U.S. State music competition difficulty levels, and diverse concert programming best practices and external resources for further reading and research.

Methodology of the Database

A key pillar of the methodology in constructing and expanding the database is consent. This manifests most clearly in the requirements for submitting new information to the database, as secondaries parties are permitted to submit information only about historical composers, and if submitting information about a living composer, all entries are vetted and independently confirmed with the composer in question to receive approval that the information is indeed correct but also if they consent to be included in the database at all. These steps help to ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the information collected, but also helps to protect newly added composers who may be included against their wishes or if information is disclosed publicly which they would prefer to remain private. As described by the Institute, if positive consent cannot be obtained by a new submission, then it is not included as part of the database.

Demographic information included as part of the database include: if a composer is living, deceased, or if their works exist in the public domain; the gender identity and sexual/romantic orientation of the composer; racial and ethnic demographics; musical mediums and genres composed; and geographic location information. A high degree of flexibility is present in how little or how much information a composer could choose to include in the database; the only required fields when submitting a new entry include a name, a contact email address, and country of residence, with all other demographic fields remaining optional.

Demographic Categories. Each demographic category includes prescribed options from which to choose, as well as some free text fields. Gender identity options include intersex, man, non-binary, third gender, transgender, Two Spirit, or woman. A free text field allows for entries beyond the included categories of gender identity as well as indication of the pronouns used by the composer.

Sexual and romantic orientation follows a similar structure, with prescribed fields for aromantic, asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, straight, and Two Spirit. While a free text field exists for expression beyond the given categories, an option also exists to indexed under the category of LGBTQIA2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, Two Spirit, plus) as an umbrella term which is the only sexual or romantic orientation that is a search option in the interface for the database.

Racial and ethnic demographics include prescribed options for African, Black, Latinx/Latin American, Indigenous Peoples, East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, West Asian/North African, and White. Special indications are also made for forms of verification required to confirm status for those self-declaring as American Indians or Alaskan Natives, though no requirements are indicated for indigenous people living outside of the United States. A free text field is also provided for elaboration on racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds not represented by the prescribed choices.

Location information which can be included in database records includes city of residence, U.S. State or Territory of residence, country of residence, and place of origin.

Taxonomy Methodology. As described in the frequently asked question section of the Institute for Composer Diversity's webpage, the definition of diverse used is "composers and artists who identity as female or non-binary, composers of underrepresented racial, ethnic, or

cultural heritage, and those identifying within the LGBTQIA2s+ community" (State University

of New York at Fredonia, 2021). Initial selection of demographic groups for inclusion in the

database was drawn from the US Census and has been gradually expanded based on user

feedback.

In response to the difficulties in expressing a wide set of identities for a single person

with prescriptive categories, the solution used by the database is the inclusion of free text fields

to include individual expressions of identities. In the case of LGBTQIA2S+ composers,

additional prescriptive fields can be included to indicate which identity or identities apply from

within the acronym.

A major challenge outlined earlier in this paper is the challenge of encompassing

intersectional identities and this challenge is one that the database readily recognizes and

acknowledges, with no taxonomy or classification fully representing an individual. To allow

further self-expression, an option is available for composers to include a personal statement with

their accompanying record in the database, which allows more freedom to express personal

identities or backgrounds which are otherwise unrepresented in the current classification scheme

of the database.

Evaluating the Database

Reflecting Diverse Voices. Perhaps the greatest strength of the Composer Diversity

Database is that self-verification of both consent to be included and the accuracy of the

information in the database is a requirement. While a simple solution would be to rapidly expand

the database and removing records or erroneous information as it is discovered, the ethical

approach taken by the database designers is a crucial step to make sure that the database lives up

to its equitable goals. This approach differs from the use of literary warrant for inclusion in

catalogues, as is the standard with most libraries. The literary warrant approach creates a situation where acquisitions are divorced from the act of classification and cataloguing, making any kind of knowledge organisation system less flexible and responsive to the works being included. The narrative surrounding the use of literary warrant is that it is neutral or unbiased, though in the application of any knowledge organisation system, the cataloguer inherently applies their own biases (Drabinski, 2013). This approach of self-declaration of identity also removes the need for a third party or cataloguer to make assumptions or judgements about an individual's identity. A self-reporting model is the commonly cited manner in which to build more equitable classification schemes and it is worth underlining that the Composer Diversity Database incorporates this value at its core (Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2019).

The acknowledgement that it is impossible to classify all aspects of an individual's identity is an important step in creating a sense that the system is working to best represent those included, and the ability to incorporate free text descriptions of identities and personal statements further elaborating or creating context contributes to this goal. The welcoming of feedback from users is also an important element of transparency and accountability which helps support the ongoing refinement and development of the database.

Because this database was developed in the United States, an element of Americentrism should be acknowledged. This manifests most clearly in the location demographic information which can be provided, as the only options for subnational geographic divisions are for U.S. States and Territories. Additionally, the racial and ethnic demographics are fundamentally based on U.S. Census categories which might not reflect common language in other regions (e.g., First Nations, Métis, and Inuit when discussing indigenous people in Canada).

Finally, a major demographic group of disabled composers is not represented as part of the current reporting framework of the database. Failing to incorporate descriptive cataloguing for disabled people is a frequent occurrence, as nearly all cataloguing and metadata standards do not provide a provision for including this information (Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2019). Including classification capabilities for composers with physical or developmental disabilities and impairments as well as for neurodivergent composers is a major step that could be done to expand the audience, usefulness, and equity of the database as an information resource. The Composer Diversity Database team has recognized this gap in their FAQ forum and state that it is a goal for further expansion in the future.

Search, Retrieval, and Browsing. Significant issues in search, retrieval, and browsing exist with the database which could be improved. Records included in search results are relatively bare, with the only information included beyond the search facets used are personal statements, any free text information entered, and links to composer websites, if available. This simplicity could be seen as both an asset and hindrance, as the straightforward information offered is aligned with the database goal of serving as an initial starting point for discovering new composers rather than as a comprehensive resource; conversely, the lack of information included means that compositions by any given composer cannot be browsed from a composer's record in the database, even if those compositions are included accompanying Works Database. The lack of linkages between databases is a major hindrance to the browsability of the resource within its own records, though links to composer websites remain a more effective browsing strategies as those sites may include score or recording examples, functionality the Composer Diversity Database does not support.

Another important drawback of the database is the search functionality, as while on the surface, it appears to be a full faceted search system, those this is not the case. As described as part of a search tip, selecting more than one search facet will follow the logic of an OR Boolean search operator; the interface does not include functionality for AND Boolean operators. This creates issues in the possibility of search complexity, as a search with the categories "Black" and "LGBTQIA2+" will include results of any composer identifying with either category. If a searcher is looking for Black queer composers specifically, this means a high degree of noise is introduced in the search, with further filtering unsupported and results only sortable alphabetically. This is a disappointing drawback to the search interface, especially because of the effort in developing a faceted cataloguing structure meant to represent the intersectionality of composer identities.

When proposing new additions to the database, subdivisions of sexual and romantic orientations are possible, as well as many categories offering free text fields to accommodate other identities; however, both these subcategories and free text entries cannot be used for search and retrieval as they only appear in records of individual composers. This kind of basket design is a common trait in many metadata schemas when trying to include diversity information, as it provides broad categories without needing to incorporate the nuances and tangled relationships of intersectional identities (Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2019). While the additional context is useful when examining an individual, it is a missed opportunity to be unable to incorporate this information in searching, as it more rigidly enforces the existing taxonomy of the databases and suppresses expressions outside of that taxonomy as access points. Expanding the search capabilities of the database to allow searching of these fields not only will make the resource

more diverse and equitable by more clearly representing the identities of users, but also will improve the precision of searches as more facets would be available.

Records can be exported from the database, though the resulting information is created in a comma-separated value (CSV) format. The use of CSV formats is indicative of the underlying structure of the database and in turn helps explain some of the limitations of the searchability of the data. Without encoding in a metadata schema, the manipulation and interoperability of this data is limited. Translation of this data from its current form to a standard metadata schema is a meaningful step which could be taken to enhance the usability of this database as an information resource.

Conclusion

Illustrated through this discussion, creating a universal classification system capable of ethically describing all intersectional identities is an impossible task, one that has been acknowledged by myriad scholars, advocates for radical and critical cataloguing, and by resources like the Composer Diversity Database. The challenge remaining is to create systems that work as equitably and effectively as possible for those they serve.

Queer theory is frequently used as an epistemological framework for evaluating how and if diverse identities have a place as part of library catalogues and other knowledge organisation systems. Emily Drabinski and Bullard et al. outline several strategies, including that classification and cataloguing deemed to be "wrong" needs to be corrected, leading to a constant evolution and revision of existing systems (Bullard et al., 2020; Drabinski, 2013). A more radical approach outlined is that the underlying structures of knowledge organisation need to be reformed, or that the politics of correction work to smooth over the failings which work to inform users through critical reading and analysis; "rather than placing a correction at that

exposed limit, a queer analysis suggest interventions that highlight that limit and invite the user to grapple with it" (Drabinski, 2013, p. 105). Arguments also exist that the resulting harm from even attempting to incorporate intersectionality identities will outweigh any possible information retrieval benefits and question if this work is something that should be done through library catalogues at all (Billey et al., 2014).

When grappling with reconstructing descriptive paradigms for institutions with very broad general collections like academic or public libraries, the task is a colossal one, but when evaluating resources like the Composer Diversity Database that have a clear purpose and audience, there are more measurable steps which can be taken. As previous discussed, in the language and method of description, the Composer Diversity Database satisfies many of the most common arguments for radical and critical cataloguing, allowing for a high degree of description of personal identities compared to traditional standards. Also important is the requirement for self-identification, a cornerstone for creating accurate and meaningful metadata (Clarke & Schoonmaker, 2019).

Transparency in the system is another key element which the Composer Diversity Database addresses well. "In a world where knowledge and truth are social constructions and where these notions are thought of, produced by and established in social interactions, classifications need to be developed in constant collaboration with its users" (Mai, 2010, p. 639). This element of trust is one that the Diversity Database works towards admirably, not only through relevant rationale for their methodology freely available on their website, but also for ongoing solicitation of feedback from users about where they may need to improve or future directions for the development of the database.

While most of the issues with the Composer Diversity Database are related to search and retrieval, one possible improvement to the knowledge representation could be using user tagging or folksonomies. The power for users of to self-classify and remove the power relation between the classifier and the user is acknowledged as a possibly transformative and emancipatory change that can be made to information systems (Bates & Rowley, 2011). An excellent possibility for incorporating such a system would be with the free-text fields for gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity in the database. Such a system would not only allow these self-expressions to be more visible alongside prescribed classifiers, but also would allow them to be useful as part of the search and browsing of the database. While arguments have been made that even with the freedom folksonomies afford, structures of societal norms still emerge and are reinforced through user tagging (Bates & Rowley, 2011), the potential benefits afforded are worth exploring while soliciting feedback from users.

While it is difficult to universally recommend the use of the Composer Diversity Database as a reference and research tool for libraries due to the limitations of the search capabilities, the vast amount of valuable data collected and mean that it is a worthwhile resource towards its goals of increasing diversity in concert programming by championing otherwise silenced composers. The database is also in constant evolution so improvements to the search interface are possibilities to help improve the resource in the future. Continuing to explore the uses of the database for collection development purposes is another venue of explorations for music libraries looking to expand their collections of contemporary music, especially because large numbers of the composers included in the database are self-published which makes traditional library acquisition workflows challenging (Underwood, 2016). The Composer

Diversity Database could also serve as a source of authoritative data for libraries looking to incorporate demographic information as part of their new acquisitions.

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