QUERY BY HUMMING WITH THE VOCALSEARCH SYSTEM

Don't know the composer, performer, or title? Let the system match the theme you know to the song you want.

By William Birmingham, Roger Dannenberg, and Bryan Pardo

When one wishes to find a piece of music through Apple Computer's iTunes or at the local public library, the usual approach is to enter some textual information (metadata) about the piece (such as composer, performer, or title) into a search engine. However, when one knows the music, but not its metadata, standard search engines are not an option. One might instead hum or whistle a portion of the piece, providing a query for a search engine based on content (the melody) rather than on metadata. Systems able to find a song based on a sung, hummed, or whistled melody are called query by humming, or QBH, even though humming is not always the input.