

**The Shape of Music Publishing Today:
a research guide for determining agency relationships
as they impact music retrieval in North America**

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Finding music that is available on hire to orchestras in North America can be a challenge. Publishers based in the U.S. promote titles that can be found within their own catalog, and are not legally able to itemize titles from other publishers that they might distribute or represent for hire purposes. Further complications come from the web-like structure of relationships between publishers, often down to the level of subsets of individual composers' catalogs. This guide hopes to present resources that are helpful for "hunting down" a specific title, and to elucidate the publishing body who is positioned to provide certain titles to you.

Researching copyright protected titles: a guide

Music publishing is driven by contractual agreement between publishers, as well as between publishers and organizations or individuals who hope to perform, arrange, record, and broadcast music. Researching these relationships in order to obtain a work takes a little bit of effort at times; fortunately, freely available resources are available to you. What follows is a research method that has been honed with a few year's practice:

1. Narrow down the imprint (the initial publisher) for the work in question
 - a. Keep in mind that many of the more frequently requested composers are split between publishers - i.e Stravinsky, Bartok, and Britten
 - b. Concert arrangements of a particular work - say, songs from West Side Story - are often contracted by discrete entities
2. Perform a catalog search/browse on the website of the publisher you found in step one
 - a. Determine which components of a work are for sale, and which are available for hire
 - i. Choral material is often for sale while the orchestral elements are available on hire
 - b. Scores that are available for sale are often exempt from perusal service
3. Once the work is found, use the publisher's website to locate a list of agents in your territory
4. In many cases, the representative for the work's publisher will also list the imprints they manage on the underlying imprint's behalf.
5. Send your inquiry (i.e. quote request, license application, perusal request, etc) to the representing publisher in your area.

In light of their agency arrangements, publishers generally endeavor to make all contact forms open to all of the possible works available through their libraries. This allows for customer input of works from ever-expanding agency catalogs, and at the same time results in a side effect of mislaid requests. The turn around time on placed inquiries varies based on the company, so it is crucial to your success that you are certain that your inquiry is headed to the right place.

Resources for Research

Worldcat.org – While this is a basic resource for many of us, its value in researching the source for musical materials cannot be understated. The goal in searching WorldCat is to identify the publishing body for the title in question (don't forget to select "musical score" in the facets along the left of search results).

www.MPA.org - The Music Publisher's Association of the United States keeps a fairly up-to-date directory of publishers and an index of imprints. Caveat: since the MPA's website relies upon push notifications, it is important to fact check by visiting the websites of the underlying publisher of the piece as well as that of the representing body for your territory.

www.halleonard.com - Hal Leonard is a major distributor for sale items; check their catalog for scores and choral material as appropriate to the title in question. Hal Leonard's check out process will include a roster of retail websites and brick and mortar locations from which sheet music can be purchased.

ASCAP.com - ASCAP provides what they call an ACE title search that is very useful in showing the imprint for a work that is tracked by ASCAP or one of its foreign affiliates. Caveat: the search mechanism does not allow for Boolean searching, and the database doesn't have a controlled vocabulary for composer's names.

BMI.Com - The other half of a search for imprints through royalties collection. Titles that are not registered with ASCAP are often handled by BMI instead, so searching ASCAP and BMI are two halves of a good search.

A Few Examples

Serge Prokofiev	Materials	North America	United Kingdom/World
Alexander Nevsky, op. 78 Pub. Boosey & Hawkes MP	score	Sale: Schirmer	Sale: www.boosey.com/shop
	vocal score	Sale: Chant du Monde; Distr. Hal Leonard	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP
	parts	Hire: G. Schirmer	Hire; Boosey & Hawkes MP
Ivan the Terrible, op. 116A Pub. Boosey & Hawkes MP	score	Sale: Sikorski; Distr. Hal Leonard	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP
	parts	Hire: G. Schirmer	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP
Symphony no. 5, op. 100 Pub. Boosey & Hawkes MP	score	Sale: Sikorski; Distr. Hal Leonard	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP
	parts	Hire: G. Schirmer	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP

Milhaud	Materials	North America	France	United Kingdom/World
La Creation du Monde Pub. Eschig	score	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes Inc	Hire: Durand-Salabert-Eschig	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP
	parts	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes Inc	Hire: Durand-Salabert-Eschig	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP

Stravinsky	Materials	North America	Italy	France	United Kingdom/World
Puccini - Nessun Dorma Pub. Ricordi	score	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes Inc.	Hire: Ricordi Milan	Hire: Durand-Salabert-Eschig	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP
	parts	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes Inc.	Hire: Ricordi Milan	Hire: Durand-Salabert-Eschig	Hire: Boosey & Hawkes MP