SEARCHING WITH UNIFORM TITLES

When the wording on title pages or recording labels differs among various publications of the same music, a uniform title is needed to uniquely identify the piece of music and to allow all editions of it to be similarly searchable in the catalog.

Using a uniform title for your search will bring together variant titles and help you search for music more efficiently.

There are three general types of uniform titles:

1. **Form titles**: based on the name of a musical form such as "Concertos" or "Sonatas"
2. **Distinctive titles**: such as used for operas, songs, and some instrumental works
3. **Collective titles**: for collections containing multiple works by a composer

**How to Search Using Uniform Titles**

For **Form Titles** →

Many musical works have titles that actually are the names of forms or types of compositions ("sonatas," "concertos," "symphonies," and so forth). In these cases, the name of the form of the work is used as the first word of the uniform title.

Let’s use Korngold’s **Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 35** as our example.

To create the proper search, follow this formula:

**Form + Instruments + Numbers + Key**

Note: In the search bar, each term will be separated by a comma.

1. First, identify the form of the composition ("sonatas," "concertos," "symphonies," and so forth). In this case we will use **Concertos**.
2. Then, specify the instrument(s) and/or voice(s) for which the piece was written. Ours will be **Violin**.
3. Next, include the opus number, symphony number, or other numeric identifier (i.e. K. 488, D. 137, etc.). For our purposes, it is **op. 35**.
4. Finally, include the key if it is typically included in the title of the work. In this case, D Major.

Our final search term will appear as follows:

**Concertos, Violin, op. 35, D Major**

Combined with the composer’s name, this search will bring up any item in the catalog that includes Korngold’s Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 35.

For **Distinctive Titles**
When a composer gives a composition a title that is not the name of a musical form, that distinctive title, in its original language, is used as the uniform title. Works that have distinctive titles include operas, oratorios, ballets, and many other types of vocal and stage works.

In the examples below, the distinctive title in the original language is in bold, and the commonly known name is in English.

Stage works with distinctive titles:

- Offenbach, Jacques
  **Les contes d’Hoffmann**
  *The Tales of Hoffmann*

- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus
  **Le nozze di Figaro**
  *The Marriage of Figaro*

There are also instrumental compositions that have distinctive titles:

- Strauß, Richard
  **Ein Heldenleben**
  *A Hero’s Life*

- Bach, Johann Sebastian
  **Wohltemperierte Klavier**
  *The Well-tempered Clavier*

When searching for works with distinctive titles, use the original language as the uniform title.

For **Collective Titles**
The library owns many editions and recordings that contain multiple compositions by the same composer. Often, a particular composition will only be available in such a collection. For example, several of Beethoven's piano sonatas will be found only in collections containing all thirty-two of his sonatas. In this and similar instances, the catalog often will not list individual pieces. You must use a bit of imagination to find a collection that contains the piece you want,
because, for the collection of any one composer, the uniform title may be:

1. **a form collective title** – for collections containing works of the same form
2. **a performance medium collective title** – for collections with the same performance medium
3. **a general collective title** – for collections with various forms and media

**Form collective titles:** consist of the form name, and-if necessary-the medium of performance, exactly like the beginning of a form-type uniform title for an individual work. Remember that these works do not all have to be for the same performance medium.

**Performance medium collective titles:** consist of the name of the performance medium, followed by "music." The performance medium can be specific ("Piano music," Orchestra music," etc.), or broad ("Keyboard music" if the collection includes both harpsichord and piano music, "Vocal music" if the collection includes both songs and duets, etc.).

**General collective titles:** Some collections of a composer's works contain both instrumental and vocal music in various forms. Most often such a collection will contain all of the composer's works, will consist of several volumes, and will be intended primarily for scholarly study rather than for use in performance. It sometimes happens that the composition you want is available only in such a collection. The collective uniform title for collections of a composer's complete works consists of the single word "Works."

**When in Doubt...**

Ask for help! The Music Library Staff are happy to assist you in your search.

**For More Library Tips...**

Visit the Music Library’s **Student Resource Center** in the Quiet Zone!

**Sources:**

- [http://library.music.indiana.edu/tech_s/mla/ut.gui](http://library.music.indiana.edu/tech_s/mla/ut.gui)
- [http://library.music.indiana.edu/collections/uniform/uniform.html](http://library.music.indiana.edu/collections/uniform/uniform.html)