Aspects of Music-Resource Description and Evaluation

DESCRIPTION

Publication Information-
Author(s)/editor(s); composer; performer
Title/subtitle; edition
Imprint/reprint (i.e., publisher place, publisher name, year of publication; for recordings, dates of capture/release)
Frequency of issue (for periodicals)

Structural/Editorial Information-
How many pages, volumes; presence of front matter and back matter; “site map”
Inspect preface/foreword and table of contents (TOC): what is the source’s purpose, intended audience, and scope (comprehensive, selected, cursory), and how is the material ordered? How does it differ from earlier editions?
Inspect the indexing: is it thorough, or barely adequate? cross-referenced?
Is there a supporting appendix, glossary, bibliography, “FAQ,” etc?
Illustrations? Tables? Musical examples? Lists of abbreviations or sigla?

EVALUATION

Credibility, authorial credentials. Is the author/editor an “expert” – with what academic or professional institutions is he/she affiliated – what other items has he/she authored?

Bias, vested interest. Is the treatment “fair and balanced” or does there seem to be an implicit or explicit ideological slant – might editorial decisions/positions be compromised by commercial interests of some kind – does the author self-disclose assumptions, biases or special connections that might compromise objectivity (or that might helpfully explain “where I’m coming from,” especially on a controversial issue) – are “opinion” pieces clearly identifiable as such?

Factual accuracy. Are mistakes or inaccuracies evident – can crucial statements be corroborated by another authority – what do reviewers have to say about the reliability of this source? Are there enough typographical or printing errors to make you uneasy? Are the illustrations and examples properly attributed? Internet: is this site a HOAX or SPOOF?

Recency and relevance. Is the source of recent publication and reflective of current attitudes, or is it an older source of historical interest and importance – how will this resource be useful and relevant to YOUR project – does an internet resource have “stability” or did it prove to be unsustainable?