

SEARCHING MANDOLIN SCORES AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The following guide is not a product of the Library of Congress. It is a privately composed and compiled guide intended to help visitors to the Library's [online catalog](#).

Caveats:

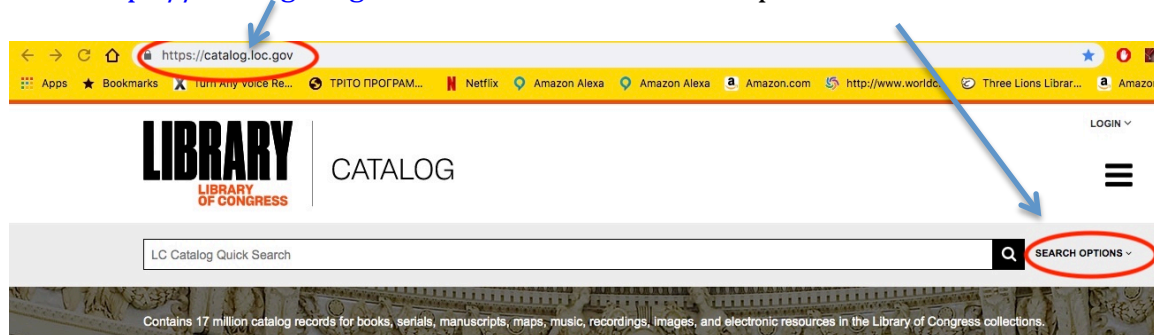
1. The online catalog does not include all of the Library's printed music.

- There is a Music Division physical card catalog listing many items that do not yet have an online record.
- There are many scores in the Library's stacks that have never been cataloged at all.
- There are a few scores at <https://www.loc.gov/> that may not be found in the online catalog. Some of these scores, unlike the contents of the catalog, have been scanned and can be viewed online.

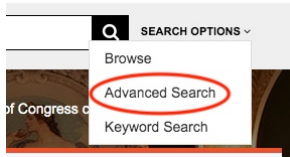
2. The online catalog is not uniform in its presentation of records for printed music. Cataloging conventions (standard cataloging codes, library decisions, cataloger judgment, publishing conventions, etc.) have changed through the many decades represented within the online catalog.

STEP 1.

Go to <https://catalog.loc.gov> and click on the "Search Options" button:



The drop down menu under “Search Options” includes “Advanced Search”, and that is what we will use here:



The resulting window appears:

A screenshot of the 'Advanced Search' window in the Library of Congress Catalog. The window has a header with the 'LIBRARY OF CONGRESS' logo and the word 'CATALOG'. Below the header is a search bar with the text 'LC Catalog Quick Search' and a magnifying glass icon. To the right of the search bar is a 'SEARCH OPTIONS' dropdown menu. The main content area is titled 'Advanced Search' and contains three search fields. Each field has a text input box, a dropdown menu for 'all of these', and a dropdown menu for 'within'. The first field has 'all of these' set to 'all of these' and 'within' set to 'Keyword Anywhere (GKEY)'. The second and third fields have 'all of these' set to 'all of these' and 'within' set to 'Keyword Anywhere (GKEY)'. Below the search fields is a '+ Add Limits' button. At the bottom of the search area are 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons. Below the search area is a link to 'Advanced Search Tips'.

Let's say you are trying to find **printed music for solo mandolin**. (The following *looks* more complicated than it really is.)

In the first search box you type the subject heading¹, in this case, "mandolin music"².

In the box to the right, you click for the drop down list and choose "as a phrase" because this is the *exact phrase* you are searching.

In the box labeled "within" you click for the drop down list and choose "Subject: ALL (KSUB)"³.

The screenshot shows a search interface with three rows of search criteria. The first row has a text box containing "mandolin music", a dropdown menu set to "as a phrase", and a "within" dropdown menu set to "Subject: ALL (KSUB)". The second row has a text box containing "sound recording", a dropdown menu set to "as a phrase", and a "within" dropdown menu set to "Keyword Anywhere (GKEY)". The third row has an empty text box, a dropdown menu set to "all of these", and a "within" dropdown menu set to "Keyword Anywhere (GKEY)". Between the first and second rows, there are radio buttons for "AND", "OR", and "NOT", with "NOT" selected. Blue arrows point from the explanatory text blocks to specific elements in the interface: from the first text block to the "mandolin music" text box; from the second text block to the "as a phrase" dropdown; from the third text block to the "Subject: ALL (KSUB)" dropdown; from the fourth text block to the "NOT" radio button; from the fifth text block to the "sound recording" text box; from the sixth text block to the "as a phrase" dropdown; and from the seventh text block to the "Keyword Anywhere (GKEY)" dropdown.

In order to retrieve records for printed music only and not sound recordings as well, you choose this NOT button.

In this text box type "sound recording".

Again, choose "as a phrase" from the drop down list.

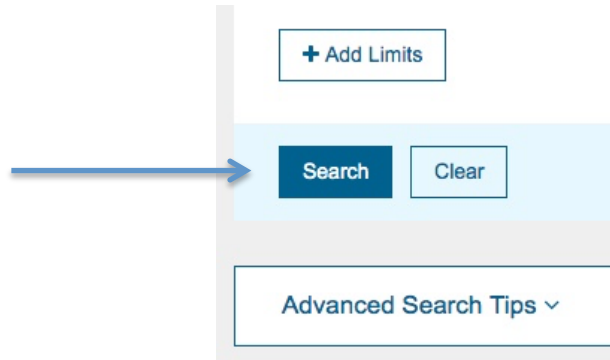
Leave the final box as it is.

¹ Subject "headings" are *formal established phrases* used to designate the topic of an item.

² "Mandolin music" is a the subject heading used to designate music for *solo mandolin*.

³ This cryptic specification searches the subject heading fields in every record in the catalog for the subject heading you just specified.

Now you are ready to click the SEARCH button:



The result (at least today's result) will look like this:

LIBRARY
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

CATALOG

LC Catalog Quick Search

LOGIN

SEARCH OPTIONS

← Refine Your Search


You Searched: Subject: ALL (KSUB): mandolin music NOT Keyword Anywhere (GKEY): sound recording

Titles List: 1-25 of 1445


Sort: Records per page: 25

☐ Select All


☐ 1

 **2000 mandolin : featuring solos by the world's finest mandolinists!**
Pacific, MO : Mel Bay Publications, c2000.
SELECT TITLE FOR HOLDINGS INFORMATION

☐ 2

 **50 anos de música / Danilo Brito, Luizinho 7 Cordas.**
[Manaus?] : OrpheuMusic, [2010]
Request in advance in Rec Sound Ref Center (Madison, LM113)

☐ 3

 **50 tunes for mandolin : traditional, old time, bluegrass & Celtic solos / [arranged] by Mark Geslison.**
Pacific, MO : Mel Bay Publications, c2004-
SELECT TITLE FOR HOLDINGS INFORMATION

You have a total of 1,445 hits. While *most* hits will be for printed music (see the icon for the first hit in the image above), there will be other formats that creep into the set: some sound recordings, computer files, microforms, and perhaps images. BUT, it will mostly be printed music for, in this case, solo mandolin.

There are ways to change the result by manipulating the search boxes further than I've had time to show here, including the following:

- using the “Add Limits” option just north of the “Search” button
- exploiting the drop down box labeled “within”
- using multiple search terms each properly define and qualified by buttons and drop down boxes
- pay attention to the “Advanced Search Tips” link

For instance, if you are really interested to find out if Valentine Abt arranged any of the popular opera excerpts at the turn of the century, you could create a search like this:

The screenshot shows a search interface with three search rows. Each row has a text input field, a dropdown menu for qualifiers, and a dropdown menu for the 'within' field. The first row has 'mandolin 'and' piano music' in the input, 'as a phrase' in the first dropdown, and 'Subject: ALL (KSUB)' in the second dropdown. The second row has 'abt valentine' in the input, 'all of these' in the first dropdown, and 'Name: Personal (KPNC)' in the second dropdown. The third row has 'operas' in the input, 'all of these' in the first dropdown, and 'Subject: ALL (KSUB)' in the second dropdown. Between the first and second rows, and between the second and third rows, there are radio buttons for 'AND', 'OR', and 'NOT', with 'AND' selected. Below the third row is a button labeled '+ Add Limits'. At the bottom of the search area are two buttons: 'Search' and 'Clear'.

You'll get one hit:

Personal name

Mascagni, Pietro, 1863-1945, composer.

Uniform title

Cavalleria rusticana. Intermezzo; arranged

Main title

Intermezzo sinfonica : Cavalleria rusticana / P. Mascagni ; transcription by Valentine Abt.

Published/Produced

Philadelphia, Pa. : Graupner & Meyer, [1897]

[Request this Item](#)

[↓ Item Availability](#)

There is a great deal that I could write about search strategies, the idiosyncrasies of the catalog, the idiosyncrasies of the fields specified in the “within” drop down list,

and the formal vocabularies used in the library records. Not for nothing is librarianship a profession.

However, the above is intended as a simple introduction to searching the catalog, something that will enable you to get started exploring what the Library of Congress has to offer. Needless to say, what you are searching and finding are bibliographic records only, not PDFs of scores. The Library has not yet scanned this music.

As a last addendum to the above, let me simply list some of the *formal subject headings* you might use for particular types of mandolin music:

- Mandolin music
- Mandolin music (Bluegrass)
- Mandolin music (Jazz)
- Mandolin music (Mandolins (2))
- Plucked instrument trios (Guitar, mandolins (2))
- Guitar and mandolin music
- Mandolin and piano music
- Mandolin orchestra music
- Plucked instrument orchestra music
- Mandolin ensembles
- Mandolin--Methods
- Mandolin--Methods (Bluegrass)

Use these as you did “mandolin music” in the first search example above, typing them exactly as you see them constructed here. The exceptions to this are the “Methods”; the word “Methods” must be entered as a second search term, not as part of the primary search term. One other tip is that you can restrict each of these headings (methods excepted, again) to *arrangements* by simply adding the word “arranged” at the end of each of these formal phrases, e.g., “Guitar and mandolin music, Arranged”.

Joe Bartl
10 July 2019