

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

Music

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I. Scope

The overall context for this policy is the Library's position as the *de facto* national library of the United States. This statement refers to all materials that pertain to the subject area of music, particularly those that are in the custody of the Music Division. The Library collects these materials from across the world, but places primary emphasis on music of the United States. Music of the United States is here understood to mean concert music written by composers of this country as well as its popular and vernacular music that includes, but is not limited to, such genres as jazz, rock, gospel, country, rhythm & blues, soul music, rap, hip hop, as well as styles that originated outside the U.S. but have been adopted by American composers, such as reggae, salsa and other Latin-influenced music. This statement covers a variety of analog and digital formats including music and literary manuscripts, scores, parts, books, monographs, serials, correspondence, photographs and other primary source material, microforms, and machine-readable materials. Note that recorded sound, including recorded music, is not found in the Music Division and is covered by a separate policy, [Sound Recordings and Radio](#).

The core materials covered by this statement comprise the collections in Classes M (Music), ML (Literature on Music—which includes all special collections, iconography, and other materials), and MT (Musical Teaching—Instruction and Study). Music holdings may also be found in several locations other than the Music Division, notably the special format divisions and the Archive of Folk Culture in the American Folklife Center. Music materials in other Divisions, including all recorded sound, are covered by the following Collections Policy Statements (CPSs):

- American Folklife Center and the [Folklore and Folklife](#) CPS;
- Manuscript Division and the [Manuscripts](#) CPS;
- Microformat Collections and the [Dissertations and Theses](#) CPS;
- National Audio-Visual Conservation Center and the [Moving Image Materials](#) and [Sound Recordings and Radio](#) CPSs;
- Prints and Photographs Division and the [Photography](#) and [Fine and Applied Arts - Non-book Materials](#) CPSs.

Materials pertaining to the subject area of music may overlap with those pertaining to theater or dance; artists and creators may produce material that spans across the performing arts. See the [Theater](#) and [Dance](#) CPSs for more guidance.

II. Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement

As the nation's de facto national library, the Library of Congress strives to build an expansive, yet selective, collection that records the creativity of the United States and is reflective of the nation's diversity and complexity. The Library's mandate is to have collections that are inclusive and representative of a diversity of creators and ideas. A priority includes acquiring material of underrepresented perspectives and voices in the Library's collections to ensure diverse authorship, points of view, cultural identities, and other historical or cultural factors. The Library also seeks to build a research collection that comprises a globally representative sample of international materials that are diverse in voice and perspective, relative to their places of origin, further supporting the Library's mission to sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for Congress and future generations.

Diverse collecting is mentioned within many of the Library's Collections Policy Statements. In addition, the Library has adopted several specific collection policies in an effort to ensure it is building an inclusive and representative collection. For more information, see the Library's Collections Policy Statements on [Ethnic Materials](#), [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#), [Women's and Gender Studies](#), [Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#), and [Countries and Regions with Acquisitions Challenges](#).

III. Research Strengths

The music collections of the Library of Congress constitute an exceptional resource for musical scholarship. They include cataloged and uncataloged monographs, serials, and related textual items, and special collections, and are estimated to contain more than twenty-five million items.

The collections are particularly strong in United States concert music and musical theater; European concert music; opera scores and libretti; early imprints of works dealing with music literature and theory; and periodical literature from the 18th century to the present.

The special collections are unparalleled as a resource for musical research. The Library has an outstanding collection of popular music. Popular music of the United States is strongly represented for all of its history; for European and Latin American popular music, the Library's collection is exceptional from the 1920s on. Jazz and music for film are also well (and increasingly) represented. Other special collections strengths comprise a wide variety of materials including: music manuscripts, printed music, correspondence and other literary manuscripts, concert programs, scrapbooks, and photographs. The vast majority of items date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and continuing into the twenty-first. Particularly noteworthy among the special collections are the great number of holograph scores, especially of 20th-Century concert and musical theater composers of the United States; collections of papers and correspondence of 20th century composers, lyricists, librettists, performers, and scholars; and collections including musical instruments, such as the Dayton C. Miller Collection of, among other materials, flutes and other wind instruments, books, and pieces of music.

The Library has extensive collections related to folk and other music of the diasporic communities in the United States, of Native American communities, and of communities around the world. See the [Folklore and Folklife](#) CPS for more information.

Music-related material in non-English languages and music-related material from outside the United States can be found across the Library's collections. The Rare Book and Special Collections Division holds music items such as broadsides, early American sheet music, librettos, and other rare volumes, including thirteen books on music theory and literature in the Thomas Jefferson Library Collection.

IV. Collecting Policy

The Library of Congress places primary emphasis on music of the United States and aspires to collect comprehensively in this area. Music of the United States is here understood to mean concert music written by composers of this country as well as its popular and vernacular music that includes, but is not limited to, such genres as jazz, rock, gospel, country, rhythm & blues, soul music, rap, hip hop, as well as styles that originated outside the U.S. but have been adopted by American composers, such as reggae, salsa and other Latin-influenced music. For more information on the acquisition of folk music and the music of ethnic populations in the United States and elsewhere, consult the [*Folklore and Folklife*](#) CPS.

The Library has and continues to extensively collect authoritative editions of Western concert music. The Library aspires to strengthen its collections of other world music, particularly music from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. (See also the [*Ethnic Materials*](#) CPS.) It aspires to extend these collections, including non-U.S. materials, beyond broadly representative examples in order to support research on music and music-related materials from around the world.

The following sections deal with policy for the specific types of materials acquired.

A. Music Scores

The Library collects published and unpublished music scores with primary emphasis on music in the United States, and continuing emphasis on Western, concert music and popular and vernacular genres as described above, and to strengthen its collection-building for scores for non-Western music overall. Scores of an instructional nature receive lower priority, especially those at the elementary level. An exception may be made if the teaching material is by a significant composer.

B. Published Textual Material

The Library collects works of serious scholarship on the subject of music, including monographs and serials. Through subscription databases the Library offers access to many serious journals on music, as well as dissertations and theses. The Library also collects librettos and other sung texts. Works dealing with musical instruction and study are also acquired. When such textual material is available online through subscription it may be desirable or necessary to obtain them in that manner. For further information, see the Collections Policy Statement for [*Dissertations and Theses*](#) and the Supplementary Guidelines for [*Microforms*](#) and [*Electronic Resources*](#).

C. Primary Source Material

The Library aspires to collect primary source material by and about nationally and internationally prominent and significant musicians and persons of recognized achievement and contribution to the world of music. Archives of music organizations are considered for acquisition only when of direct relationship to collections already held by the Library or of unusual significance.

Because of their great value to musicological research as well as their intrinsic cultural and associational value, manuscripts of significant musical figures are sought, with a particular emphasis on American composers and arrangers (e.g., Copland, Gershwin, Sousa, Bernstein, Roach, and arrangements held in the Ella Fitzgerald Collection), and research materials from aligned figures (e.g., lyricist/librettist Oscar Hammerstein, and photographer William Gottlieb).

Collections considered for donation or purchase may contain mixed formats of materials or realia, or both. In those cases where the total scholarly value of the collection is enhanced by accepting accompanying realia (e.g., art works, musical instruments, medals, diplomas and awards, and similar materials) such collections may be accepted as a body. Whenever possible, the goal is to curate these items as selectively as possible, focusing on research value and the likelihood that any items might be used in an exhibit or display. The realia may be separated for custody at an appropriate repository

outside LC. The acquisition of musical instruments relating to strong collections already existing in the Music Division is considered discriminately on a case-by- case basis.

In the event that original documents for important materials are not available, the Library may acquire reproductions through microfilm, photocopy, digital reproduction, or similar means.

D. Music Software

Software is collected in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the [Computer Science, Telecommunication, and Artificial Intelligence](#) CPS.

E. Web Archives

The Music Division curates collections of web archives that enhance and contextualize current holdings in print, digital, and manuscript formats. Websites related to creators of the Music Division's special collections continue to be added to the Performing Arts Web Archive. This ensures that as legacies become more born-digital, archival evidence such as online concert calendars, works lists, programs, artist statements, perusal scores, press kits, and blogs are preserved. Websites of composers commissioned with endowed Music Division funds – including but not limited to the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation, McKim Fund, and Dina Koston and Roger Shapiro Fund for New Music – continue to be added to the LC Commissioned Composers Web Archive to support current and future research of contemporary Western art music, jazz, and their creators. Websites of local, national, and international performing arts organizations related to unions, licensing, education, technology, professional development, medicine, and scholarship continue to be added to the Professional Organizations for Performing Arts Web Archive. This collection particularly expands upon materials in Subclass ML received in print by the Music Division in the early through mid-20th century, such as membership pamphlets, conference proceedings, programs, and posters.

New web archive collections will be proposed and curated in accordance with collecting priorities and staff initiative as set forth by the [Web Archiving Supplementary Guidelines](#).

F. Related Topics

An important and growing aspect of the Music Division's collecting policy is a focus on performing arts materials and collections that align and intersect with theater, dance, and film. These areas also fall under their own Collections Policy Statements ([Theater](#); [Dance](#); [Moving Image Materials](#); [Sound Recordings and Radio](#)). But it is important to make clear that there is significant crossover in the performing arts and many of the Music Division's special collections are the papers of individuals whose work shares a focus on and materials related to music, theater, dance, and/or film (and radio, and television). Examples include the Bob Fosse/Gwen Verdon Collection—where Fosse began his career as a dancer, became a choreographer (on stage, film, and television), then a director, initially of film musicals, but then non-musical films, and returned to Broadway where he directed, choreographed and wrote musicals, and dance works. Both Neil Simon and Arthur Laurents were writers who began in radio, Simon then moved to television, and they both then wrote scripts for both plays and musicals, as well as film scripts; Laurents also went on to become a director. Set designer Oliver Smith designed musicals, plays, ballets, and operas. Tony Walton was both a set and costume designer, both for stage and film.

V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see:
<http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources, open digital content, web archiving, and data sets, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf>, <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/opencontent.pdf>, <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>, and <https://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/datasets.pdf>.

VI. Acquisition Sources

Whenever possible the Library attempts to acquire materials through non-purchase means, such as copyright, exchange or gift. The Library of Congress collections are heavily dependent upon materials received through the copyright deposit provisions of U.S. copyright law ([17 USC section 407](#) & [17 USC section 408](#)). For copyright demand, the U.S. regulations allow for the Library to receive analog and some digital materials. When items are offered in both formats the Library's default is normally the Best Edition print version, unless the publisher has arranged a special relief agreement with the Copyright Office. For materials not available to the Library through copyright deposit, or other non-purchase means, the Library acquires materials through purchase. Purchase is used predominately for non-U.S. publications that are not widely available within the United States. The Library utilizes an array of traditional methods of library acquisition (firm orders, subscriptions, and approval plans) with vendors located in different areas of the world. In addition, the Library uses its six Overseas Operations Offices to broaden its acquisitions opportunities outside the United States.

As sources of acquisition, the Library relies on the provisions of the Copyright Act for the major portion of music materials published in the United States. Other musical materials (i.e. music not copyrighted in the United States, unpublished music, special musical collections, such as primary source materials, etc.) are obtained through purchase, donation, or exchange, transfer or the Cataloging in Publication Program (CIP), as appropriate. It is important to note that, increasingly, contemporary music in all genres is not printed or published, but only available as sound recordings, and music that is published is increasingly done so only electronically.

Books that are U.S. imprints are received through Copyright and CIP. Coverage varies. At the present, foreign publications are primarily acquired via purchase from vendors, primarily via approval plans. A large number of independent/self-publishers are producing material in scope for the Library's collections. Generally these materials are not available through vendors and are recommended and acquired individually.

Future acquisitions for books will most likely continue through Copyright deposit and approval plans. However, as electronic Copyright registrations or publication of electronic-only materials increase, the Library will monitor evolving trends in scholarship and publication, in order to continue to build the collections at the same level.

Scores that are U.S. imprints are received through Copyright. Submissions of deposits vary according to publisher. With the move to electronic copyright registration, many publishers are now depositing music electronically. This means the best edition, as first published, may often be the electronic edition and not a paper score, so that the Library may not own a print edition of many scores. Scores published outside of the United States are acquired primarily by purchase from vendors.

When the Library makes purchases outside of circumstances described above, it is usually of antiquarian and unique materials that are not available through other means. The Library also focus on items that directly relate to its existing collections—such as correspondence or music manuscripts of a creator

whose papers the Library already holds. The general policy is not to purchase special collections, but exceptions are made in unique circumstances.

Future acquisitions for the majority of foreign publications will most likely continue to be conducted via purchases from vendors. Smaller vendors continue to prove to be a significant resource for acquiring publications from around the world.

VII. Collecting Levels

The following list is arranged according to the major subclasses of Classes M, ML, and MT of the Library of Congress Classification. The collecting levels are numbered to conform with the [Collecting Levels page](#) that accompanies these statements. It should be noted that these collecting levels are aspirational in nature. That is, they are goals for guiding the Library's collecting policies. Changing resources in, for example, budgets or human capital, may require adjustments in collection building, especially at the comprehensive level (level 5).

For many ranges in Class M not listed in the tables, it may be assumed that the Division is not actively acquiring materials in those areas (such as minstrel music, or songs of the Civil War, or music composed for instruments that are no longer made, or for organizations, or even countries that no longer exist). Most classifications are collected at a lower level for non-U.S. then U.S., with the exception of classifications that are specifically non-U.S. in designation, such as music of that country.

Meeting the Library's Diverse and Inclusive Collecting Statement (see Section II) and the collecting levels outlined below requires continual evaluation of the publishing landscape, sources of expression, current events, and socio-cultural trends to thus maintain effective collecting policies and acquisitions methods. Changes in publishing or in the creation of materials covered by this policy statement may necessitate collecting efforts not explicitly referenced here. Such efforts will be handled on a case-by-case basis while the Library evaluates the need for policy statement updates.

A. Music scores

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Comments
M1.A1-M1.A15	Americana, pre-1860	5	4	
M2-M3	Historical sets, complete and collected editions	5	4	Both U.S. and foreign materials
M3.3	First editions, selected composers	5	4	Both U.S. and foreign materials
M6-M175	Music for solo instruments	4	3	
M176	Incidental music, motion pictures	4	3	Music for silent motion pictures and music not intended for specific motion picture soundtracks.
M177-M990	Instrumental chamber music	5	4	

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Comments
M1000-M1366	Music for orchestra and other ensembles	4	3	
M1375-M1420	Instrumental music for children	3	2	
M1473	Electronic music	4	3	
M1480	Music with color apparatus	4	3	
M1450	Dance music	5	4	
M1470	Chance compositions	4	3	
M1490	Music printed in Europe between 1500 and 1700		4	
M1495-M1497	Vocal music, collections	4	3	
M1500-M1527.8	Dramatic music	5	3	
M1528-M1529	Vocal duets, trios, etc.	4	3	
M1530-M1527.8	Choruses, etc.	4	3	
M1628-M1677.8	Secular vocal music, U.S.	5	4	
M1678-M1853	National music other than U.S.	4	4	U.S. level indicates national music of non-U.S. countries that is published in the U.S.
M1900-M1985	Songs of special character	4	3	Includes part and solo songs, secular and sacred songs, songs of societies and organizations, student songs, and those dealing with particular topics.
M1990-M1998	Secular vocal music for children	3	2	
M1999-M2188	Sacred vocal music (including hymnody)	4	4	
M2190-M2196	Sacred vocal music for children	3	2	
M2198-M2199	Gospel music	5	4	

B. Literature on music

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Comments
ML1-ML5	Periodicals	5	4	
ML12-ML21	Directories, almanacs	5	4	
ML25-ML27	Societies	5	4	
ML48-ML54.8	Librettos	5	4	
ML90	Writings of musicians (collections)	4	3	
ML93-ML96	Manuscripts	N/A	N/A	See Collecting Policy section - Primary Source Material subsection.
ML97	Catalogs of collectors, dealers, etc.	4	3	
ML100-ML109	Dictionaries, encyclopedias	5	4	
ML111-ML158	Bibliography	4	3	Unless otherwise shown below
ML120	Bibliography, national	5	4	
ML128	Bibliography, by topic	5, 4	4, 3	In LC areas of strength, 5/4.
ML134	Catalogs of composers' works	5	4	
ML136	Catalogs of public and institutional libraries	5, 3	4, 2	Major research libraries 5/4; others 3/2
ML156-ML158	Discographies	5	4	
ML159-ML3797	History and criticism	4	3	Unless otherwise shown below
ML197	History and criticism: 20th century	5	4	
ML200	United States	5	4	
ML460-ML1092	Instruments and instrumental music	5	4	

LC Classification	Subject	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Comments
ML1100-ML1165	Chamber music	5	4	
ML1700-ML2100	Dramatic music	5	4	

C. Musical instruction and study

LC Classification	Subject/Intensity	U.S. Levels	Non-U.S. Levels	Comments
MT1-MT10	Theory, teaching materials	3	2	
MT18-MT88	Teaching methods	3	2	
MT90-MT165	Analytical guides	5, 1	1	Major U.S. orchestras 5, otherwise 1
MT170-MT810	Instrumental techniques	3	2	
MT820-MT893	Singing and voice culture	4	3	
MT898-MT949	Singing and voice culture for children	3	2	
MT955	Production of operas	5	4	
MT960	Music in theaters	5	4	

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