not before captured on recording to their striking design and sound quality. Hopefully listeners captivated by what they hear on Bridge's *Music of Harry Partch* series will be led to seek out Partch's historic records and discover a musical landscape they could never have imagined otherwise.

Andrew Granade

• • •

Journal of the Society for American Music (2020), Volume 14, Number 3, pp. 379–381
© The Society for American Music 2020 doi:10.1017/S1752196320000280

Music Division, *The New York Public Library, Digital Collections*, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/divisions/music-division.

The digital collections of the New York Public Library (NYPL) boast nearly nine hundred thousand items that include prints, photographs, maps, manuscripts, published music, and streaming video. Within NYPL, the Music Division describes itself as

> One of the world's preeminent music collections—documenting the art of music in all its diversity—classical and opera as well as the whole spectrum of popular music including spirituals, ragtime, jazz, musical theater, film, rock and world music. While the division contains many scores and manuscripts from centuries past, its curatorial mandate is an activist one, placing major emphasis on capturing the creative output of contemporary composers.[1]

Despite this focus on contemporary composers, little of that content is accessible in the Music Division's digital collections. Likely because of issues with copyright and intellectual property, most of the materials available online are from the first half of the twentieth century or earlier. With just over 140 digital collections of material, or just over nineteen thousand items, the digital collections—as in almost any major archival repository—are a fraction of what is available for onsite use. More than half of these digital collections include three items or fewer, while only twenty collections currently include more than one hundred items. Many of the items are published sheet music, pieces of iconography, and music journals from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Collections of several prominent American composers, such as John Cage and Henry Cowell, are also included.

The robust, linked metadata and the clear presentation of specific items are two of the strengths of the NYPL's digital collections. Metadata provided include title, collection, dates/origin, library locations within the NYPL, topics, genres, physical description, resource type, and unique identification number. Almost all of these data are hyperlinked to aid users in locating additional related materials. Similarly, NYPL's presentation of the digital items facilitates ease of use. Upon clicking on a specific item, users are presented with several options for viewing the material: individual scans of each page with the ability to zoom and rotate items;

[1] Music Division, The New York Public Library, Digital Collections, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/divisions/music-division.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752196320000280 Published online by Cambridge University Press

for multipage items, viewing the material as a book in which one can digitally "flip" pages; or the option to download individual scans as JPEG or TIFF files to view on another device. Likewise, NYPL's prominent, easy-to-use placement of citation information indicates a focus on the use of collection materials by diverse patrons, be they scholars, students, teachers, or hobbyists. Most telling is the inclusion of a formatting option for citing an item on Wikipedia.

Navigating the larger collections within the Music Division does present several small challenges. Although the keyword search function allows for searching across all collections, like many library databases, variances and (mis)spellings can lead to a yield of zero results. The "Music Division Set and Costume Design Collection"—the Division's third largest collection and one of the NYPL's understated gems—provides a succinct example of some of the website's idiosyncrasies. Upon clicking on the collection, users are presented with a gallery view of items with a navigation pane. This navigation pane ostensibly groups the images by associated production or individual creator in a somewhat alphabetical order, but lacks an accompanying scope and contents note in the "About" section for clarification. Some productions, such as *Aida* or *Alceste*, include further hierarchical breakdowns for drawings or designs from specific productions. Yet after clicking on several of the headings, I was unable to view any items, even though the navigation pane suggested that several items could be found under those headings. In other collections, the navigation pane is more intuitive. The second largest collection, "American Popular Songs," organizes the published sheet music by year, and within each year, by alphabetical order. Moreover, the accompanying prose in the collection's "About" section makes clear the broader context of the collection from which the digitized items come.

The Music Division's digital collections do offer significant potential as a pedagogical resource in the cultural study of music. For example, one of the more helpful search functions within a specific collection is the ability to filter results by topic, name, collection, place, genre, publisher, division, or material type. The hundreds of possible topics within the "American Popular Songs" collection include "Flirting," "Desertion," "Jealousy," and "Poor African Americans." Instructors for students of all levels could draw on these access points for a variety of methodological approaches. The many scanned periodicals and magazines likewise offer students the possibility to study past receptions and conceptions of music through primary documents. Other items, such as a lock of Ludwig van Beethoven's hair, can lay the groundwork for topical conversations on the notion of genius, commemoration, and even provenance.

Researchers, however, may be frustrated by accessing materials through the Music Division's digital collections. The website is not very clear in delineating which digitized materials are only available onsite by accessing the NYPL's Wi-Fi network. Only when I tried to view the treasure trove of manuscripts within the John Cage collection did I receive the notification that access to specific items was available only onsite. Similarly, the metadata for several collections is less than clear in indicating if the Music Division holds additional materials onsite that have not been scanned. The digital collection of the Felix Labunski Papers, for example, consists of one manuscript score. Yet the accompanying "About" section lists correspondence, clippings, programs, and other ephemera among the collection's contents.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752196320000280 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Only at the very end of the lengthy description does the user see a nearly hidden link to a finding aid for the full collection.

The Music Division's digital collections continue to grow in scope and size, encouraging users to revisit for new or expanded content. Once users are accustomed to some of the website's idiosyncratic organization of mostly historical rather than contemporary content, they will find a wealth of potential, especially for pedagogical use in the classroom.

Paul Allen Sommerfeld

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752196320000280 Published online by Cambridge University Press