

# Writing to the World on a World of Music

## A JOURNEY THROUGH THE UNIVERSE OF RILM

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} EBSCO

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# Introduction

What does it mean to research and study music in and of the world? Answers to such a philosophical question depend on whom one asks, and perhaps, on the music itself. For over 50 years, Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, better known by its acronym RILM, has been part of this inquiry, documenting and disseminating publications that address it directly and indirectly, answer it, or question it further. RILM has done so through [RILM Abstracts of Music Literature](#), a comprehensive international bibliography of writings on music covering publications from the early 19th century to the present (also available with a full-text enhancement); through [RILM Music Encyclopedias](#), a curated, continuously expanding collection of music reference works; and through the [Index to Printed Music](#), the digital finding aid for locating musical works contained in printed collections, sets, and series. RILM also produces its own modest writings on music through its print publications and [Bibliolore](#), the blog that shares staff members' unique perspectives on music literature and includes subjects of practical interest to music researchers and librarians, writings on music prone to pique curiosity, and original contributions. In light of RILM's longstanding partnership with EBSCO, staff members also occasionally contribute to the [EBSCOpost](#) blog.

The content of this booklet offers a compilation of previously published, though slightly adapted, blog posts that are reflective of RILM's aim to present "The World's Writings on A World of Music" — its motto. As such, they are sequenced by way of a journey that takes off by helicopter from Papua New Guinea, where this means of transportation has become part of the texts sung by girls coming of age. It continues

by entering the world of dance, taking tango as an example of music being a disciplinary crossroad for topics as widely strewn as medicine and therapy, sexuality and gender, geography, and, of course, dance. Indeed, music crosses boundaries and borders, as evident in the universe of melodies collected by Abraham Zvi Idelsohn and in a dinner at Benito Mussolini's table where a historic rāga was performed.

These topics are interspersed with explanatory vignettes that introduce the reader to concepts and ideas related to music reference works, the nature of musicology and music pedagogy, and librarianship. Written by a team of colleagues, they reflect the dialogues RILM supports by comprehensively and accurately representing music scholarship in all countries and languages, and across all disciplinary and cultural boundaries.

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# Helicopters in Music Encyclopedias

by James R. Cowdery

The cross-volume search capacity of [RILM Music Encyclopedias](#) offers some quirky surprises — for example, this resource currently includes over a dozen different music-related articles with references to helicopters. These include entries on Madonna, Mickey Rooney, and the following excerpt from the article “Highland Region of Papua New Guinea” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*:

“The texts [of girls’ coming-of age songs] address topics broadly sorted in four sets: *daily routine*, recalling netted bags (made by all women), sores (irritated by flies), and pleasure over good food (grown or gathered); *unusual events*, like sighting a helicopter, European missionaries’ arrival, and death in a hospital; *desires*, including the romantic, with meanings often hidden in metaphor, but also the adventuresome, like wanting to ride in a vehicle; and the *coming-of-age performance itself* — speaking of dancing together, laughing together, and becoming adults”.

The cross-volume search capacity of *RILM Music Encyclopedias* offers some quirky surprises.



# Why Music Reference Still Matters in the Age of *Wikipedia*

by Tina Frühauf

The field of music reference has evolved continuously since the 1768 publication of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique*. But, the advent of *Wikipedia* in 2001 has had a dramatic impact on this hitherto gradual evolutionary process in terms of format, authorship, and editorial structure. Assessments of *Wikipedia's* impact differ widely, from viewing *Wikipedia* as a means and medium of internationality to complaints about *Wikipedia's* elimination of the individual and avoidance of editorial control mechanisms. Whether *Wikipedia* strikes you as a net benefit or loss, it has triggered important questions as to how future reference works and bibliographies can and should be made accessible, to whom, and with what features. Technology has changed how much can be accomplished and how far one can reach. But, where does all this leave musicologists and music librarians? Printed reference works are organisms in themselves, reflective of their time and culture, region and subject matter. Technology has the ability to transform each organism into a universe of musical reference works and bibliographies, easily accessible in multiple languages and across cultural and other divides. More concretely, technology can create such a universe by facilitating cross-database searching, hyperlinking, and complex keyword searching, while maintaining the identity and specificity of reference works as individual organisms. Indeed, why, in the



age of advanced information technology, should one reference work exist without the other? Such a communal approach was first put forth by *Wikipedia*, but neither thought through nor further developed beyond the issues of open access and open authorship. Ideally, digital archives should not aim toward completeness and a global perspective, but toward carefully curated content by means of 21st-century technology.

With technological advances, currency becomes an important matter as well. But, as music researchers continue to rely on established and existing reference sources and bibliographies for research on individuals and subjects not included in modern encyclopedias, and for historiographical work which compares the representation of individuals and subjects over time, “old” encyclopedias have now received the ability to become new encyclopedias for the digital age.

In the *longue durée*, music reference works have always been reflective of their time and location, and also of their editors and users. The aforementioned Rousseau *Dictionnaire* is a case in point, as it has been deemed both radical and traditional at the same time

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— radical, in that Rousseau advanced philosophy on opera and revealed his rejection of French musical tradition; traditional, in that he held on to existing categories — music as art and music as science — and views on music theory accepted in the 18th century. This presence of two (or more) distinct strands or “voices” can be best understood as a reflection of the dialogue process in the formation of musical ideas.

# It Takes Two: Four (or More) Ways RILM Can Enrich Interdisciplinary Research

by Tina Frühauf

With their song “Takes Two to Tango”, written in 1952, Al Hoffman and Dick Manning coined an expression that soon found itself to be an integral part of the idiomatic repertoire of the English-speaking world, famously popularized by Ronald Reagan with regard to Russian-American relations during détente. The tango metaphor has also gained currency as a proverb in loan translation in other languages. Like many other dance forms, it does take two; but to create tango, it takes much more. In essence, tango draws from diverse elements found in African, Latin American, and European cultures. Its inherent hybridity has made it an object of research beyond the realm of music and dance. As political scientist Martha Savigliano asserts in her acclaimed book, *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, it is “also a philosophy, a strategy, a commodity, even a disease”. Indeed, tango has become a subject in a variety of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. In this vein, RILM treats tango as broadly as it does other interdisciplinary subjects, as the following examples illustrate.

**Dance** – Tango emerged in the port and slums of Buenos Aires and the La Plata river area among immigrants from Italy, Spain,



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and Eastern Europe, who worked out steps among themselves; from the 1870s onward it evolved into three different forms: tango, milonga, and valse. Going beyond the form, there are also cognitive aspects to tango, which allow for creation and interpretation on the spot, allowing individuals to become better at negotiating space with others in an intuitive yet co-creative way.

**Music** – Tango syncretizes the Afro-Cuban dance rhythm known as habanera, the milonga (a gaucho dance of alleged African origin), the candombé (an African-derived rhythm that had become an important part of Uruguayan culture), as well as European instruments (among them the iconic bandoneon) and forms (the waltz). But, tango can be enjoyed on other instruments such as the Mongolian horsehead fiddle known as [morin khuur](#).

**Geography** – Tango is tied to place, most notably Argentina, where it originated. In February 1914, the tango made its Istanbul debut at a ball in the Skating Palace. Though tango was at first enjoyed only by the non-Muslim minorities (Greeks, Armenians, and Jews), after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and of Atatürk’s policy of opening to the West, Muslims too embraced tango. Since then, tango has become a global genre disseminated throughout the world, with tango scenes in Helsinki, London, Berlin, Tokyo, and New York.

**Sexuality and Gender** – Tango’s early history is linked to the brothels of Buenos Aires. The erotic suggestiveness of its movements and the topics found in the lyrics of the *tango canción* make it an important topic in gender studies. Recently, the queer tango movement emerged, which has adapted and transformed tango in order to redefine a

liberated territory that attempts to avoid identity confines.

**Medicine and Therapy** – Recent music research suggests that tango dancing may be an effective strategy for influencing symptoms related to mood disorders such as depression and anxiety. In turn, tango can positively affect the training of healthcare professionals, whose understanding of patients in a therapeutic setting can be improved through the mastery of this dance.



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# What is Musicology?

by Georg Burgstaller

Since its formal inception in 19th-century Europe, musicology has come to cover the gamut of music making worldwide. In its original conception the discipline was, and to a large part remains, distinct from solely enjoying or even making music, although scholars tacitly understood from the outset that it would or rather should benefit any given listener and, especially, the performer. Seeking to mirror the artistry of composers and the virtuosity of singers and players, musicologists aim to discover — usually having developed a background as musicians themselves — why music sounds the way it does, what it wishes to express, and how this is best achieved in performance. Adding to this, the cultural study of music known as ethnomusicology has created awareness of music's *meaning* in societies around the globe. While ethnomusicology and popular music studies frequently remain institutionally separate from musicology, their concerns have come to increasingly influence all music scholars, encouraging them to look beyond musical structures codified in musical notation and emphasize other ways of thinking about musical production and consumption, often broaching historically marginalized themes and considering historically marginalized people.



At the same time, musicology intersects with a host of other disciplines, often in complex and unexpected ways.

At the same time, musicology intersects with a host of other disciplines, often in complex and unexpected ways. These include the power of music to evoke any range of emotions in listeners and the application thereof in medicine and therapy, music's interplay with other art forms and interactive media, and inquiries into music's acoustic and metaphysical dimensions unfolding in time and space. At its most ambitious, musicology helps to uncover, recover, and reposition the way we view a universal human activity that is likewise telling of the human condition. To that end, musicologists are perhaps less preoccupied with their discipline's scientific status (as signaled by the suffix *-ology*), but rather inspired by their own curiosity about, enthralment with, and deep love for music.



# Idelsohn's *Thesaurus of Oriental Hebrew Melodies*

by James R. Cowdery and Tina Frühauf

Upon settling in Jerusalem in 1906, the Latvian cantor Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882–1938) was deeply impressed by the diversity of the Jewish communities in Palestine and embarked on a massive project. Supported by the Academy of Science in Vienna and supplied with a phonograph for his fieldwork, Idelsohn recorded the unique musical and linguistic traditions of these communities. This ethnological work led to the publication of his *Gesänge der jemenitischen Juden* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1914), which would become the first installment of his ten-volume *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz / Thesaurus of Oriental Hebrew Melodies* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel et al., 1914–32).

In its final form, the thesaurus covers a universe of over 8,000 Jewish melodies including the musical traditions of Yemenite, Babylonian, Persian, Bukharan, Oriental Sephardi, Moroccan, German, Eastern European, and Hassidic Jewish communities in Palestine and throughout the Diaspora (as a cantor he had previously served in South Africa and in various cities in Germany). Idelsohn's goal was to illuminate the "authentic" Hebrew elements in Jewish melodies. He firmly believed that neither geographical



change nor outside influences could alter the basic spiritual mold of Jewish culture.

Both the original publication and the reprints of this exhaustive and seminal work are accessible through RILM's [\*Index to Printed Music\*](#).

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# What is Music Pedagogy? Universality of Education in Sound and Sound in Education

by Tina Frühauf

Learning music is as old as music making itself. The world's cultures have developed a panoply of different systems of teaching and learning—one may think of *maguru panggul*, literally, “teaching with the mallet” in Bali and Java; or the system of the Xhosa in Ngqoko, South Africa, which is based on the progression incentive–songs–techniques– terminology. Master–apprentice approaches have been common in many cultures around the globe and throughout history, from the troubadours to the *guru-śiṣya paramparā* tradition in India to the Bach family. But as a field of study, music education has only been established in later modernity, and it was not until the 20th century that it moved towards becoming a discipline in its own right: music pedagogy.

In its broader sense, music pedagogy refers to all practical, application-oriented, as well as scholarly efforts aimed at teaching and instruction. The tasks of music pedagogy focus on ability, knowledge, experience, understanding, and interpretation in all areas of music. As such, music pedagogy includes the related concepts of music education, didactics, teaching, and instruction in music, although their distinctions are neither clear nor consensual.

In its narrower sense, music pedagogy has come to refer to the scholarly reflection of



and theory formation within all its fields. Systematic music pedagogy thus provides the practical, applied areas with a theoretical basis for their actions and reflects on aesthetic, psychological, and sociological questions on the meaning and effect of music and on the reception of art in the most diverse forms of music. As such, it serves artistic, scholarly, and didactic practice.

With music pedagogy's evolution in the 20th century, many distinctive approaches further developed or received refinement and new methods came to the fore. Among them are, the Kodály method named after Hungary's charismatic composer and pedagogue; Eurhythmics developed by the Swiss musician and educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze; the Schulwerk of Carl Orff in Germany; and the Suzuki method, created by the Japanese violinist and pedagogue.

Paralleling its establishment as an independent discipline, the institutionalization of music pedagogy began as well. Aside from its place in the academy, music university or college, and school, music education also takes place in individualized, lifelong learning, and community contexts. Both amateur and professional musicians typically take music lessons, short private sessions with an individual teacher. In all these diverse efforts and approaches, all share the goal to educate people how to produce organized sound, make and transmit music, and do it well.

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# Thakur and Mussolini

by James R. Cowdery

Near the end of his visit to Rome in 1933, the Hindustani vocalist Omkarnath Thakur (1887–1968) received an invitation to dine with Mussolini; *Il Duce* had caught wind of Thakur's theories and experiments regarding the inducement of emotional states by [rāga](#) performances, and he wanted a demonstration.

After a specially prepared vegetarian dinner, Thakur began with *hindolam*, which depicts valor. "When I was soaring in the high notes of the raga", he later recalled, "Mussolini suddenly said 'Stop!' I opened my eyes and found that he was sweating heavily. His face was pink and his eyes looked like burning coals. A few minutes later his visage gained normalcy and he said 'A good experiment'". After Thakur brought him to tears with *rāga chayanat*, which is meant to depict pathos, Mussolini said, after taking some time to recover, "Very valuable and enlightening demonstration about the power of Indian music". *Il Duce* then returned the favor: Producing his violin, he treated Thakur to works by Paganini and Mozart. Again, both agreed on the music's power to evoke emotion.

"I could not sleep at all the entire night", the vocalist recalled, "wondering whether the meeting had really taken place; I thought it was a part of a dream". The next day, two letters from Mussolini arrived — one thanking him and one appointing him as director



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of a newly formed university department to study the effect of music on the mind (an appointment that he was unable to accept).

This according to "Omkarnath Thakur & Benito Mussolini" by B.K.V. Sastry (*Sruti* 163 [April 1998] 19-21; *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature* 1999-26342). Although the exact date of this meeting is not recorded, we know that it took place in May 1933.

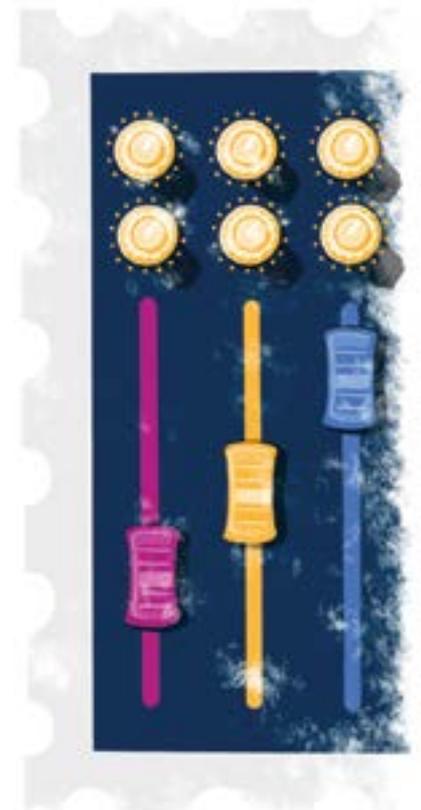


# Mastering the Mix – Choosing Authentic Popular Music Material for Libraries

by Jason Lee Oakes

Long before huge databases of music recordings could be shared and filtered with such efficiency, academic databases like *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature* developed a similar approach to information about music. Drawing on a “peer-to-peer” network of shared music research, today there are nearly a million records about music in *RILM Abstracts of Literature*, searchable through the EBSCO interface. But, how can searches of this massive database be made as “musical” as possible, quite apart from the content itself? Taking a page from Napster and from other digital music algorithms, how can we best enhance the quality and the impact of information retrieval in academic databases through increased musicality?

A good starting point can be established through a simple observation: Music is defined by relationships. A single note doesn't mean much in isolation. Even Tuvan and Mongolian throat singers subtly alter timbres/overtones over time to make a “single note” musical. In the broadest possible sense, then, music acquires meaning through how notes are arranged relative to other notes: arranged pitch-wise in relative intervals to form melodies and harmonies; arranged relative to time through structured rhythms, metrical systems, and other temporal modes; and through the relative arrangement of voices and instru-



ments to create compelling timbres and textures. Musical meaning is also found in how humanly organized sounds are used to organize people — acting as a powerful symbol for cultural identity, social belonging, individual uniqueness, and other methods of negotiating human relationships.

One quick, easy and useful parameter that can be added to the mix is “Full Text”.

Moving from music itself to music scholarship, database search results are usually at their most effective and appealing when a query is posed in relational terms. Taking an inverse example at first, if you search *RILM Abstracts* for records on “popular music” with Major Topics chosen from EBSCO’s pull-down search menu, more than 82,000 records are returned. The search result isn’t likely to be “effective or appealing” to anyone due to its single-note quality and the lack of focus that results.

But now let’s try turning this into a multi-parameter search. One quick, easy and useful parameter that can be added to the mix is full text. By clicking the “Linked Full Text” box on the left side of the screen, only records with attached PDFs are returned, saving the user a trip to the library in the process. At the time of writing, this search returns more than 7,000 entries. It’s still a large number, but a lot less than 82,000, and the content is just a click away.

From here it’s easy to take more steps to get a more “musical” search result by throwing more parameters, and thus a broader array of relationships, into the mix. Adding an EBSCO Subject parameter to the parameters already chosen, the search is narrowed to records where the chosen word or phrase appears in *RILM Abstract’s* indexing for a given record. For instance, choosing “heavy metal” as the subject returns around 100 full-text citations, a much more manageable number than 7,000.

Most important of all, the results are musical. They strike a useful balance between uniformity and diversity, a balance likewise found in music that strikes an aesthetically appealing balance between repetition and variation. While all the records in the dataset are uniform in addressing heavy metal directly and thoroughly, there's a good bit of variation otherwise: spanning writings that examine "metal studies" as an academic field, sonic traits of drone metal in light of genre theory, the sociology of Caribbean heavy metal scenes, and perceptions of sexuality and gender around female metal fans, among many other topics.

From EBSCO to Excite, the ultimate goal of most search engines is to return a good mix of results. This helps explain the shift from the directory model of first-wave search engines like Yahoo Directory to the second wave of webcrawler search engines (Google most famously) that utilized algorithms to locate sites, collect metadata and build an index. I would submit that the latter won public favor due to two main factors: it was more likely to deliver exactly the results the user was looking for (indexes are more granular than top-down categories); and it was more likely to return unexpected results.

Needless to say, random and irrelevant results are not widely desired. They are equivalent to "wrong notes" in a melody and just about as popular. Instead, results that provide a novel yet purposeful perspective on a query are often the most impactful — like the surprising yet logical-after-the-fact twist in a melody that serves as the "hook". Returning to the example of Napster, it hooked users not just because it found the music they already knew they wanted, but also because they ended up discovering new and unfamiliar music they went on to fall in love with — often by searching laterally through a given user's music collection. This mix of the familiar and the novel is a sure-fire for-

mula for a successful search interface. With this in mind, the digital-age database manager must work to be a master of the mix — all the more so when it comes to popular music studies and other interdisciplinary fields. The popular music researcher is sure to need materials published in non-music journals and publications. What's more, she is likely to seek out other important data strewn across magazines and fanzines, posted on blogs and other websites, and located across a range of other non-traditional sources. To accommodate their needs, RILM has been seeking out and compiling more of these “outside the box” materials, curated for potential use value as primary or secondary data.

With this in mind, the digital-age database manager must work to be a master of the mix.

Given the risk of information overload that comes with the widening and the blurring of traditional boundaries, effective curation becomes all the more important. Approaching a database from a musical point of view offers a step in the right direction. Editors at RILM and at other databases are increasingly placed in the role of “record collectors” who don't just “collect” but who also filter, organize, and interpret the data we collect. Like the crate-digging DJ, we dedicate ourselves to digging for data and creatively integrating new materials. This [DJ mindset](#) also highlights the necessity of working across various old and new media and of delving into unexplored spaces to find hidden gems.

# The Pointy End: Spoof Articles

by James R. Cowdery

Many reference works for music — and presumably other topics — contain articles about fictitious characters. Sometimes writers for these works slyly slip them by their editors (an article on “Verdi, Lasagne” was almost typeset for printing in *The New Grove Dictionary*); others are incorporated with the collusion of all parties.

For an example, look up Otto Jägermeier in *Komponisten der Gegenwart* (available through *RILM Music Encyclopedias*) or in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (available through *MGG Online*). You will find that Jägermeier composed, among other intriguing works, an opera called *Der Idiot* with a libretto by Fëdor Dostoevskij, and a work for solo clarinet called *Psychosen*. The name Jägermeier is a play on Jägermeister, a popular German cordial.

RILM is not above adding a spoof article or two to [RILM Abstracts of Music Literature](#). Of course, we won't tell you which ones they are, but we'll give you a hint: One includes a reference to the very real and wonderful Malcolm Bilson and Mozart's fantasy in C minor, K.475.

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