

Musical Iconography

Study of the significance and interpretation of visual representations related to music. Can supply pertinent information about instruments and performance practices (if accuracy of depiction is certain); can provoke interpretations about symbolic content of musical situation. Also, musical compositions can be inspired by art.

- Paintings—drawings—sculpture—stained glass windows—tapestries—album cover-art—photographs
- As visual documentation: accurate, inexact, fanciful?
- As cultural documentation: allegorical, social, political?
- Requires parallel expertise in both music history and art history
- RIDIM (International Repertoire of Musical Iconography) scholarly indexing effort for images, similar to RILM, RIPM, and RISM
- Scholarly journal: *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography*

Discography

Most simply, a systematic list of audio recordings; in research, the establishment of facts that distinguish one recording from another or that identify a recording that has been issued in multiple formats or under alternate titles; can involve examination of “session” documentation from a record producer’s archives, as well as published or unpublished interviews with participants, musicians’ memoirs, biographies.

- Arose as an activity of jazz music fans in USA, 1930s
- Uniformity/standardization is a continuing problem (more so in the “wikinet” era! However, see *Brian 5* at <http://www.jazzdiscography.com/Brian/BrianDoc/intro.html>)
- Access to a record producer’s session archives can be difficult
- Secondary research sources include record company’s catalogs, the album’s “packaging” (liner notes etc.), contemporaneous album reviews
- Types of discography: content/genre (e.g. composer; presidential speeches; SFX libraries) – performer (individuals or ensembles, e.g. Charlie Parker; Beatles; JP Sousa Band) – label (e.g. RCA Victor; Columbia Masterworks; Sun Records)
- Downloaded music tracks are seldom accompanied by metadata and provenance/circumstances of recording

Musical Biography

Literary genre consisting of written accounts of the lives and works of musicians and topically-related persons; biographies document and interpret events, influences, and relationships in a life and may also include connections to the subject's socio-cultural milieu and/or speculations on psychological issues.

- Prehistory/ancient history in legends, myths, sacred writings: Apollo, Orpheus, King David, etc.
- 1700s: biographical dictionaries appear, as do biographical sketches in early music periodicals; the musical public is interested in anecdotes and reminiscences
- Genre of book-length music biography appears in late-18th-early-19th centuries; very uneven quality—no standards of scholarship!—combine the factual, the conjectural, and the fanciful to varying degrees
- Late 19th-century: application of scholarly methods to biography by musicologists; there appear works on individual composers for both the academic musician and the general public (who are always interested in lives of musicians!)
- By the turn of the 20th century many (but not all) musicologists become less interested in writing biographies (why not? because human factors are peripheral to “works” and “styles” and “practices,” and are too prone to subjective expression!)
- A notable exception: the objective/empiricist “documentary biography” genre, pioneered by OE Deutsch’s work on Schubert
- By mid-20th-century we have the age of revision & demythologizing—all those romantic-era bios must be re-examined and corrected!
- Late-20th-century: cross-disciplinary concerns and renewed interest in issues such as creativity and marginalization spawn new era of biographical writing which are often oriented to psychological analysis or critical/cultural theory