

Collection Subject Statement: Music

Last reviewed: January 2025

Music materials rich in Western art music, world music, and popular music of all kinds can be found throughout the ULS. The Theodore M. Finney Music Library, located in the Music Building on the Oakland campus, houses approximately 65,000 books and music scores, 25,000 sound recordings, 1,500 microforms, 500 video recordings, and more than 150 journal titles. An even larger amount of music material is stored across the ULS in the LCSU, Hillman Library, and departmental and branch libraries. Most items can be easily shipped to any access point in the ULS.

Collection Purpose and Audience

The ULS supports and develops music research, performance, and teaching through targeted acquisitions of music literature, scores, and recordings. Music collections support undergraduate music programs and graduate programs in Composition and Theory, Jazz Studies, Ethnomusicology, and Musicology, as well as the work of local and international artists and researchers unaffiliated with the university. Collections support emerging research areas in global music history.

Guiding Principles and Areas of Focus

The ULS seeks to represent the whole world of music-making in its collections and to build on institutional strengths in classical music, popular song, jazz, gospel, and hip hop. General collections support archival and special collections, particularly those documenting music in Pittsburgh and jazz. Acquisition of music scores by US composers is handled primarily through Theodore Front, music scores from outside the US through Harrassowitz, and music literature through GOBI. At present, new acquisitions in music literature and scores are print preferred, with acquisition of electronic formats growing.

Collection Scope

General music collections are strong in classical music, world music, and global popular music, covering musics from around the globe and from all time periods. Strengths include musics from Europe, the Americas, western Pennsylvania, and Indonesia.

Collections include scores (M), music literature (ML), music instruction texts (MT), and recordings in various formats. Music scores and recordings in all languages are collected. Historically, music literature in English and German was collected, but presently only literature in English is acquired and other languages are selectively chosen. Literature on music pedagogy is acquired only on faculty request.

Formats

Notated Music

- Scores

- Miniature scores
- Oversized scores
- Folio scores
- Facsimile editions
- Collected works and monuments
- Electronic score databases
- Digital scores

Music Literature

- Books
- E-books
- Dissertations and Theses
- Print Journals
- Electronic Journals

Music Recordings

- Video Recordings (VHS, DVD, streaming databases)
- Audio Recordings (wax cylinders, 78s, 45s, LPs, tape, CDs, digital formats, streaming databases)

Music Reference Materials

- Databases: indexes, dictionaries, encyclopedias, thematic catalogs
- Print versions of these materials when databases are unavailable

Connections & Collaborations

Collection development is conducted in close consultation with and in support of the Center for American Music, Archives & Special Collections, and the Music Department. Music collections are enhanced through resource-sharing agreements with other institutions. The ULS's music staff is active in the Music Library Association and the American Musicological Society.

Subject Experts

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Sources of Information

Alma analytics reports, published and unpublished essays on the history of the Finney Music Library, inventory data, music department meetings, faculty and student consultations, and existing approval plans.