

**Voices, instruments and somewhere
in between:**
using musical medium to cross the
knowledge organization/music boundary

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Introduction

Music

**Library and
information science**

Schedule

1. The “great” vocal/instrumental divide
2. Main musical instruments classes
3. Cross-currents between knowledge organization (KO) and organological classification schemes

I. Vocal/instrumental divide

Music perspective

- Music considered vocal or instrumental
- Values change over time, e.g.
 - 19th century: rise of “absolute music”
- Vocal and instrumental music as ***genres?***

I. Vocal/instrumental divide

KO perspective

- Classification schemes reinforce the vocal/instrumental divide, e.g.
 - Highest division within 'medium'
 - Same concept treated differently in vocal and instrumental
 - Separate citation orders
- However, no strong ***preference*** for instrumental or vocal

I. Vocal/instrumental divide

**Musical works do not always
fit this binary classification**

e.g. choral symphonies

I. Vocal/instrumental divide

Classifying choral symphonies

- Orchestral works with choral parts
- E.g. Beethoven's 9th symphony
- Medium = orchestra + choir (+ soloists)
- Form = symphony

→ **Vocal or instrumental?**

I. Vocal/instrumental divide

- ***Analysis of choral symphonies in KO schemes reveals ...***
 - Difficulties in handling ‘vocal and instrumental’ works
 - If treated as vocal, problems having an ‘instrumental’ form

So ...

- In music domain choral symphonies are hybrid and original → ***reflected in KO***

Organology classification outline

- Organology = sub-discipline of music devoted to instruments
- Classification and taxonomies are core of organology
- 20th and 21st centuries: dominance of Hornbostel and Sachs (H/S) classification
- H/S = 1914, but based on earlier scheme by Mahillon (1880)

2. Musical instrument classes

Organology perspective (historical)

- From Ancient Greek theorists onwards, ‘traditional’ 3 class system

Strings



Wind



Percussion



- Order of strings/wind varies
- Percussion usually at end

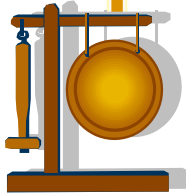
2. Musical instrument classes

Organology perspective (modern)

However ...

- Mahillon's 4 class system in 1880
- Division: ***how sounds created/vibrations***
- Basis of Hornbostel and Sachs classes

Idiophones



Membranophones



Chordophones



Aerophones



2. Musical instrument classes

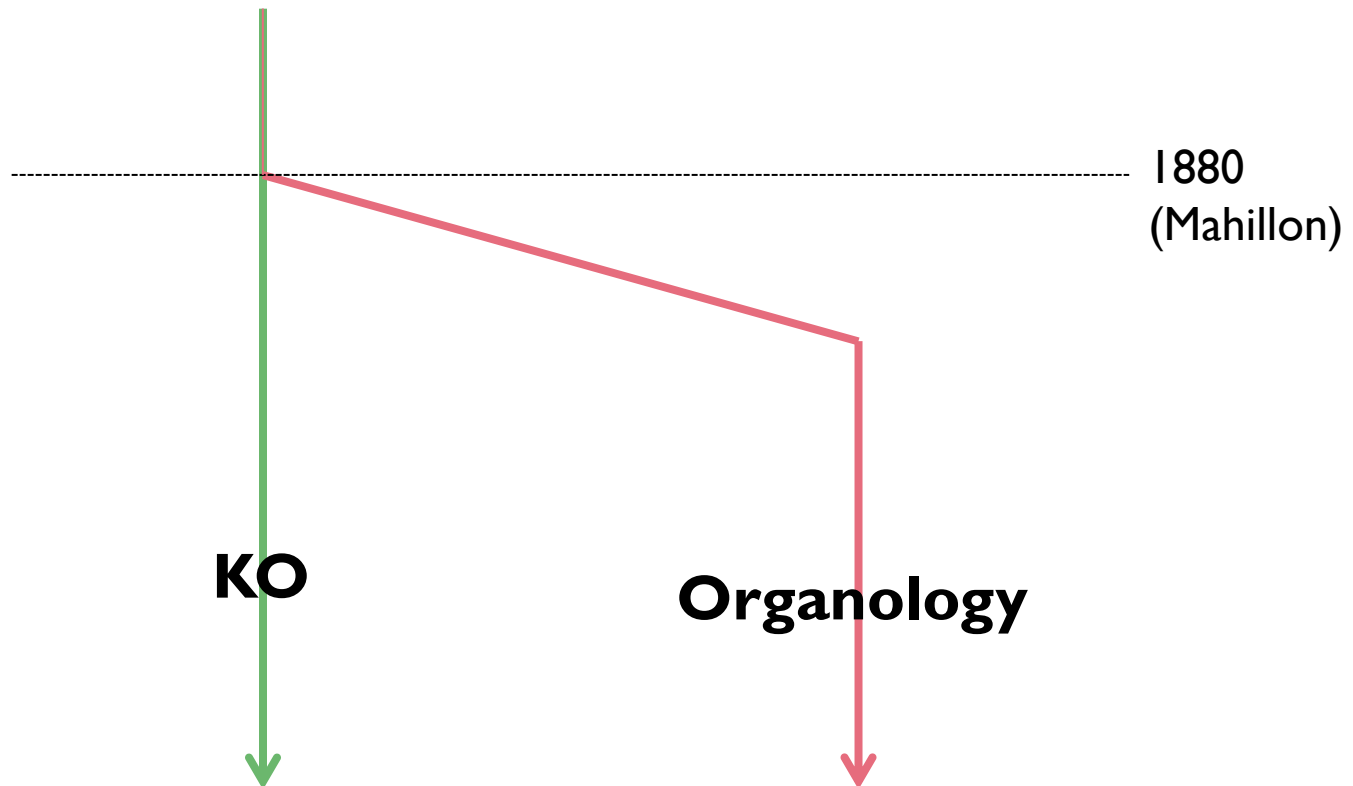
KO perspective

- 3 'traditional' classes
- When percussion is divided, not usually at class level
- Keyboard instruments often in separate class → different from organology
- Dominance of Western instruments

2. Musical instrument classes

'Traditional' 3
class system

4 sound-based
classes



3. Linking KO and music schemes

Do organological taxonomies, e.g. H/S, infiltrate KO schemes?

How? Which classes?

3. Linking KO and music schemes

Example 1. Flexible classification (1967)

- H/S used for percussion instruments
 - Main division within percussion class: idiophones and membranophones
 - Ordering within idiophones and membranophone sections indebted to H/S

3. Linking KO and music schemes

Example 2. Dewey Decimal Classification

(DDC; Phoenix schedule/edition 20 onwards)

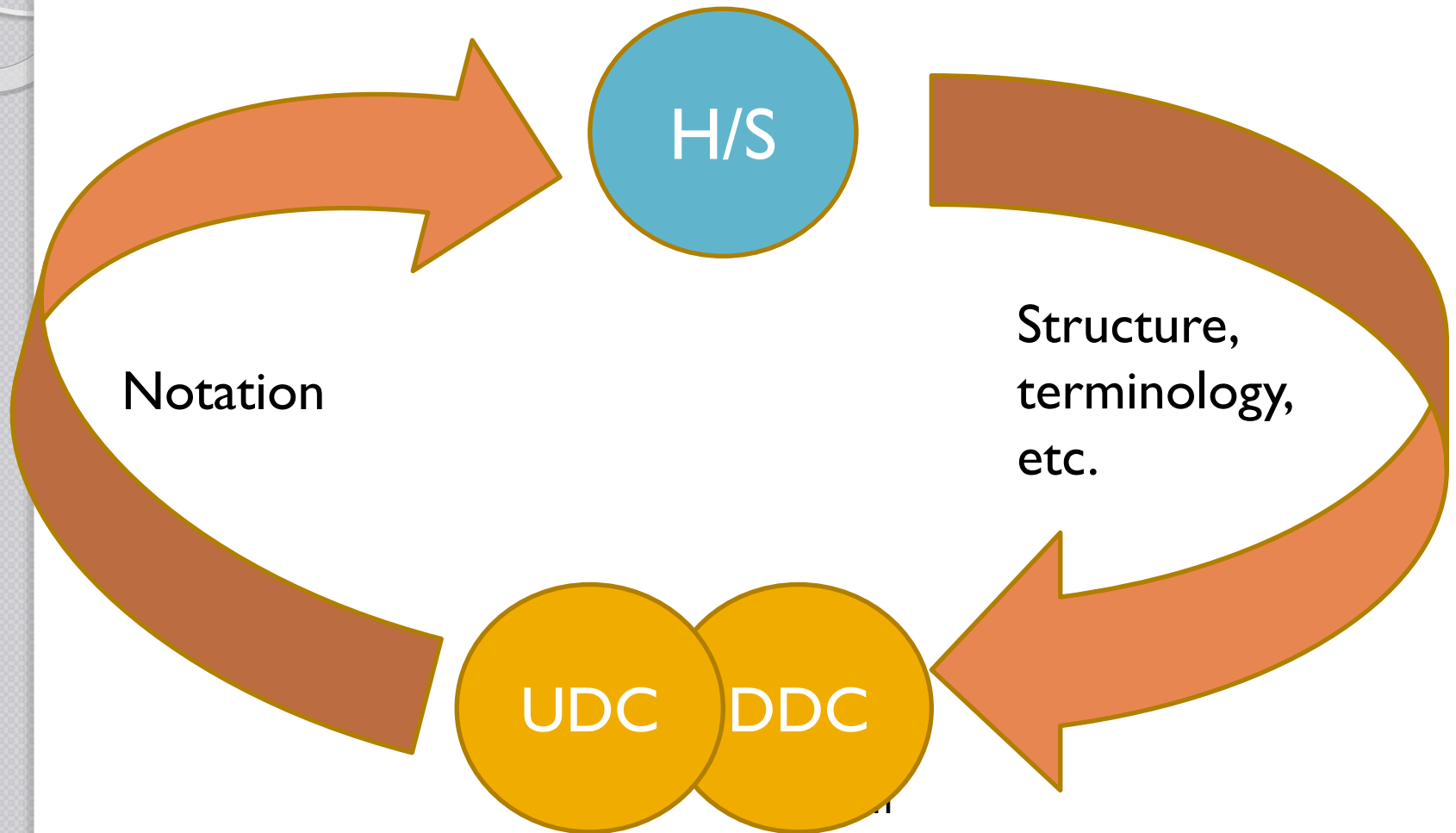
- Heavily indebted to H/S
- Use of H/S terminology
 - e.g. 'Wind instruments (Aerophones)'
 - e.g. 'Mechanical struck idiophones'
- Orders within classes correlate to H/S
- **But** ... cannot entirely escape older DDC editions, e.g. keyboards still separate

3. Linking KO and music schemes

... and in the opposite direction

- H/S uses KO ideas of notation
- Authors state use of DDC notation
- (Gnoli: ... actually the European, Otlet and La Fontaine adaptation of DDC)
- **So** ... KO scheme also influencing organological taxonomies
- Full circle: DDC20 onwards utilises H/S, which was itself influenced by DDC

3. Linking KO and music schemes



Concluding thoughts

- Different ways of traversing the boundary
 - **Reflection.** Music domain reflected in KO
 - **Independence.** Music and KO differ
 - **Adoption.** KO adopts elements of music schemes, and occasionally vice versa
- Study the boundary → understand issues

Questions



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