

The ET Classical Music Tagging Method.

The aim of the method is to provide a way of tagging classical music that maximises the use of existing standard fields/tags whilst keeping any additional fields/tags to a minimum and is flexible enough to allow transition from an inconsistent tagging structure to a consistent one in stages.

Unlike its competitors and some scrapable metadata web-sites, MC does not impose a rigid set of rules and fields/tags on anybody.

As with MC we are all free to choose how we do things therefore the decision as to whether or not you make use of some, or all, of the method I am outlining is yours and yours alone.

How to go about tagging your tracks/albums?

Remember listening to your Music should be more Important than making sure all tags you have decided to use contain the right information/data. Isn't being able to listen to it the reason why you added it to MC in the first place?

Stage 1 - Sit down with all the information that you have to hand about your classical music collection; the CD Insert, Track Listing or Booklet that came with your CD's or Box Sets, and jot down all the relevant things about individual Works/Compositions and Tracks that is provided.

Stage 2 - Rationalisation.

Your aim should be to keep the amount of data/information down to the smallest amount needed to allow you, and others, identify the Track/Work/Composition.

Step 1 - Keeping the number of existing fields/tags used to a sensible minimum.

MC, and a lot of other Media Players, provides 3 movement related fields/tags - "Movement", "Movement Number" and "Movement Count"

If the Movement field/tag contains the Movement Number, i.e. 3. Moderato pesante, do you really need to use the "Movement Number" field/tag and/or the "Movement Count" field/tag.

If you use the MC Link Tracks Option to "Link" all the "Movements" for a Work/Composition the "Movement Count" field/tag becomes even more irrelevant because if you add 1 of those Linked Tracks to Playing Now, a Playlist or Smartlist MC is going to add all of them.

Step 2 - Keeping the number of additional fields/tags to a sensible minimum.

When it comes to classical music there are three important facts that you have to take into consideration about adding information/metadata that can only be handled/stored in fields/tags that have to be added to MC - The probability that it is only in MC or a modified version of one of the MC Ultra or ET Ultimate Track-Info Plugins where you will be able to see those fields/tags and their content.

Some of the devices you may use, especially hand-held ones, are not set up to display anything other than a minimal amount of information about the music it is playing.

Do you really want to spend ages looking on the Web for Data/Information that is not going to enhance your Listening Experience?

One of the things you may spot, or already have, is that with Classical Music the "One Size Fits All Approach" that can be normally applied to Popular Music appears to be unsuitable for use with Classical Music.

Some Works/Compositions consist, like most popular music, only of a Name and a single piece of music; whilst others are not only made up of multiple pieces of music, some of them give different names to those component parts.

Some will be labelled Movement, some Part, some Act, some Scene, etc.

But if we look at one of the Definitions for the term Movement - "a distinct structural unit or division having its own key, rhythmic structure, and themes and forming part of an extended musical composition" - you can avoid proliferating the number of Additional Fields/Tags by simply using the "Movement" Field/Tag for every one of them.

Don't forget - The more tags/fields you use, or add, the more effort and time it's going to take to complete the task.

Stage 3 - Plan which order and what MC View(s) you are going to use to carry out the task.

Because the method was designed so that it could be implemented in stages there are several ways you can handle the task of transitioning from an inconsistent tagging structure to a consistent one; how you tackle it is down to you.

Some of you may decide to take a Composer-by-Composer Approach, some may decide to take a field/tag by field/tag by one.

Similarly, some of you may decide to use one or more Audio > Panes Views to select the tracks to be worked on, others, including me, may prefer to use Smartlists instead.

Either way one of the easiest ways of restricting the Tracks Selected to only Classical Music ones is to set up a New Field/Tag for the purpose.

The one I use is set up as "Music Type" with an Edit-Type of Integer and after selecting all my Classical Music Tracks I set it, in the tag window, to 3. I use 1 to identify Single Artists Albums and 2 to identify Multiple Artist/Themed Compilations like the "Now That's What I Call Music" releases.

I also added Composer(Sort) set up as Calculated Data using the Expression =swap([Composer]).

Stages 4 to Infinity.

Using a session-by-session approach make the relevant changes to a group of tracks.

The Fields/Tags the ET Classical Music Tagging Method Uses.

The existing fields/tags that can be used

A lot of the existing MC fields/tags have Names that may seem inappropriate/unsuitable for use with Classical Music but with the help of some lateral thinking they can still be used -

MC Field/Tag	Note	Can be used to hold.
Arranger	1	The name of the person who Transcribed, Arranged or Orchestrated the Track/Work/Composition
Chorus		The name of a Chorus and/or Choir performing the Track/Work/Composition
Composer	2	The name of the Composer of the Track/Work/Composition, i.e. Johann Sebastian Bach.
Conductor		The name of the Conductor of an Orchestra or the Leader of a Chamber Orchestra or Ensemble performing the Track/Work/Composition.
Genre	3	The "Western Classical Music Era/Period" the track/work/composition was written in.
Instrument	4	The names of the Instruments performing the Track/Work/Composition.
Lyricist		The name of the Librettist when the Track/Work/Composition being performed includes lyrics/text (Libretto).
Orchestra		The name of the Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble or Band performing the Track/Work/Composition.
Movement		The name of a Movement, Act, Scene, Part, or any other identifier used for a distinct structural unit, or division, of an extended musical composition.
Orchestra		The name of the Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble or Band performing the Track/Work/Composition.
Soloists	5	The name/names of any Instrumental and/or Vocal Soloists performing the Track/Work/Composition.
Style		The Composition Type, i.e. "Sonata", "Symphony", "Opera", etc.

Notes

1	Is used when the Track/Work/Composition has been Transcribed, Arranged or Orchestrated.
2	The MC Ultra Track-Info Plugins must use the Composers Name in its 1st Name 2nd Name Order when looking up The Composers Name on Wikipedia.
3	The Western Classical Music Eras/Periods MC Ultra Track-Info Plugins use to switch into "Classical Music Display Mode are :- Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modernist, Postmodernist and Contemporary N.B. Since some Composers wrote Works/Compositions in Different Era's/Period's the Genre should be that of the Work/Composition and Not the Composer
4	For the purpose of this field A single Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble or Band performing the work/track should be entered as a Single Instrument i.e. Orchestra Multiple Orchestras, Chamber Orchestras, Ensembles or Bands performing the work/track should be entered as Multiple Instruments i.e. 2 Orchestras Combinations of Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble and/or Band should all be entered as Single Instruments i.e. Orchestra; Band

	<p>Single Instrumental Soloist performing the work/track should be entered as an Individual Instrument i.e. Piano</p> <p>Multiple Instrumental Soloists performing the work/track on different instruments should all be entered as Single Instruments i.e. Piano; Violin</p> <p>Multiple Instrumental Soloists performing the work/track on the same instrument should be entered as a Multiple Instruments i.e. 2 Pianos</p> <p>A Single Vocal Soloist performing the work/track should be entered as an Individual Instrument i.e. Vocal Soloist</p> <p>Multiple Vocal Soloists performing the work/track should be entered as a Group of Instruments i.e. Vocal Soloists</p> <p>A Single Choir or Chorus performing the work/track should be entered as an Individual Instrument i.e. Choir</p> <p>Multiple Choirs or Chorus's performing the work/track should all be entered as Multiple Instruments i.e. 2 Choruses</p>
5	<p>Since some Soloists, especially Instrumental Soloists, are proficient on more than 1 Instrument I prefer to populate this field using a "Solists Name (Instrument)" format</p> <p>Every Soloist performing the work/track should be entered as an Individual entry</p> <p>The only exception being when more than one soloist is performing the work/track on a single instrument, usually piano/keyboard works for 4 or 6 hands, when the soloists should be entered as a single Combined entry. i.e. Pianist 1 & Pianist 2 (Piano 4-hands)</p>

The extra/additional fields/tags that are used

Field/Tag Name	Note	Data Type.
Collection (or Box Set)	1	String
Composer's Catalog #	2	String
Composition Group	3	String
Composition Order	4	Integer
Chorus Master	5	List
Date (Performed or Orig Recorded)	6	String
Disc Title	7	String
Original Composer	8	List
Recorded At	9	String

Notes

1	used to hold the Name of a Box Set or Collection, it can also be used with Non-Classical Music.
3	can be used with the "Style" field/tag to group "Composition Types" by a Sub-Type; i.e. if a user decides that the "Style" for Violin Sonatas and Piano Sonatas is "Sonata" so that they are listed under a single heading, they can use this field/tag to provide a way of listing them under a different heading, like Piano Sonata or Music for Piano
4	can be used to hold the order Works/Compositions were written/composed in when the Composer or Publisher did not assign a Catalogue Number or when the Compositions were composed in a different order to that in the Composer's Catalog.
5	used to hold the Name(s) of 1 or more Choir/Chorus Master(s).
6	used to hold the Date a Performance was recorded or the Date the track was Originally Recorded when the release date of the Boxset or Album is not the same as the date the track was Performed or Recorded. I.E, A Multi-Disc/Multi-Artists Album of 60's Pop Music that was released in the 21st Century.
7	used to hold the Date a Performance was recorded or the Date the track was Originally Recorded when the release date of the Boxset or Album is not the same as the date the track was Performed or Recorded. I.E, A Multi-Disc/Multi-Artists Album of 60's Pop Music that was released in the 21st Century.
8	used to hold the name of the Original Composer when - the Composer Transcribed, Arranged or Orchestrated another Composer's work, the Composer is playing another Composers composition, or the work/composition is a Variation based another Composers composition/work
9	usually used in conjunction with the Date (Performed or Orig Recorded) field/tag to hold the name of the place a Live Performance was held/recorded, or the place where the recording of the track/work was made.

The other fields/tags used + How you can extract data from one field/tag to populate other fields/tags and/or populate one field/tag from a combination of fields/tags.

Whilst we are not allowed to modify any of the MC Supplied Fields/Tags so that we can use Expressions to populate them the Tag Window does allow us to use expressions to populate 1 tag with the content, or part of it, from another tag.

The MC "Audio -- Task -- Empty properties" Smartlist considers the following fields/tags too important to be left blank/empty - Album, Artist, Genre, Name & Track #

Album - I prefer to add the Composers Surname to the beginning of the Album Name - adding it to an Existing Album field/tag can be achieved by entering =ListItem([Composer(Sort)],0,,) [Album] into the "Album" field/tag in the tag window.

For most Box Sets I use the Box Set Name to populate the Album field/tag and since the Box Set Image is the easiest to find/obtain I use that for the Cover Art.

Album Artist - I prefer to populate this using =Composer(Sort) in the tag window

Artist - If the relevant Conductor, Orchestra, Soloists and Chorus fields/tags for a track, or group of tracks are populated they can be used to populate the Artist field/tag by entering =[Conductor];[Orchestra];[Soloists];[Chorus] into the "Artist" field/tag in the tag window; because List fields are set up to automatically remove any Empty/Blank Entries/Elements from the user's input.

Thanks to the info provided with most Classical Recordings & what is available on Wikipedia for each track I build the "Soloists" field/tag using only the names of the vocal and/or instrumental soloists performing on that particular track.

Name - should be populated using a "Work": "Composer's Catalog #"; "Movement" format, where Work is Mandatory and ": Composer's Catalog #" and "; Movement" are Optional i.e. -

Name	Contains
Swan Lake; Op. 20, TH 12, CW 12: Act 2 No 13 Dance of the Swans 1 Tempo di valse	Work + Composer's Catalog # + Movement
]The Year 1812 in E-flat; Op. 49, TH 49, CW 46	Work + Composer's Catalog # only
Symphony No. 6 in B minor "Pathétique": 1. Adagio, Allegro non troppo	Work + Movement only
In the Steppes of Central Asia	Work only

There are two ways of using this field/tag -

By manually populating the "Name" field/tag and using its content to populate the "Work", "Composer's Catalog #" and "Movement" fields/tags.

Composer's Catalog # is populated using =ListItem(ListItem([Name],1,;),0,;) - To give everything between the ; and the :

Movement is populated using =ListItem([Name],1,:) - to give everything after the :

Work" is populated using =ListItem([Name],0,;) - to give everything before the : - i.e. Work and Composer's Catalog # if it is present.

"Composer's Catalog #" will only get populated if the ; is present regardless of if the : is present or absent.

"Movement" will only get populated if the : is present

"Work" will always get populated by what's in the "Name" even when there is NO "Composer's Catalogue #" and/or "Movement"

NOTE - neither the Colon : or Semi-Colon ; should be used anywhere else in the Name field/tag

Or by using the content from the "Work", "Composer's Catalog #" and "Movement" fields/tags to populate the "Name" field/tag

Since the Name field/tag is set up as a String you need to set up 3 Smartlists or Views -

#1 - to list the Tracks whose "Composer's Catalog #" and "Movement" fields are empty, select all the tracks and in the tag window enter =[Work] in the "Name" field/tag.

#2 - to list the Tracks whose "Composer's Catalog #" is not empty but the "Movement" field is, select all the tracks and in the tag window enter =[Work]: [Movement] in the "Name" field/tag.

#3 - to list the Tracks whose "Composer's Catalog #" and "Movement" fields are NOT empty, select all the tracks and in the tag window enter =[Work]; [Composer's Catalog #]: [Movement] in the "Name" field/tag.

One of the advantages of having a Composer's Catalog # field/tag

If in one of your Classical Music Panes Views you add Composer's Catalog # as one of the Categories then clicking on a Composer's Catalog # in the upper window will list all the Tracks for the Work/Composition Assigned/Using that Catalog # in the lower window making it easier to Link all the tracks for a particular Work/Composition.

This is particularly useful when, as some Box Set compilers are prone to do, the "Movements" are not on the same disc.

I've noticed that sometimes not only are the Movements of some Works/Compositions spread over more than 1 disc they are also not always in Ascending Movement Number Order so you may have to sort them into Movement Number Order before linking them.

N.B. Just make sure you are not accidentally Linking the Movements for a Work/Composition performed by 1 Set of Artists to those for the same Work/Composition performed by a different Set of Artists;

or when clicking on a Composer's Catalogue # that only contains an Opus No. you are not accidentally Linking the Movements for a Work/Composition by one Composer to those of a Work/Composition by a different Composer that is using the same Opus No.

