

Genres, forms, types and somewhere in-between: exploring the category of “musical genre” for organizing bibliographic music collections

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ABSTRACT

Genre is an important facet in bibliographic classification schemes. Yet, the nature of musical genre as a type of information, especially its close but indistinct connections to the related ideas of form and type, has received little deep analysis in knowledge organization discourse. This article uses classification scheme and superfacet analysis, alongside music domain analysis, to contemplate musical genre as a classificatory unit. The bibliographic and domain analysis of genre illuminates the synonymous nature of genre/form as terms and the porous genre/form boundary of categories, as well as highlighting the dependency between genre and medium/function facets. The analysis of forms reveals interesting questions about the *it-ness* versus *about-ness* question in music, and explores the relative dominance of genre *versus* form and how this compares to the music domain. The analysis of types introduces the novel idea of types of music as supergenres, as well as discussing the connection between types of music and the (de)centralization of Western art music. The article concludes with a model of the classification of musical genre, showing the complexity of the classificatory unit of genre and how it occupies a shared space between genre, form, type and other music information.

KEYWORDS

Genre; classification theory; music classification; musical form; type of music; domain classification

INTRODUCTION

Genre is an important part of describing and classifying musical works, and works about music. In bibliographic classification scheme terms, it is often identified as one of two key facets of music alongside medium and conjoined with form – see, for example, Pethes (1967), Elliker (1994), Smiraglia and Young (2006), and Lee (2017). Put simply, genre is a key way by which music is organized and accessed in bibliographic collections of music. Yet, despite its importance, the nature of musical genre as a classificatory device in bibliographic classification schemes remains undefined and somewhat undiscussed in the knowledge organization (KO) literature. At the heart of this ambiguity is fuzziness about the boundaries between genre and form on one side (for example, symphony versus sonata form), and genre and type of music on the other (for example, symphony versus Western art music). The issues with genre go beyond bibliographic classifications and beyond musical genres. Genre itself is problematic. Duff (2000, 1), when introducing genre theory in a literary setting, states that “few concepts have proved more problematic and unstable than that of genre”. So, this article takes a novel approach of exploring genre by using knowledge organization to explore a particular iteration of genre: musical genre in the bibliographic classification. It unpicks and analyses musical genre as a classificatory unit, and considers

what genre is as a *type of information* for the organization of, and access to, bibliographic collections of music.

However, music in bibliographic classifications is not autonomous. As shown in the idea of domain analysis (Hjørland 2017; Mai 2011), the bibliographic classification of a subject is a reflection of, a reaction to, and interconnected with its classification in its related domain. So, musical genre as a complex and nebulous classificatory unit is unlikely to have been born this way in bibliographic classifications; instead, to truly understand musical genre as a classificatory unit, we need to also look at the likely germination of such complexities within the antechambers of the music domain, and consider how genre's porous boundaries and overlapping concepts are conceived in the music domain too. Domain analysis is an important tool within classification (Hjørland 2017); for example, Abrahamsen's (2003) formative article on indexing genre within the music domain argues for a domain analysis approach. This provides a foundation for the study of the form/genre/types of music triumvirate in both the music domain and bibliographic classifications. Moreover, we need to contemplate the connections between the two, utilizing Lee et al.'s (2019) model of relationships between domain classification and bibliographic classification.

Therefore, three research questions underpin this article:

- How is musical genre treated as a category of information within bibliographic classifications?
- How do form and types of music relate to genre within bibliographic classifications?
- What are the connections between genre as a category of information within bibliographic classifications, and how genre is used to define, organize and access information in the music domain?

The terms and scope inherent in these questions require comment. First, the ambiguous term “bibliographic classifications” is used deliberately: the article analyses bibliographic classification schemes (for example, *Dewey Decimal Classification* and *British Catalogue of Music*), but also considers another knowledge organization system for bibliographic information which is not a classification scheme as it does not arrange books/music on the shelves (the *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT)*). Second, the emphasis on bibliographic classifications within the confines of these questions has a corollary: the music which dominates the classification schemes permeates the analysis. Western art music is the dominant music in the majority of the bibliographic classifications examined, and thus the examination of genre will inevitably reflect this Western art music lens. While non-Western-art-music features in the examples examined, even this is through the perspective of being the outliers to the Western-centric, art-music-centric conceptions of music exemplified in these schemes. Third, there is a question of what we mean by “music”. This article considers genre as a classificatory device for both music itself and works about music – although we will find fascinating differences between how they are treated in classification schemes. Fourth, there is a corollary from this question about musical works versus musical documents (Smiraglia 2002), which is an important delineation in information studies and music. So, when discussing musical genre, we also need to think about whether we are talking about a type of information (genre) that is part of a musical *work* or one that is part of a musical *document*. Furthermore, there is also overlap between works/genres in the importance of social and historical positioning, which is noted for musical works (Smiraglia 2002; Goehr 1992) but also significant to studies of genre.

The article will start with an overview of some relevant ideas about genre classification from the KO, literary theory and music literature, before moving on to a discussion of the methodological methods utilized in the study. The main part of the article is divided into three sections. The first considers the classificatory idea of musical genre in bibliographic classifications. This is followed by a section which considers the classification of forms in the context of genres, and then a section which looks at the idea of types of music in relation to genres. Each of these utilizes example bibliographic classifications and systems of “superfacets”, and are contextualized by reference to similar classificatory ideas in the music domain. The article concludes with a model of musical genre in bibliographic classifications, which illustrates the complexity of musical genre as a way of organizing musical information. This study sets out to understand the essence of musical genre as a classificatory device, which ultimately will help us to access bibliographic documents of music.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Genre-as-Classification

Studies of genre have a varying relationship with the idea of genre-as-classification. In some sources, genre’s function as a classificatory device is so imbued within the meaning of genre, that it even features in its definition: for example, *Oxford English Dictionary* defines genre as “A particular style or category of works of art ...” (Oxford English Dictionary, “genre (n.)”, 2023), and Samson’s (2001) *Grove Music* entry for genre defines it as “A class, type, or category”. Frow (2006, 51) goes further still and states that genre is “... a matter of discrimination and taxonomy: of organizing things into recognizable classes.” Beghtol’s (2001, 17) seminal article on genre goes even further, saying that to discuss genres is to inevitably discuss classification, and also states the *type* of classification: “A discussion of genres is a discussion of classificatory activities – specifically, of the division of some whole thing into the kinds or types of the thing.” In all these definitions and examples, genre *is* categorization. Yet, this position is contested. For example, Andersen (2015a), draws on the work of Miller to posit that genre is no longer about classification at all, and the information studies work *Genre Theory in Information Studies* (Andersen ed. 2015b) is concerned with claiming back genre studies in information studies from a position of genre-as-classification. Interestingly, in our research, genre is not analysed as *especially* classificatory as a concept; instead, genre is discussed as a category of information, or a facet, just as though it were any other facet of music, such as medium, time period, and so on.

Musical Genre in Bibliographic Classifications

Interestingly, existing literature could be said to be both awash in studies of the classification of musical genre, and also an underrepresented topic – it depends, entirely, on the viewpoint and discipline. Rafferty (2022) states that much has been written about musical genre classification from the machine learning and automatic indexing contexts. Furthermore, articles such as Madalli et al.’s (2015) creation of a faceted ontology for music include some discussion of the KO of genres; however, genre *as a category* is not deeply questioned.

Within the remit of bibliographic classifications, studies which focus on musical genre are much rarer, but there are useful ideas about genre contained in works which look at music classification more generally or also include non-bibliographic classifications of music. To start, it is useful to note that form/genre is considered to be an important facet, according to the music classification literature. For example, Smiraglia and Young (2006) place it as one

of the two fundamental facets of music. This strengthens the argument that it is worthy of close consideration. Lee's (2017) doctoral dissertation includes a chapter on genre and form, which articulates some of the issues on terminology of facets which are discussed later in this article, and these ambiguities around the naming of the genre facet form part of the classification scheme analysis in this paper. Hider and Lee's (2023) work on music genre is focussed on subgenres rather than genre as a category, and includes a mix of bibliographic and non-bibliographic classifications. Nevertheless, it has some interesting findings about ambiguity in defining musical subgenres, which augments the idea of the musical genre facet being somewhat abstruse. An important aspect of genre's nature as a facet can be extrapolated from the idea of orthogonality in music facets (Lee et al. 2021) which found that the genre/form facet was frequently dependent on the medium and function facets. This idea helps us to frame the analysis of genre/form in classification schemes for this article, where we also consider the relationship of genre/form/type to medium and function. Finally, Szostak and Lee (2022) consider how musical form, genre and types can be added to the interdisciplinary classification scheme Basic Concepts Classification (BCC). The article finds some benefits in using synthesis to express genre/form/type, including circumnavigating issues of consistency in the quantity of subgenres between different types of music, and how BCC's precise system of describing inter-subject relationships allows music subgenre classes to be synthesized from existing classes. Yet, even these tools do not resolve the baseline question of what *is* genre (versus form and/or type).

The Connections between Form and Genre

A key theme of this article is to consider how the category of genre interrelates to both form and types. Therefore, it is useful to briefly consider how this plays out in both musicological and general literary theory literature. To start, there is crossover in terminology between genre and form. For example, Dreyfus (1993) describes the use of the terms "genre" and "form" in musicological literature up until the early 1990s as synonymous; as another example, Samson (2001) uses the term "form" to describe genre in certain places in his *Grove Music* entry on genre. This terminological interplay is discussed in more detail in the section on genre. The idea of the genre/form synonym is found in discussions of literary genre theory too: Levine (2015, 13) states that "For many critics, the terms *form* and *genre* are synonymous or near-synonymous". Consequently, we are exploring genre as a category and its boundary with form, yet at a primal level, these terms are used in scholarly practice as synonyms.

The genre-form connection is not, however, just a connection in terminology. Dahlhaus (1989) suggests that genre is constituted by text, function, scoring (i.e. medium) and formal model (i.e. form); thus, form helps to make up genre, and we could conceive genre-form as a hierarchical relationship. In information retrieval, Rafferty (2022) notes how Rosso's writings consider the genre of a document to be based "on purpose, form and content", again emphasizing again the hierarchical connection between genre and its subordinate of form. Dreyfus (1993) makes a pertinent point about the relative values of form and genre: he suggests that from the 19th century until the time he was writing, musical genre is generally – and he believes, mistakenly – seen as something which is subsidiary to form and governed by form. This is a key point that will be returned to through this article: when looking at bibliographic classifications, we will ask whether genre classes are being driven by genre or by form.

Time is important to the form/genre relationship along two different axes. First, Dreyfus (1993) describes a genre/form relationship that ebbs and flows over time, with form starting as being part of genre pre-19th century, and he hopes to return genre to this position in the 1990s. This counsels us that the relationship between form/genre is only true for the time in which it is given, and that this should be considered when analysing a set of bibliographic schemes which were created, and potentially updated, at very different times. Second, Levine (2015), writing from a literary perspective, argues that one key difference between forms and genres is that forms are generally more stable across time and environments, whereas genres are not. So, this is something to consider when examining genre as a category in classification schemes: genres are likely to only be valid for certain historical periods, and not at others.

The analysis of form and genre brings to light another factor: function. For example, function is also included as a constituent of musical genre by Dahlhaus (1989). As another example, in literary theory, Fowler (1982) discusses various triggers for genre change, including change of function; so, again, this suggests a close relationship and a dependency between genre and function. We will see that function makes an appearance when considering genres in bibliographic classifications, and also very much so for types.

Finally, this analysis has considered form and genre, but what of type? The idea of a kind-of thing which encapsulates types of music such as popular music, blues, folk music, and so on, is much more nebulous than form and genre. So, we do not find explicit literature which considers the type/genre boundary in the same way as the form/genre boundary. This, in itself, is an interesting result, and foreshadows what we will find in the main body of the article about type as a classificatory device.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quasi-content-analysis methodology, to unpick and decode musical genre as a type of information within bibliographic classifications. This research examined the classification of genre by analysing seven example classifications: British Catalogue of Music Classification (BCM - Coates 1960), Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC - Dewey et al. 2011), Flexible Classification (Flexible - Pethe 1967), Library of Congress Classification (LCC - Library of Congress 2024b), Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT - Library of Congress 2024a), Subject Classification (Subject - Brown 1939), and Universal Decimal Classification (UDC - British Standards Institution 2006). (Note that LCGFT is not a classification scheme for arranging physical objects, but instead a vocabulary providing index terms for bibliographic data.) Summary information *about* the schemes can be seen in Table 1, including date, type of scheme and type of music document covered.

The schemes were selected by purposive sampling along various spectrums. They include a mix of general classifications and special classifications for musics, and schemes were purposively included in the sample where they had substantial enough music schedules for there to be the possibility of many classes for genres, forms, and types. The latest editions of schemes were used where possible, but convenience sampling also led to the more available UDC 2006 edition being used, say, than *UDC Online*. However, although the most recent examples of schemes were consulted (aside from UDC), it should be noted that the structure of knowledge and technology is often indebted to earlier editions, and hence the original year of the classification scheme is also included. As longitudinal data was not required for these

research questions, only one version of each scheme was consulted. However, all parts of the music schedules were included: for example, in BCM, this meant looking at both the schedules for music literature and music, and for LCC looking at the M (music), ML (music literature) and MT (music theory) schedules. The main structure, coverage, terminology used for musical genre, form and type was analysed for each scheme. In addition to the classification schemes, three systems of superfacets were also used and are included in Table 1: Elliker (1994), Redfern (1978) and IAML (devised for The International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML) - Dorfmüller 1975).

(“Superfacets” is a term coined by Lee et al. (2018) to describe the results when an individual or group have created a set of facets which sits above any individual classification scheme, and that they believe to encapsulate all of a subject. These three sets are discussed in more detail in Lee et al. (2018)). These superfacets proved especially valuable for issues around terminology, as they provided a summarizing meta-perspective.

Bibliographic classification	Type of classification	Date	Documents included
BCM	Special	1960	Music and literature
DDC	General	2024, originally 1876	Music and literature
Flexible	Special	1967	Music and literature
LCC	General	2023, originally 1904	Music and literature
LCGFT	General	2019, originally 2013	Music
Subject	General	1939	Music and literature
UDC	General	1993, originally 1902-1907	Music and literature
Elliker	Superfacets	1993	Music
IAML	Superfacets	1975	Music and literature
Redfern	Superfacets	1978	Music and literature

Table 1: The Example Bibliographic Classifications and Superfacets

In addition to the analysis of the structure, facet/category labels and overall coverage, the research also used five examples of genres, forms, and types. These are as follows: genres – operetta, oratorio, nocturne, symphony, waltz; forms – binary form, fantasia, fugue, sonata form, variations; types – film music, folk music, jazz, popular music, reggae. These examples are all in common use in music, and were all terms that had entries in *Grove Music*, to allow for analysis of terminology – see below. This allowed for a deeper analysis of certain issues, especially when looking at the boundaries between genre/form/type. The terms were selected purposively but were not intended to be representative, and with acknowledgement of the very small number of classes these form out of the total population of genres/forms/types. Relatively common genres/forms/types were chosen, so as to stand most chance of being included in the bibliographic classifications in the first place. The examples deliberately included both undebatable genres/forms/types and some boundary examples, either where an individual classification between form/genre/type was debatable (such as nocturne) or ones which questioned the nebulous nature of form, genre or type as a whole (such as jazz, which is included here as a type, but in classifications which have no broader types is treated as a genre). Additionally, entries for each of the example genres/forms/types were consulted in *Grove Music* (*Grove Music Online* 2024), the foundational reference resource in the music domain. This was to see whether the categorization and labelling as a genre/form/type in this representative text from the music domain accorded with the findings from the bibliographic classifications. This enhanced the discussion of the fuzzy boundary examples, and highlighted musicological discussion points around genre-as-classification.

Additionally, general writings about genre as a category were consulted from the music domain. This took an approach of using domain classifications, which uses a small part of the domain analysis approach (Hjørland 2017; Abrahamsen 2003). So, a small sample of domain (music) texts were consulted, which specifically focussed on defining genre especially in relation to form, such as Dahlhaus (1989) and Dreyfus (1993). However, it should be noted that these musicological texts are from relatively recent musicological thought, rather than being a historical study. Finally, a note about terminology is needed. The word “musicological” is used to indicate thought from the music domain. However, it is used as shorthand for the all the sub-disciplines contained within music (music theory, ethnomusicology, and so on), not just musicology.

THE CLASSIFICATORY IDEA OF GENRE

The Terminology for Genre as a Category

The research starts by examining genre in the bibliographic classifications. A summary of the categories for genre in the example schemes is shown in Table 2 and the appearance of the five example genres in Table 3. Note that Table 2 includes the labels used by the classification schemes for the category which encompasses the individual genres in the scheme, such as genres in BCM being found under the broader terms of “Types of vocal music” and “Forms of instrumental music”. Delineating the genre sections of the schemes is not always simple, and this highlights the ambiguity around genre/form/type categorisation which is at the core of this research. The most striking terminological aspect of Table 2 is that the term “genre” is used rarely. In place of the term “genre”, many of the examples use “form”/“forms” instead. For example, DDC has categories called “Instrumental forms” and “Dramatic vocal forms”, and in the manual, describes a musical form as a facet. Redfern calls its genres “Forms a) major”, to distinguish them from the minor forms that we may consider to be actual forms and that are more structural. UDC has labels of “Forms of instrumental work”, yet for vocal music calls it “Kinds of music”. This difference in label for genre based on the medium (i.e. the people playing and singing) and function of music (i.e. the purpose of the music) is intriguing, and will be explored later in this section in more detail. Other labels include types (for vocal music, found in BCM, and alongside form in parts of LCC), kinds (for vocal music, found in UDC), music (found in Subject) and no label at all (found in much of LCC, and arguably in LCGFT too). Genre is used in a few places, such as in the title of LCGFT, and very occasionally alongside forms in LCC in the music theory schedules. Interestingly, two systems of superfacets (Elliker and IAML facets) use the term “genre” (or its German equivalent of “Gattungen” in IAML), but again, these only appear conjoined with form. Therefore, two ideas emerge about genre here. Firstly, the variation in naming this category suggests some ambiguity around genre’s borders and boundaries. Secondly, there is clearly an interesting overlapping here with the idea of form, which is worthy of further exploration. This echoes ideas in the music domain by Dreyfus (1993) and Samson (2001) around the genre/form synonym, as discussed in the literature review above.

Bibliographic classification	Labels for genre	Structure of genre
BCM	“Types of vocal music”, “Forms of instrumental music” in literature schedules; no labels in music schedules	Category of information. In two places (instrumental and vocal)
DDC	“Instrumental forms”, “Nondramatic vocal forms”, “Dramatic vocal forms”	Category of information, though some mashup with forms. In three places (instrumental, vocal dramatic and vocal non-dramatic), however one set of instrumental genres is a form/genre hybrid

Flexible	"The form of instrumental compositions", "Vocal forms of music", "The form of theatre music"	Category of information. In three places (instrumental, vocal, theatre)
LCC	Mostly unlabelled in music schedules, when does appear called "By form or type"; some genres are found in "Forms and types" in music literature schedules; some genres are found in "Forms and genres" in music theory schedules	Typically, genres are listed under each individual medium rather than collectively
LCGFT	No sections for genres. Implied term of "Genre" from title of the classification	Not separated or distinct from other types of information. No distinction between vocal/instrumental. Genres <i>under each function</i>
Subject	Could be considered to use the term "Music", such as "Sacred Music", "Concerted Vocal Music", "Orchestral Music", "Dramatic Music"	Category of information. In various places based on medium and dramatic function
UDC	"Forms of instrumental work", "Kinds of music"	Category of information. In two places (instrumental and vocal), and each treated differently
Elliker	"Form/genre"	N/A
IAML	"Form-Gattung" (Translation: form-genre)	N/A
Redfern	"Forms a) major (eg concertos)"	Under "Forms"

Table 2: The Labels and Structure of Genre in Bibliographic Classifications and Superfacets

Genre	Medium/function	Label in Grove definition	BCM	DDC	Flexible	LCC	LCGFT	Subject	UDC
Nocturne	Instrumental/Concert	"Piece" and "genre"	Not included	Genre	Form -- "Small forms, genre pieces" as an example	Not included	Genre	Form	Genre
Oratorio	Vocal/Concert	"Extended musical setting", and indirect used of "genre"	Genre	Genre	Genre	Genre	Genre	Genre	Genre
Operetta	Vocal/Dramatic	"Form", "artistic form", and "genre"	Genre	Genre	Genre	Genre	Variant term only	Genre	Genre
Symphony	Instrumental/Concert	"Work"	Genre, in same class as sonata	Genre	Genre, in same superordinate class as sonatas	Genre	Genre	Genre	Genre
Waltz	Instrumental/Dance	"Dance form", and indirect implication that dance forms are genres	Genre	Genre	Not included	In a list of generic subjects in literature schedules; in joint form/genre list in theory schedules	Genre	Form	Genre, as an including note

Table 3: The Classification of Five Example Genres

There is also an important question about time. We need to consider whether classification schemes' lack of use of the term genre is due to when the schemes were written compared to

the term's use in the music domain. Furthermore, we must remember that even when we are looking at more modern editions of a classification scheme, its roots are in the literary warrant of its first creation and how musicological literature at this point was describing phenomena such as genre. Samson (2001) sees a key session on genre at the American Musicological Society conference in 1986 as an important juncture for rethinking genre. However, while genre was rethought in the late 1980s and 1990s in musicology (Samson 2001; Dreyfus 1985, 1993; Kallberg 1986, 1988), genre as a way of categorizing musical works was certainly not new in the 1980s. The idea of musical genres has been around since Ancient Greek times (Dreyfus 1993); so, the lack of genre as a title for this facet cannot be entirely explained by the term's etymology within knowledge more generally, though could be a reflection of musicological discourse. Furthermore, schemes such as DDC and LCC have regularly updated editions since the late 1980s and 1990s, so *could have* chosen to update their label for genres to better reflect the work of Dreyfus, Kallberg, and other musicologists, despite these schemes originating at a time when perhaps music was not discussed in these terms. So, while the “last” editions of some of the schemes in this study (such as BCM, Flexible and Subject) were published a long time before the 1980s’ musicological developments around genre, this does not hold as a reason for those schemes which updated multiple times after this point (such as DDC and LCC). Therefore, time of writing is not enough by itself to explain away the reluctance to use genre as a label. Instead, we could see the bibliographic classifications’ terminology decisions to be both an accord with the domain’s terminology confusion while, for the post-1980s schemes/editions, simultaneously a discord with modern musicological thought.

Coverage of Genre as a Category

The coverage of genres in the schemes can be seen through the five example genres, as summarized in Table 3. In many cases, the five schemes treat the genres as genres; for example, all seven schemes have oratorios as a genre. Yet, Table 3 also shows nocturnes and waltzes are not included as a class in every scheme, and sometimes they only appear as examples under a more general class. Interestingly, the two lesser-used examples (nocturnes and waltzes) are also the most borderline genres in terms of their categorization, based on their treatment in *Grove Music* and the example schemes.

Structure of Genre as a Category

The example bibliographic classifications and superfacs help us to conceive of genre as a type of information in the bibliographic realm, as seen in Tables 2 and 3. To start, all the bibliographic classifications and superfacs have a place for a type of information that we might call genre. In other words, bibliographic classifications have a category of information which includes classes for symphonies, overtures, operettas, masses and so on – albeit typically called something other than genre, as discussed above. This confirms that genre is an important type of information, and a structural feature of bibliographic realizations of musical information.

A structural issue emerges around the interplay between genres and other aspects of music: the analysis of the classification schemes revealed that genres were generally split by medium and function. For example, genres in DDC were found in “Instrumental forms”, “Non-dramatic forms” and “Dramatic vocal forms”, rather than being a single list. So, genres in DDC could be viewed as being dependent on – so, non-orthogonal with – the facets of musical medium and function (Lee et al. 2021). Interestingly, the seven classification

schemes do not agree exactly on how genres are divided. LCC, BCM and UDC have separate genre lists for different mediums; whereas, DDC, Flexible and Subject appear to utilize function too, with dramatic genres appearing separately in some and sacred genres in others. LCGFT presents a different narrative: genres are not split between vocal and instrumental genres and different functions of music appear as the top terms. Nevertheless, this general idea of genre being linked to medium and function can be related to musicological and literary thought about genre, such as Dahlhaus (1989) stating that genre consists of medium, form, function and text. So, we could view the separate lists of genres for specific mediums and functions and the general dependency of genre on medium and function, as a realization of this musicological view of genre's constituent parts.

Another structural issue centers on the form/genre boundary, and how the five example genres illustrate the porous nature of that boundary. Comparing these with how these example genres are perceived in the music domain, through the *Grove Music* entries, offers an extra level to the analysis. First, in some schemes, the genre of symphony seems to be fused with the genre of sonatas. For instance, in BCM, symphonies and sonatas share a class. In Flexible, symphonies have their own class and subclasses, but the overall class is "Sonata, Symphony". This grouping makes sense from a form perspective as both the sonata and symphony have similar structures, including the first movement in sonata form; yet, it makes far less sense from a genre perspective as symphonies and sonatas typically have different mediums and divergent social histories. So the BCM and Flexible examples suggest a form-driven classification of genres, and one which exemplifies Dreyfus' (1993) concerns from the 1990s about genre being subordinate to form.

Second, there are examples where there are noteworthy differences in how individual example genres are perceived. Nocturnes are described in *Grove Music* as a piece and a genre, and are mostly treated as genres in bibliographic classifications; yet, in one scheme, Subject, the nocturne is treated as a form. This demonstrates the fragility of the form/genre boundary. Furthermore, the waltz offers an example of discordance between domain and bibliographic classification. The waltz is described in *Grove Music* as a dance form, with a little allusion to genre; yet, the majority of bibliographic classifications treat the waltz as a genre instead. This waltz example embodies Dreyfus' (1993) suggestion that forms and genres have been treated as synonyms in musicological thought.

Third, operetta illuminates some of the issues with vocal genres/forms. The *Grove Music* entry for operetta (Lamb 2001) variously calls it a form, artistic form and a genre. Conversely, the example bibliographic classification schemes universally treat operetta as a genre, if we assume any vocal classes not specifically about formal features or parts of vocal music are genres rather than forms. While this may be another use of synonyms in *Grove Music*, it may also be a symptom of the duality of form and genre in vocal music such as operetta. Operetta is defined both by its light subject matter – leaning into the idea of genre here – but also its use of the formal feature of spoken dialogue (Lamb 2001). So, musicological thought is not clear about whether operetta is a genre or form, while the bibliographic classifications appear to err on the side of genre by not treating it explicitly as a form.

FORM IN THE CONTEXT OF GENRE

The Terminology for Form as a Category

Next, we examine the two boundary terms with genre, starting with form. A summary of the categories in the example schemes is shown in Table 4 and the appearance of the five example forms in Table 5. The bibliographic classifications unequivocally use the term “forms” – see Table 4, unlike the shyness of using the term “genres” as seen in the previous section. There is sometimes variation in the construction of the title of these categories. For example, “Musical forms” is used by Subject, DDC and Flexible as either a class title or part of a class title, with BCM opting for “Forms of music”. Nevertheless, there are still signs of the form/genre. Elliker and IAML prefer a form/genre hybrid title for their facet, and LCC usually combines forms with either genres or types. If we consider this in light of Dreyfus’ (1993) statement about forms and genres being synonyms, we could argue that Elliker, IAML and LCC clearly do not consider form and genre to be actual synonyms. If they were, then “form/genre” and “forms and genres” would be a tautology. Furthermore, as discussed above in the genre section, we also see some classification schemes using form as a term for what we might consider genre, including Redfern’s use of minor forms (form) and major forms (genre). So, although forms is used as a label in many classification schemes, the use of forms for non-form-related information could be seen as further reflection of the haziness between form and genre.

Bibliographic classification	Labels for form	Structure of form	Used for music and/or literature
BCM	“Forms of music”	One single list of 7 terms	Used for music and/or literature
DDC	“Specific musical forms”, in general section (781) and “General musical forms” under instrumental music (784); some forms also included under “Instrumental forms” (784), which is a genre/form hybrid section	Under “Musical forms” (781), a list with one level of hierarchy for “Binary, ternary, da capo forms”; in 784, a class called “Musical forms” has two subordinate classes of “Specific musical forms” and the mixed form/genre class of “instrumental forms”, both with some levels of hierarchy	Both
Flexible	“Forms of instrumental music”, “Forms of vocal music”, “Forms of dramatic, theatre instruments”	Forms in music literature class, and divided between instrumental, vocal and dramatic. Classes created by adding the specific genre from the music schedules	Literature
LCC	Example labels include “Collections by form and type”, “Forms and genres”	Found in various places in music and music theory schedules	Both
LCGFT	No unequivocal forms included	N/A	N/A
Subject	“Musical forms”. Has subordinate classes called “Instrumental forms”, “Dance forms”, “Vocal forms”	Around 60 classes	Both
UDC	Found within genre classes, with labels “Forms of instrumental work” and “Kinds of music”	N/A as combined with genre	Both
Elliker	“Form/genre”	N/A	Music
IAML	“Form-Gattungun” (Translation: form-genre)	N/A	Both
Redfern	“Forms b) minor (eg binary)”	Under “Forms”	Both

Table 4: The Labels and Structure of Form in Bibliographic Classifications and Superfacets

Form	Medium/function	Label in Grove definition	BCM	DDC	Flexible	LCC	LCGF T	Subject	UDC
Binary form	Instrumental/vari ous	"Structure"	Form	Form – specific class in 781, and in a multiple class under general musical forms in instrumental forms	Not included	Not included	Not includ ed	Not included	Not included
Fantasia	Instrumental/con cert	"Form"; defined as a form but also occasionally called "genre" elsewhere in the article	Not included	Genre, as an including note	Not included	Genre under orchestra, band and one specific piece in music schedules, sharing class with potpourris or variations	Genre	Form	Genre, with Arabesques and Moments musicaux
Fugue	Instrumental/vari ous	"Genre designation" and "compositio nal technique"	Form	Genre	Genre, and further subdivided by no. of voices	Genre under organ in music schedules; in forms and genres list in music theory schedules	Genre	Harmony and composition	Genre, with variations and preludes
Sonata form	Instrumental/con cert	"Formal type"	Form – entitled "First movement or sonata form"	Genre, class entitled "Sonata form and sonatas"	No explicit class for sonata form; would be created from sonata classes in genre, which are under umbrella of sonata/symphony class	Sonata appears (seemingly) as a form under "Forms and types" in a few places in literature schedules; sonata form appears explicitly in music theory schedules	Not includ ed	Form	Not included
Variatio ns	Instrumental/con cert	"Form"; defined as a form but also occasionally called "genre" elsewhere in the article	Form	Form	Genre	Genre under one specific piece in music schedules alongside fantasies; under forms and genres in theory schedules	Genre	Form	Genre, with Preludes and Fugues

Table 5: The Classification of Five Example Forms

Coverage of Form as a Category

The coverage of forms in the bibliographic classifications is much sparser than that of genres. Table 4 shows how not all the classifications have sequences of classes for forms, with classifications such as LCGFT having no coverage at all for unequivocal form such as the sonata form. Even when there are spaces for forms, an examination of the schemes shows that forms get fewer classes as compared to genres. For example, as a comparison, BCM has only seven classes for forms in its section for music literature, yet 56 classes for what we consider to be genres. Considering the five specific examples of forms for this study also adds to this argument of low coverage – see Table 5. Binary form is a significant musical form, dating back to the 16th century (Tilmouth 2022) and occupying an important position in many musical textbooks about forms (Lee 2023); yet, it is only found in two of the seven example schemes. Even sonata form, one of the most significant forms in the study of music (Webster 2001), is only found truly as a form in three of the seven schemes. Finally, while fantasias are in most of the bibliographic classifications, they are only there as a note or combined with other forms.

Considering why forms are not as prominent in classification schemes as other types of information and its impact is useful. One reason is the about-ness versus it-ness duality of music. Table 4 shows that in some cases, musical form is used for works about music (which we can call literature) instead of the music itself (which we can call music). For instance, in BCM, which has a clear class for musical forms, this only appears in the music literature section of the schedules, not the music ones. So, in BCM, a work about the musical form of the rondo would be housed with other works about the rondo, yet all the works which *possess* the rondo form would not be placed together. LCGFT is for what works are rather than what they are about (Library of Congress 2022). This might help explain why LCGFT does not include some of the fundamental musical forms such as binary form and sonata form. Still, musical works most definitely *possess* musical form, even if that form is a free form or they deliberately have no form at all – see Lee (2023). So, the absence of musical forms to organize music is a reflection of what classifiers – and by logical extension the library users – consider to (not) be useful ways of organizing musical works. This has an interesting impact on how we consider musical form as a category of information.

Structure of Form as a Category

The form classes in the example classification schemes provide some insights into form as a type of information. Table 4 summarizes the form sections found in the example schemes and also says whether form is used for music, literature or both. First, we can look at the sections which do exist for forms. For instance, BCM has a section for forms in its literature section, and DDC has two places for unequivocal forms in the general sections (781.8) and beginning of the instrumental sections (784.182) – there are further spaces for forms in DDC, which will be discussed later. Even these small sections for forms in BCM and DDC have some organization of those forms, and, this organization shows similarities to the orders of forms found in the music domain by Lee (2023). For example, BCM's placement of canons and fugues in the final class can be seen as a separation between homophony and polyphony in the first instance, which is an important organization in the music domain (Lee 2023). Furthermore, the exalted place occupied by forms such as sonata form in the music domain treatment (Webster 2001) and organization of forms (Lee 2023), is sometimes echoed in the bibliographic classifications; Subject and LCC prioritize sonata form by placing it before the other forms and out of (alphabetical) sequence with them. So, we can see that in some ways,

bibliographic classifications accord with musicological ideas about the order of forms and hierarchy of forms.

Form-as-a-category brings an added dimension of complexity by seemingly being linked primarily to instrumental concert music, rather than vocal or dramatic music. This is also seen in the music domain: Lee (2023) found in her study of musical textbooks that textbooks about form typically only covered instrumental music or only included vocal/dramatic forms as a small “other” section. Yet, vocal and dramatic music also have formal plans and structures. In other words, they do possess the quality of form. For this study, Table 4 includes results from schemes which state that the section is both vocal and about forms (and dramatic and about forms). (Note that the five form examples, for example sonata form, are all from instrumental music to avoid complications brought in by the variable of whether the whole concept of vocal form exists.) The classifications react to the idea of vocal and/or dramatic forms in different ways, with many having no space to express the forms of vocal and/or dramatic music. There are some exceptions. Flexible has space to create any instrumental, vocal or dramatic form, which acknowledges that form exists in vocal and dramatic music. Subject provides a different sort of example: its category of vocal forms is both separate from vocal genres and is seemingly devoted to structural principles, with classes including arias, canzones (Chansons), cavatinas, and scenas/recitatives. These are all parts of works such as operas and arguably distinguishable from each other by structural elements – thus, Subject is suggesting that form as a category of information *can* be applied to vocal music, and is different from genre.

The Connections between Form and Genre, and other Facets

It is pertinent to analyse more deeply the relationship and connections between form and genre. At the simplest level, some of the classification schemes just include forms and genres together, with no attempt at separating these out. LCC has some examples of this: for instance, in LCC MT58-64, there is a mostly alphabetical list called Forms and genres, and the list includes sonata form, chaconnes, opera and video game music – a smorgasbord of forms, genre and types. This suggests a reluctance to separate out forms, genres and types, showing the intractable divisions between these concepts.

DDC offers a more complicated example. As well as a general place for forms (781.8), albeit the classes in this section are largely associated with instrumental music, DDC also has a section for forms in instrumental music (784). This is separated between “Specific musical forms” (784.182) and “Instrumental forms” (784.183-189). While the former is entirely for forms, the latter includes what we might consider to be a mixed genre/form list – for instance, this class includes symphonies, overtures, fanfares, Asian square dances, and square dances. Unlike the LCC example, DDC uses only the term “forms” rather than “genres”, so there is no terminological acceptance of a form/genre mix. One explanation for the split list within 784 is that the so-called specific forms are considered to be forms, whereas the instrumental forms are posited to be genres but also include some of the more boundary offerings, such as the flighty waltz (see above) and problematic fugue (see below). The argument that “Specific instrumental forms” is about genres is backed up by considering the organization and ordering within it. As one example, the overture which traditionally has the form of sonata form is categorized with the “introductory forms” rather than other genres/forms which share its structural features. This exemplifies that this section is about genre rather than form. We could even see it as a counterexample to Dreyfus (1993): in this case, when pitted against each other, genre wins out over form.

Flexible offers an intriguing take on the concept of form as a categorization unit: forms are created from genres. Genres are listed in the auxiliary schedules (-5, -6 and -7), and are separated into instrumental forms, vocal forms and dramatic forms. Then, to create a class for a form, the general number for form is used from the literature schedules (025, 026, 027, depending on whether an instrumental, vocal or dramatic form) with the specific genre added to it from the auxiliary tables (a specific number within -5, -6 or -7). For example, for a work about fugues, the number of the fugue genre (-514.1) is added to instrumental forms (025), to make a composite class representing the topic of work about the instrumental form of fugue (025-514.1). This is very elegant as it shows a clear intellectual division between form and genre as ideas, while allowing considerable coverage for both and creating a notational connection between the sonata genre and sonata form. Furthermore, Flexible could be considered the antithesis of Dreyfus' (1993) concern about form-led-genres, as Flexible presents genre-led-forms. However, there are some possible criticisms of the Flexible system, such as there is no space for forms which have no corresponding genre, and, it would be difficult to class a form where the genre was associated with a different medium/function from the form.

The treatment of sonata form (and its sometime synonym of first movement form) is particularly informative, due in part to its close relationship to sonatas. First, sonata form does not appear in classifications which do not deal with unequivocal forms, such as LCGFT. In DDC, there is a single class called “Sonata form and sonatas” in the genre-like section, thus melding together a form and a genre in the same class. So, we could read this as part of DDC’s acceptance of the blurriness between form and genre, by putting the form and the genre together and placing them in the blurry genre/form section. There are also it-ness/about-ness connections possibilities, as DDC uses the same schedules for music as for literature; thus, the works *about* the sonata form would intellectually (and, possibly physically) live with the works *in* sonata form and the works *in* the sonata genre.

Finally, fugues provide a different sort of reflection on the category of forms. The categorization of fugues is questioned in the music domain. While most textbooks treat fugues as a seminal form (Lee 2023), theorists question whether a fugue is a form, genre or compositional technique (Dreyfus 1993) and debate whether fugue is process or structure (Santa 2010). The bibliographic classification schemes’ treatment of fugues reflects these music domain classification debates. BCM treats fugues unquestionably as a form, placing them alongside other unequivocal forms; while DDC positions fugues in what we have described as its genre sequence, which matches Dreyfus’ call for fugues to be considered genres. Conversely, Subject places fugues as a type of harmony and composition rather than a form or genre, illuminating Santa’s (2010) discussion. So, fugues highlight the messiness of the form/genre boundary, and also show that the “somewhere in-between” of the genre/form/type paradigm might even be a different type of information altogether, such as composition technique.

TYPE IN THE CONTEXT OF GENRE

The Terminology for Type as a Category

The final kind of information to be considered is that of “type”, which is a lot more nebulous than the genre and form which have been discussed previously. A summary of the categories for type in the example schemes is shown in Table 6 and the appearance of the five example types in Table 7. The term “type” is generally not used consistently or frequently in

discussions of the classification of music. (We should note that “type of composition” is a term in the RDA glossary, which has as examples what we have called forms and genres, but also some examples that we might consider to be types too, such as film music and chamber music (RDA Toolkit n.d.; Music Library Association n.d.) To start, contemplating the terminology is complicated by the lack of discrete sections for type of music in many of the classifications studied – see Table 6. LCC is a partial exception for using the term “type” in a number of places, albeit always in conjunction with other categories of information – although like the majority of other schemes it does not have single sections for types. LCC uses the term “types”, in the labels “Forms and types” and “Types and styles”. DDC does have distinct space for type of music, but it is split into two: “Traditions of music” (i.e. folk music) and “Kinds of music” (all other types of music). The use of the phrase “Kinds of music” is particularly interesting. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines types, as “A kind, class, or order as distinguished by a particular character” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “type (n.)”, definition 6a, 2024). So, here we can see that kind could be considered to just be a synonym of type. The systems of superfacets present an interesting conundrum: they do not explicitly have a type facet, but deeper analysis of the superfacets suggest types are part of the character superfacet (Redfern and Elliker) or purpose/occasion/intention facet (IAML). This indicates a connection to another sort of information and this will be explored in a later section. Ultimately, the lack of consistent name for type, even in the places which treat it as a distinct category of information, are indicative of a undeveloped and perhaps even inchoate category of information.

Bibliographic classification	Labels for type	Structure of type	Used for music and/or literature
BCM	No separate sections. Some types found under "Musical character" (literature schedules) and some in "Vocal solos" (music schedules)	Scattered and not in sections specifically for types	Both, though used differently in each
DDC	Arguably "Traditions of music" and "Kinds of music" are for types of music	Two sections which arguably are types of music: Traditions of music (contains sections for folk, popular (general), popular (Western)) and kinds of music (organised by function)	Both
Flexible	No separate sections for types	No separate sections for types	N/A
LCC	"Forms and types", "Kind or style", and "Types and styles"	No one section for different types of music, and found in music, literature and theory schedules. Furthermore, individual types of music are scattered, including by instrument	Both, though used differently in each
LCGFT	No sections for types	Not separated or distinct from other types of information. Arguably some types are the top terms, e.g. popular music, folk music	Music
Subject	No section for types	A few types of music found scattered in the scheme, e.g. dramatic music, sacred music	N/A
UDC	"Kinds of music" as overview heading for dramatic, church, vocal, and instrumental music, etc.	Aside from overview heading of "Kinds of Music", also a few types of music found under vocal music	Both
Elliker	"Character"	N/A	Music
IAML	"Zweck, Anlaß, Inhalt" (Translation: Purpose, occasion, intention)	N/A	Both

Redfern	"Character"	N/A	Both
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Table 6: The Labels and Structure of Type in Bibliographic Classifications and Superfacets

Term	Label in Grove definition	BCM	DDC	Flexible	LCC	LCGFT	Subject	UDC
Film music	"Music"	Musical character	Kinds of music	"The form of theatre music"	Standalone class under instrumental music in music schedules, and also under vocal music; under forms and types in literature schedules; under forms and genres in theory schedules	Genre (under dramatic music <i>and</i> functional music)	Under "Dramatic Music"	Not included
Folk music	"Concept" and "Term"	Musical character	Traditions of music	Separate sections within genres, split between instrumental and vocal. "Instrumental folk music" with many classes at end of instrumental genres, "Vocal folk music" single class at end of vocal genres	Under "Folk, national and ethnic music" in music schedules, with substantial number of class; also under types and styles, and forms and styles in literature schedules	Top term	Under vocal music as separate section for different types of songs and ballads. Arguably treated as a genre	Same class as popular, traditional, historic, etc. songs. Arguably treated as a genre
Jazz	"Musical tradition" and "Style"	Medium. A medium under orchestral music, and jazz songs appears under vocal solos	Traditions of music	Genre. Jazz song under "Dance music, jazz", and jazz doesn't appear in instrumental	Only jazz mediums such as jazz ensembles in music schedules; as "Types and styles" and "Forms and types" in literature schedules	Genre (under popular music)	Not included	Not included
Popular music	No label for popular music, but "types" used for subordinate classes within popular music	Not included	Traditions of music	Genre, with different classes in instrumental and vocal. Class for "Composed popular music" (instrumental) and "Hitsong" (vocal)	As a subdivision under individual countries under secular vocal music in music schedules; as an overall topic and also under forms and types in literature schedules; under forms and genres in theory schedules	Top term	Not included	Not included
Reggae	"Music"	Not included	Traditions of music	Not included	Under Types and styles, and Forms and types in literature schedules	Genre (under popular music)	Not included	Not included

Table 7: The Classification of Five Example Types

Grove Music offers one view from the music domain about type of music as a category. Firstly, there is no *Grove Music* entry for types of music in the same way as genre and form. This suggests that type of music (in the meaning used in *this* article) is not an established concept in music, at least in this format. Secondly, when we look at the Grove entries for the five example types of music, we see a variety of terms used to describe these examples – see Table 7. While the entry for popular music (Middleton and Manual 2015) does use the term “Types” in its definition, the four other example types include in their definitions terms such as “music”, “musical tradition”, “style”, “concept”, and “term”. The more general words here such as concept, term and music, suggest doubt over what sort of thing a type of music might be. So, type is sometimes used in the music domain’s ideas of music information, but is nebulous both as a concept and as a label.

Coverage of Types as a Category

The five example types of music have mixed coverage in the classification schemes, and these highlight a range of issues surrounding type of music. For example, Table 7 shows that jazz, folk and film music are in most of the schemes, while reggae and popular music are in fewer. Time period is a factor in some of these cases: for example, reggae has its origins in the late 1960s (Davis 2001), therefore we would not expect to see it in mid-20th century schemes (e.g. Subject) or even 1960s ones (e.g., BCM, Flexible). Popular music is mostly not present as a singular type of music. We can hypothesize that this might be caused by the broadness of popular music as an idea. We can also consider the lack of a unified category for popular music to be the result of literary warrant, or at least *historical* literary warrant: the schemes are simply reflecting what was being collected when the schemes were created. LCC provides a good example of this. Even though we may be looking at the 2010s version of the scheme, its basis is in the structure of knowledge within the Library of Congress in 1902 (Meyer-Baer 1973) which would not have had popular music scores in the same way it would hold them now, or even at the time of the 1970s schedule revision. Finally, the relative lack of coverage of types in some schemes such as UDC and Subject is telling, even taking into account that some of the examples would not have existed at the point of Subject’s creation. This again suggests that types of music are considered less important than other aspects of music in some bibliographic classifications.

Structure of Types as a Category

Type of music rarely exists as a separate category or set of categories in the bibliographic classifications, with DDC’s two standalone sections (“Traditions of music”/”Kinds of music”) being a rare counterexample – see Table 6. Instead, different types are often found in different parts of the classification and treated differently within them. In fact, the complexity and “wordiness” of both Tables 6 and 7 are testament to the lack of clear category for the information of type of music, before even reading the contents of these tables. Put simply, it was almost impossible to summarize a category of information for the five example types within these schemes. For example, in BCM, some types are in the music character category (for example, folk music), while others reside as a subcategory of a specific medium, much like genres (for example, blues as a class in vocal solos). LCC covers a lot of types of music and treats types of music in various different ways. For instance, popular music appears as the first division under each country within secular vocal music, with the corollary that popular music is scattered among different places rather than there being a single section for popular music. Conversely, the literature schedule in LCC has types in the same sequences as forms, genres and styles, which emphasizes a lack of definitive division

between these categories of music. Hence, the bibliographic classifications are suggestive of a lack of cohesive and definable information unit of type of music.

Types as a categorical unit also have ethical implications through their power to center – or decenter – Western art music, which is the implicit default in most well-known bibliographic classifications in the Western world. When type of music appears as a category it simultaneously induces non-Western and non-Art music to receive attention in the classification scheme, yet also potentially “others” those very non-Western art musics. Flexible offers a useful example of this. Flexible has extensive coverage for the type of music of folk music, in particular, instrumental folk music; however, this is placed in its own area of instrumental genres, rather than being mixed in with forms and genres more typically associated with Western art music. This has the effect of other-ing instrumental folk music from music in general, while also allowing for depth and detail for folk music. Yet, two of the classifications attempt to counteract this. In some places in DDC, Western art music is treated as an equal to all other types of music. For example, the class “Concert hall setting” (781.534), typically associated with Western art music, is just one of many indoor settings in Kinds of music, and “Western art music (Classical music)” (781.68) comes after popular music and as their equal in traditions of music. While this shows how types of music can be used to decentralize Western art music in the organization of music, it should be noted that the other parts of the schedules still prioritize mediums, genres, and so on, associated with Western art music. LCGFT arguably goes the furthest of the example classifications in decentering Western art music. For example, under the top term of art music, art musics from various cultures are listed, so not just Western ones; additionally, folk music and popular music get their own, similar treatment, and importantly, are treated as equals with art music. Pertinently, the top levels of LCGFT are arguably these broad types of music – art music, popular music, folk music, and so on. So, LCGFT effects a decentralized organization of music and does so via a structure which is organized by broad types of music. This shows how musical type as a categorization unit can address ethical issues.

The Connections between Type and Genre, and other Facets

This research suggests that we could consider the relationship between types and genres of music in a novel way: types of music could be reconceived as higher levels of genres, making a novel idea of types of music as “supergenres”. LCGFT provides a useful prototype, as this classification makes no distinction between forms, genres and types. For example, in LCGFT, art music is a top term and we would consider art music to be a type of music; yet, symphonies, which we would consider to be a genre, is presented as a narrower term of art music. So, the type of music is a broader term of the genre, suggesting that type of music could actually be considered a genre – or, more specifically, a supergenre. Furthermore, we could interpret LCC’s combination of “forms and types”, which includes putting together genres such as operetta and types such as film music, as a sign that the difference between genres and types is actually scale, rather than nature. Ultimately, the supergenre argument might help to explain why there are fewer appearances of types within the classifications than genres, as well as rationalizing the lack of definition of type as a categorical unit within classifications.

The other significant relationship is between types of music and the idea of function and character. Function is notoriously difficult to define, especially around the idea of function versus character (Lee 2017), and has many subtypes (Hider and Lee 2023); furthermore, Lee (2017) argues that function (and its near synonyms of character and purpose) is perhaps better

understood as a quasi-facet. All this adds extra complexity when contemplating the relationship between types of music and function. In some of the classifications there is a character facet or category which either entirely or partially contains types of music. For example, in BCM, both folk music and film music are found in the facet for musical character. So, here, types of music are considered to be function/character and also a facet of music in their own right. This corroborates at a theoretical level, certainly for some types of music: film music is a type of music, which is defined entirely on having the function of being music *for* film. Therefore, a connection between type of music and function here is embedded within the music as the function *defines* the type of music. So, while perhaps imperfect in the reality, it is still a useful thought process to consider the general idea of types as supergenres, and these supergenres as being connected in some way to function.

A MODEL AND CONCLUSION

The article has demonstrated that musical genre is a complex categorical idea within bibliographic classification, and that genre is not a simple type of information within bibliographic classification schemes. Furthermore, the research has shown that musical genre has interesting and close connections to both form and type. These ideas are conceived as a model of musical genre in bibliographic classifications in Figure 1. A number of connections and connectors are highlighted in the model, which shows a variety of different types of relationships. Firstly, this study has shown that genre is closely intertwined with form in multifarious ways: as a synonym, as form being a constituent part of genre, as form classes being created from genre ones, and as a porous form/genre boundary within specific examples. Form and genre seem not to be able to get away from each other, yet they are also not the same thing. Secondly, type is argued to have a hierarchical, generic relationship with genre, and can be conceived as the novel idea of a “supergenre”. This could help to explain why type was opaque as a classification device, often overlapping with genre or not being seen at all. Thirdly, type itself has an interesting – and hard-to-define – relationship to the nebulous (quasi-)facet of function. Some types of music are defined entirely by their function, and treated in classification schemes accordingly; yet, others, such as folk music and popular music, cannot be so easily reduced to being a function. Fourthly, there are a number of dependencies on other facets that the research illuminated, such as form and genre being dependent on medium. Here, the classification scheme analysis showed some interesting ideas, such as the schemes which did not conceive of vocal or dramatic forms at all, and the largely segregated-by-medium-and-function lists of genres. Ultimately, this model helps to explain and codify what genre in bibliographic classifications is and how it works.

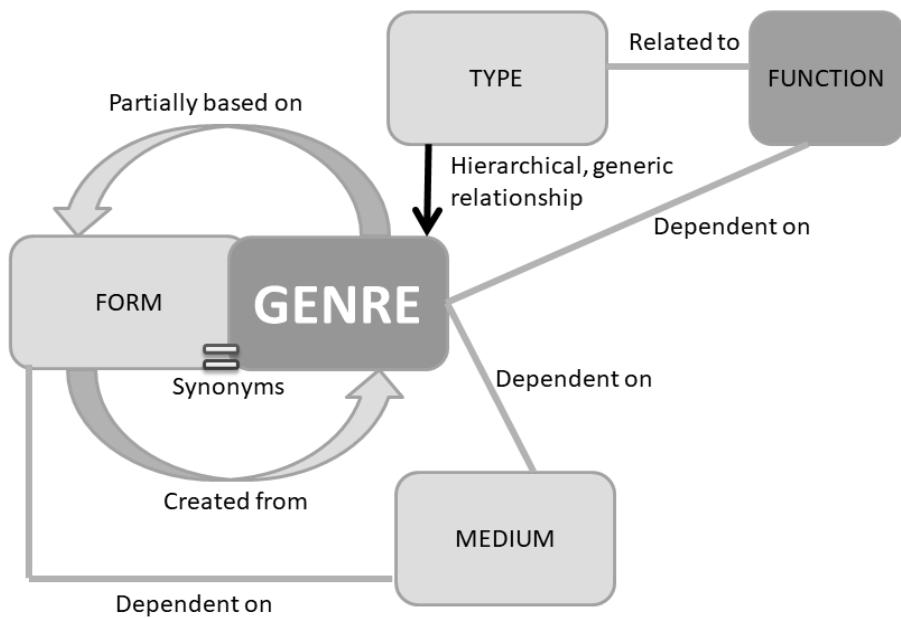


Figure 1: A model of musical genre in bibliographic classifications

Alt text: Connections between genre, type, form, medium and function are shown using boxes, arrows and lines

The third research question asks how the bibliographic classifications reflect ideas about genre from the music domain. Generally, there seems to be accordance with the music domain here (Lee et al. 2019), although acknowledging that thinking about genres is ever-changing and evolving. For example, the idea of the genre/form synonym is discussed by Dreyfus (1993); then, we find many of the bibliographic classification schemes using the term “form” as a synonym for “genre”. The general porous boundary between form and genre, as espoused by musicological thinkers, is seen in different ways in the bibliographic schemes, such as the (actual) forms and (called-forms-but-arguably-genres) “forms” in DDC, as well as the treatment of some of the borderline example genres utilized in this study. Nonetheless, there are discordances too. To start, some of Dreyfus’ (1993) concerns about genre being a subsidiary to form in the 19th and 20th centuries, do not seem to materialize in the bibliographic classifications from this time period: instead, we have shown examples of genre – rather than form – dominated thinking. For instance, form appears a lot less important to bibliographic knowledge than it does to the music domain, seen for example in the non-appearance of significant forms such as binary form and sonata form in many of the bibliographic classifications. The whole idea of types of music such as popular music, which might be foundational to the music discipline, are shown in this research to often not be prioritized or acknowledged in bibliographic classifications. The different purposes of music in the domain versus a bibliographic classification, and pertinently, the different units – works (music domain) versus document (bibliographic classification) – may be a possible explanation here for some of these divergences. Therefore, we can summarize the domain/bibliographic relationship around the categorical unit of genre as closer to accordance

than discordance on the accordance spectrum (see Lee et al. 2019). Furthermore, from a temporal perspective, the research suggests that there is a tendency to maintain older terminology of form rather than genre, yet in classificatory practices more likelihood of following Dreyfus' (1993) call to arms of a genre-leading – rather than form-leading – musical world.

Further research could take this model and apply it to an existing system of classifying music or utilize it to develop a new classification system. It would be useful to see how this might help to resolve longstanding issues around musical genre in music classifications. Another interesting project could see the model applied to different types of classifications which prioritize a wider range of musics. While the bibliographic classifications in this study were technically for all music, the majority of them were designed for traditionally Western-art-music-focussed collections. So, future research might explore the implications of this and attempt to apply the model to non-Western classifications too.

This article uses example classification schemes to do a deep analysis of the classificatory idea of musical genre. What it finds is a set of complexities and varying relationships, which sees the classificatory idea of musical genre within bibliographic classifications as something which stands not by itself, but occupying a shared space and set of relationships between genres, forms, types, and more. Moreover, this novel perspective on musical genre will lead to a better understanding of how to organize and access the bibliographic music collections which utilize these classifications, and contributes to the wider conceptual work which aims to understand the “problematic” and “unstable” (Duff 2000, 1) concept of genre.

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