

Bodleian uses crowd-sourcing to catalogue music collection

May 4 2012



About 4,000 pieces of popular piano music from the mid-Victorian period have been digitized and made available online for the public to catalogue.

The Bodleian Library is asking the public for help in cataloguing one of its collections. As part of a new project, members of the public are being asked to help describe 4,000 music pieces from the Bodleian Libraries' collections.

What's the score at the Bodleian? is the first crowd-sourcing project undertaken by the Bodleian Libraries. About 4,000 pieces of popular piano [music](#) from the mid-Victorian period have been digitized and

made available online. The music was mostly produced for domestic entertainment, and many of these scores have illustrated or decorative covers and advertisements. The collection has never been included in the library's catalogue, and its exact contents are therefore unknown.

By visiting the website, 'citizen librarians' can help by describing the scores and contributing to the creation of an online catalogue. Members of the public – with or without musical backgrounds – will be given images of the scores, which they can catalogue by submitting an online form describing the item. The project will also encourage performances of this music and will aim to provide links to audio or video recordings.

Sarah Thomas, Bodley's Librarian, said: 'Making our collections accessible for the purposes of teaching, learning and research, both within and beyond Oxford, has become increasingly possible over recent decades due to the great strides we've seen in the creation of tools for retrieving and manipulating data.

'We endeavour to apply these technologies to our music holdings as well, wherever possible. We hope that What's the score at the Bodleian? will represent a way for people to help us to make the Bodleian's music collections more accessible to the wide range of people who use them, or who would do if they knew they were there.'

Martin Holmes, Alfred Brendel Curator of Music at the Bodleian Libraries, said: 'Since the 1980s musicology has undergone a process of shedding the assumptions of its founding myths and has subjected ideas of genius, musical value, and musical greatness to historical and sociological critique, situating them contingently within then prevalent romantic aesthetics. New critical perspectives have aimed, among other things, to discover what non-elite music-making reveals about the everyday diffusion of certain kinds of ideas and practices. Making low-register, amateur music for the piano available to scholars will enable

further examination of a number of key social functions that such music performed.

'In making the scores available online, they will not only be accessible for academic study and research but will also be there to enjoy for anyone who is interested in various aspects of Victorian music, culture and society.'

The project was partially funded by Google and is developed in collaboration with [crowd-sourcing](#) technology expert Zooniverse.

Provided by Oxford University

Citation: Bodleian uses crowd-sourcing to catalogue music collection (2012, May 4) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-05-bodleian-crowd-sourcing-catalogue-music.html>

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