New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Online, 2nd ed. New York, NY: Macmillan, 2001. ISBN 0333-913981. Information on technical requirements and pricing is available at: www.grovemusic.com.

Having the *New Grove II Online* is a very good thing, certainly for libraries. The premier reference resource for music is now a dynamic, accessible and fully searchable electronic text. The question is what should we expect from the enhancements that an online version can provide. This review will concentrate on the interface of *grovemusic.com*, including visual appearance, ease of use, functionality and accuracy of search tools, performance, and, particularly relevant to music, the exploitation of the medium through use of multimedia and interactivity.

In addition to full-text searching of the articles, there are several options for searching portions of the dictionary that make full use of the database structure. For biographical entries you can search the date and place of birth or death, occupation, and nationality. Bibliographies can also be searched separately, although less accurately since the searching is keyword based. Citation searching and compilation of lists by date are also allowed, although it should be noted information on date searching is buried in the help page on wildcards and fuzzy searches. (For instance, to extract a list of sources published between 1990 and 1999, if you type in 199[0-9] you more or less get the right information, depending on whether the dates are also given in other parts of the citation.) Works' lists can also be searched separately, a feature recently added. In all, general keyword searching for full text and designated fields works well and fully supports the use of

logical and positional operators and wildcard characters.

On the other hand, the main search input box is confusing. Its label "article search" suggests that you will be lead directly to the entry, but in fact the results are a ranked keyword search of the entry's descriptive data. It makes no sense that a search for the article on harmony results in only a fifth-place ranking. To go directly to an article for which you know the entry you have to use the index.

The algorithms for grouping words are part of the Excalibur RetrievalWare software, a package composed of Semantic Networks (multiple lexical sources, natural language processing, morphology) and Adaptive Pattern Recognition Processing (ADRP™). This third-party software is responsible for the two alternate modes of searching: concept and pattern. But because of the general nature of the thesaurus used by Excaliber (now owned by Conerva), concept searching for related terms is not very useful. Searching "harmony" brings up a cluster that includes "proportion" and "balance," but what we would really like are terms such as "chord" and "tonality." In the case of "mode," we would be better served by terms such as "scale" and "interval," rather than "moods" and "manner." Pattern searching, on the other hand, works very well, particularly with proper names that have various transliterations, a common problem that no library systems vendor has yet solved in a satisfactory manner.

41

The use of the established standards Unicode and SGML for the text has been a good move, and now that use of XML is gaining momentum, the early efforts by Grove to structure the text through SGML will not be lost in the conversion to Web pages. Page design is also functional and attractive, with clear and consistent use of icons and placement of page elements. And page URLs are stable, allowing for direct linking into the dictionary (consider the possibilities for online guides). This component of *grovemusic.com* is handled by Semantico, a company created by former MacMillan and Routledge employees, and it is clear that they understand Web design as well as the long-term implications of electronic publishing.

But for sound and graphic files, adherence to standards is less successful. In fact, multimedia, or the incorporation of sound and graphics, is the weakest area of the online version of the dictionary. Internally mounted sound files are lacking, with only a few hundred outside links available, prefaced by the disclaimer that "Grove's Dictionaries is not responsible for the content on third party sites." Image files, mostly diagrams of instruments and some musical notation, have been scanned at a very poor resolution. But there is an extensive set of links into the instrument collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which are beautifully rendered. There are also five 3-D images of instruments, which require a proprietary viewer.

The *grovemusic.com* editors are acutely aware there is a dearth of sound files or, for that matter, video files, and incorporating them is a high priority. For the immediate future, the plan is to have Sibelius-enabled musical examples, which would then require the Scotch plug-in to be played. Apparently this file format allows for more elaborate musical markings and is more secure than standard MIDI, but having yet another proprietary file format that may or may not be supported in the future seems ill-advised.

The idea that an authoritative dictionary is an ongoing work in progress will take some time getting used to, as muttering from various corners has already indicated. But for most users, I can think of no reason why quarterly updates (including error corrections and revisions), site enhancements, and special features (currently the transcript of a discussion with Krin Gabbard and Scott DeVeaux on the Ken Burns' Jazz series) would not be useful. The key to accepting this new form is in the renaming of the dictionary to *grovemusic.com*. It thereby suggests a different type of resource, one that is aiming to become an interactive and dynamic music information Web space/community that also happens to house the entire suite of Grove music encyclopedias. Maybe some day users will be allowed to annotate those texts. . . .

Rob van der Bliek
Sound and Moving Image Library
York University