

A Post-Canon Music Library

Finding, Collecting and Promoting Divergent Collections at the UCLA Music Library

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“The list of works considered to be permanently established as being of the highest quality.”

Oxford Living Dictionary: English

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/canon>

Canons have been used throughout the Humanities, including in the study and performance of Western Art Music. Ostensibly, a canon serves a number of purposes.

canons...

- Set standards
- Provide limits
- Common ground and shared experience

It can set standards based on concepts of genius, aesthetic beauty, complexity, universality and timelessness.

Similarly, a canon can help to define the amount of material needed to master in order to be considered knowledgeable in the field.

And ideally, it can facilitate the scholarly conversation by creating a shared pool of knowledge to draw from.

canons...

- Set standards
- Provide limits
- Common ground and shared experience
- Reflect values of only some
- Exclude and suppress other voices
- Reinforcement of the hegemony

However, recent scholarly conversations have focused on the negative aspects of canons, many of which echo recent theory-based criticism of library selections and collection development. For example, those standards that a canon sets may only reflect the values of some groups or individuals within a society.

Canons are necessarily created by limiting and excluding, which means that many voices are not heard or considered. Most notably this has happened throughout Western history to minorities, women and people of color.

Ultimately, this results in a further reinforcement of the hegemony, for as Douglas Raber puts it, 'The ideas that dominate and govern... are the ideas of the class that dominates and governs the means and relations of... production.'



The End of the Undergraduate Music History Sequence?

AMS Pedagogy Study Group

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The End of the Undergraduate Music History Sequence?

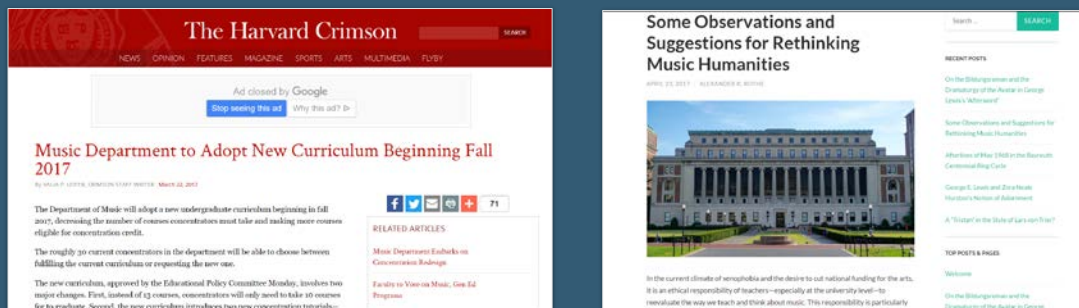
AMS Pedagogy Study Group

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cf7BILGDf0A>

Until recently, the humanities have been largely focused on the study of the canon within clear and distinct disciplines. Today, however, scholars and pedagogues are increasingly breaking down disciplinary lines and developing projects focused on primary resources and documentation, media and data, and subjects further from the canon. This shift in focus has certainly impacted music scholarship and pedagogy.

For example, the Pedagogy Study Group of the American Musicological Society has sponsored panels at their national convention to discuss the end of the Music History Sequence and related topics. Generally speaking, scholars are warming up to more complexity - teaching and studying not just the “geniuses” of European Art Music, but increasingly diverse topics both within that domain by including women, minorities, and queer studies; and external topics such as jazz, popular music and non-western musics. Similarly pedagogy is moving its focus away from students need to memorize content to developing critical skills that they can use in a myriad of contexts. These teachers focus on strategies of inquiry and active learning.

curriculum responses

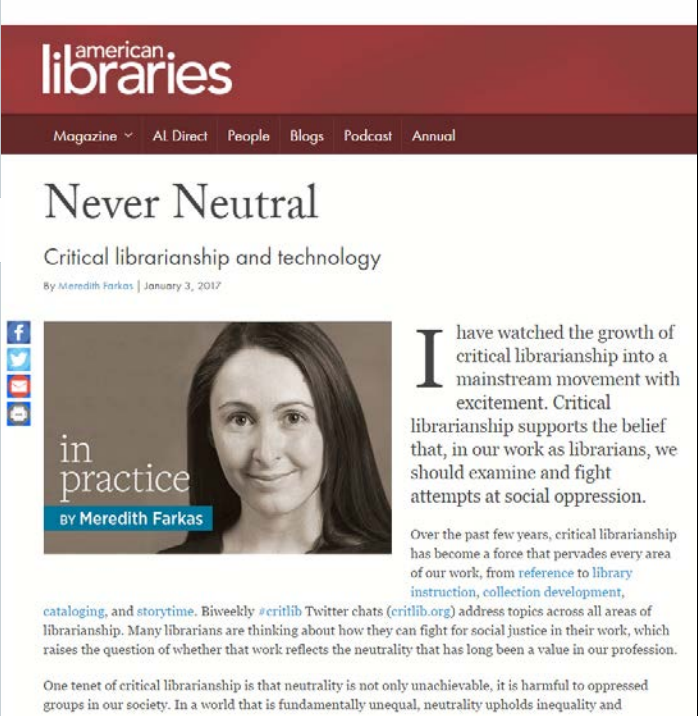


These theoretical models are being implemented in American Schools. A new music history curriculum has been adopted at Vanderbilt, and Harvard has announced significant changes, which essentially allow students seeking a concentration in music to fulfill their requirements without taking the standard music theory curriculum.

Another kind of response to the canon in music pedagogy is to “expand it” to new, “diverse” musics and musicians. Alexander Rothe promotes this response on his blog. He suggests adding “case studies” to the predetermined canon in the Musical Humanities course offered at Columbia. His proposal, while realistic for Columbia, has been criticized as being too incremental and the case studies as potentially enriching the canon instead of disrupting it.

Meredith Farkas

"One tenet of critical librarianship is that neutrality is not only unachievable, it is harmful to oppressed groups in our society. In a world that is fundamentally unequal, neutrality upholds inequality and represents indifference to the marginalization of members of our community."



The screenshot shows the header of the American Libraries website with a red navigation bar containing links for Magazine, AI Direct, People, Blogs, Podcast, and Annual. The article title 'Never Neutral' is prominently displayed, followed by the subtitle 'Critical librarianship and technology' and the author 'By Meredith Farkas | January 3, 2017'. A portrait of Meredith Farkas is featured next to the text 'in practice BY Meredith Farkas'. The article text begins with 'I have watched the growth of critical librarianship into a mainstream movement with excitement. Critical librarianship supports the belief that, in our work as librarians, we should examine and fight attempts at social oppression.' It continues to discuss the role of critical librarianship in various library areas like cataloging and storytime, and mentions biweekly #critlib Twitter chats. A quote from the author is repeated at the bottom of the article snippet.

This discussion is happening for libraries as well. There is, of course, the practical reason for academic libraries to move away from canonicity: that the collections they develop need to reflect the new foci of the scholarly communities they serve. If their patrons are studying and performing different genres of music, their collections need to support that. But there are also theoretical reasons to change collection development approaches, as arguments from critical librarianship have shown. Canons can function much like the idea of “neutrality” within libraries, in that both concepts end up giving all the power to the hegemony by supporting the status quo. As Meredith Farkas recently wrote in her column in American Libraries, “One tenet of critical librarianship is that neutrality is not only unachievable, it is harmful to oppressed groups in our society. In a world that is fundamentally unequal, neutrality upholds inequality and represents indifference to the marginalization of members of our community.” Similarly, by sticking blindly to canons, libraries continue to support the inequality and marginalization that those canons necessarily create.

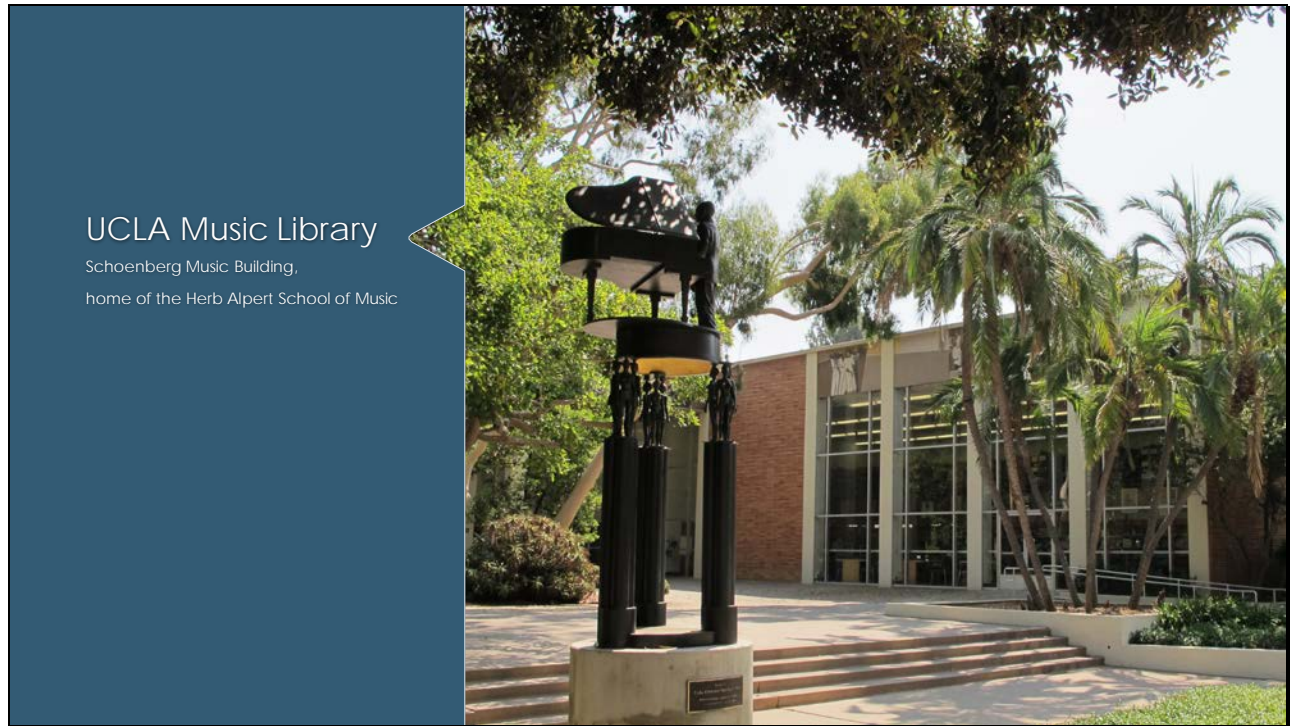
*pedagogical approaches shift from
canonic works to analytical and critical skills*

*library collections shift from
canonic works to distinctive collections and ...?*

There have been a few different ideas for responding to these changes. Some have argued for the idea of an evolving canon, or an expanding canon, or even multiple canons. A few have even suggested moving away from canons altogether, although others like John Doherty have countered that “[a] post-modernist, anarchic view of the canon would lead to a chaotic curriculum with little direction” (Doherty, 1998). However, with current pedagogy focusing more on teaching analytical skills and critical thinking, as opposed to specific works themselves, it may be more possible to move away from a canon than Doherty thinks. In another approach, Ed Komara suggests collecting comprehensively, “throughout a field representatively” (Komara, 2007). This in fact is one of the approaches we are taking at the UCLA Music Library.



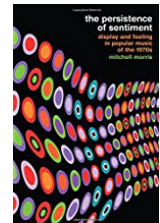
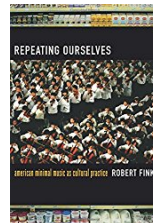
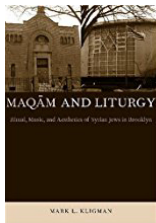
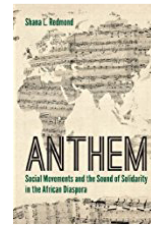
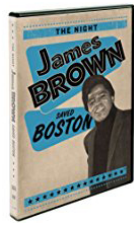
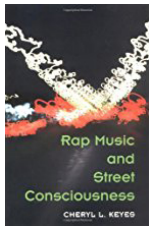
UCLA is the Los Angeles campus of the University of California, the 10-campus public university system for the state of California. Started in 1919, UCLA enrolls about 31,000 undergraduate and 13,000 graduate students, who are studying in 337 different degree programs, and it is considered one of the world's great public research universities.



The UCLA Music Library is a branch library within the UCLA Library system. Our music library is one of the largest academic music collections in North America, with approximately 80,000 books, 115,000 scores, and almost 200,000 sound recordings. We are located in the Schoenberg Music Building which houses the Herb Alpert School of Music, the only music school within the UC system. HASoM, as it is called, is comprised of 3 departments - Music, Musicology, and Ethnomusicology, with degrees in those areas as well as a minor in Music Industry and concentrations in Jazz Studies, Composition, Music Education, and Performance.

Currently there are 318 undergraduate students and 166 graduate students, with a little over half the students in the Music department, and about a quarter each in Musicology and Ethnomusicology.

publications by HASoM faculty



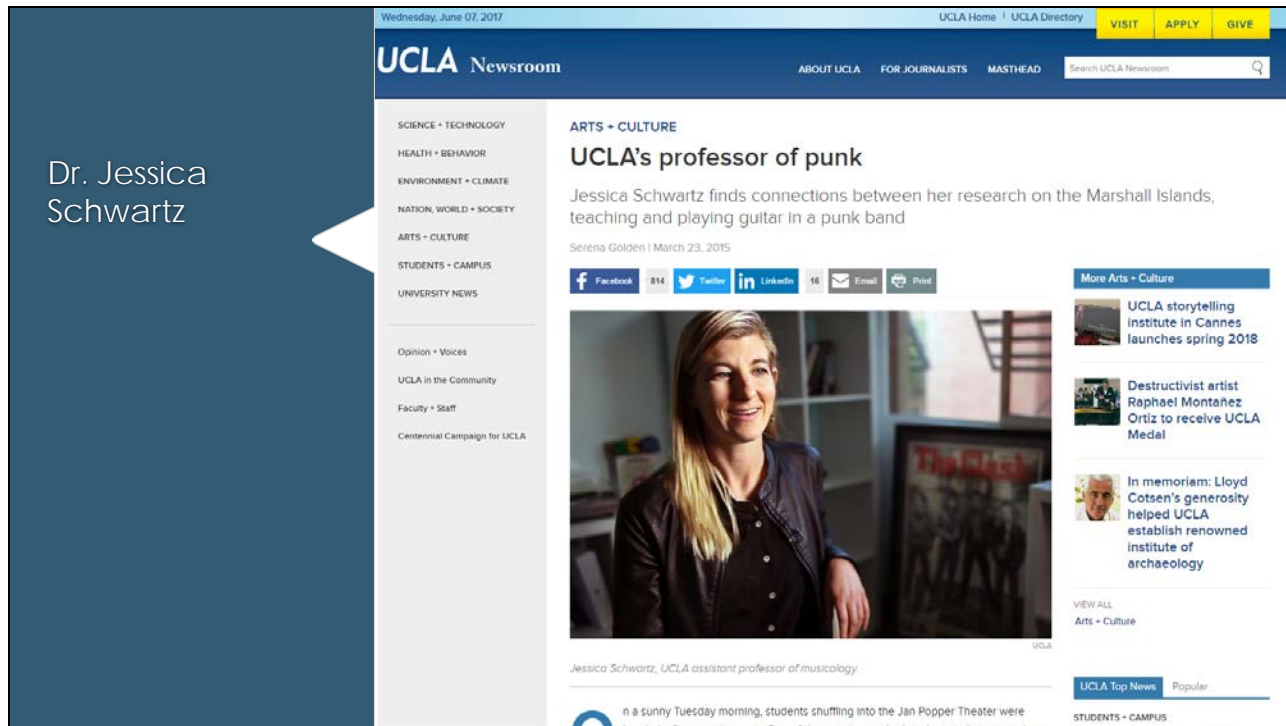
Many of the faculty in HASoM have been at the forefront of the pedagogical shifts mentioned previously. Our Musicology department stands out nationally as one of the most cutting-edge of its type, with a stated goal to “interpret Music History in the broadest possible sense ... [with] no built-in bias toward art music, Western music, or music of the past”. They offer courses in film music, music and gender, rock documentaries, LGBTQ perspectives, rap, punk music, electronic dance music, and the music industry. The Ethnomusicology Department is similarly significant, with the current music school dean Judi Smith referring to it as “the only one of its kind in the U.S. and the most celebrated program in the world for the study of diverse musical cultures.”

In order to remain relevant and useful to our patrons, we are adjusting our collections accordingly. One way is by rethinking the fundamentals of our collection development policy. Rather than trying to recreate the same core collection as every other music library, we are finding ways to develop specialized collections that dig deep into areas of interest for our scholars and local communities. Two such collections we have started are the Southern California Punk Collection and the Los Angeles Hip Hop Collection.

Slide 12



Our Punk collection actually grew out of synchronicity. A few years ago the UCLA Library Special Collections unit decided to start a Southern California Punk Archive, to “document punk music and lifestyle as it has developed and been expressed in Los Angeles”.



Around the same time, the Musicology Department hired Professor Jessica Schwartz, who started her tenure at UCLA teaching a class “Punk: Music, History, Sub/culture”. Working off of and with both of these events, we were able to successfully argue for some additional funds to start a Southern California Punk collection in the Music Library, to serve as a circulating corollary to the Special Collections Archive.

local collections

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Capitol_Records_sunset.jpg



While that created a convenient catalyst for this collection, collecting local music had been on my mind for awhile. Collecting ‘local’ music in a city such as Los Angeles can be challenging, given both the size and breadth of music-making in the city. Los Angeles is a major center for the music industry, and so many musicians and bands in Los Angeles are not from Los Angeles, but have rather simply come to the city to record and get a record deal. How, then, can we define what local music is in such an area?

intentional collections

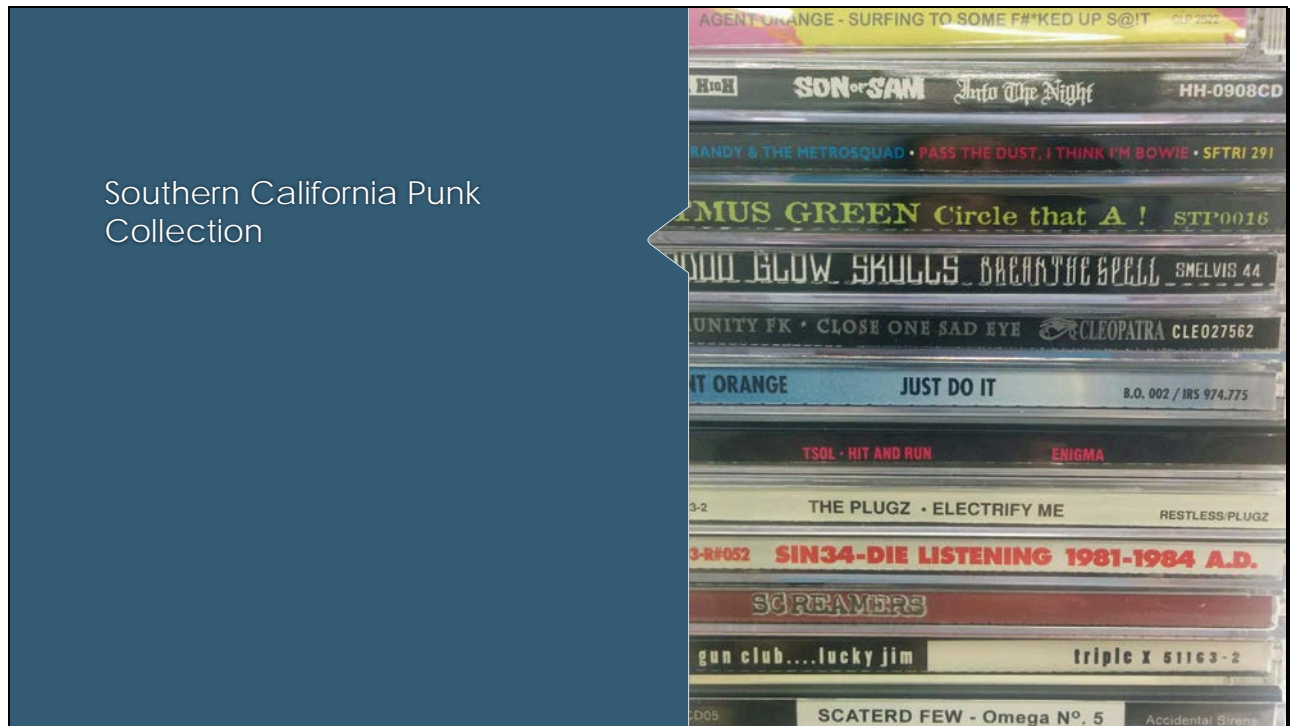
flyer for a show at the
Masque, 1978

<http://punkflyer.com/germsflyers.html>



Punk proved to be an ideal starting point to collect locally. Certainly in the beginning, punk music was very much a locally-grown genre. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was not much money to be made in punk, thus not much label interest, so the bands that emerged in Los Angeles were home-grown, developing a local version of the sound and culture.

Another attraction to collecting Southern California punk is the relative rarity of such a collection. While there has been a fair amount of scholarship and attention paid to punk in recent years, much of the focus is often on the London and New York scenes, with Los Angeles relatively ignored. However, Southern California's punk scenes were arguably as important, and even instrumental in the continued existence and evolution of the punk genre in later decades. And while some punk collections and archives are starting to appear in other institutions, notably at Cornell and the Washington D.C. Public Library, none are focused on Southern California.



The collection in the Music Library is comprised of primarily CDs, with a few DVDs and books, almost 500 items in total. Basically, we purchased all of the commercial media we could find related to Los Angeles and Orange Counties punk bands, both in and out of print. We contained the collection geographically by sticking to those two counties, as they are where the two most important scenes emerged. However, as punk is still an active genre, it is temporally an open collection, ranging from the mid-1970s through to today. We also used a fairly broad definition for punk, including all the various manifestations and sub-genres, as we wanted to avoid authenticity debates and to allow for study of the fluidity of the genre.

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Southern California Punk
Collection

UCLA Library | Catalog

New Search Select Collections My Saved Searches My Bookbag My Account/Renew Books

Titles

Collection: UCLA Libraries and Collections

494 results found

Search Request: (LOCA= Music Library ("all collections"))

Save Search Edit Search Use "Edit Search" to retain search limits during your session

Print Email Add to List Select Page All

161 History of San Pedro punk : 06.26.05 through 07.31.05 / curated by Marshall Astor.
2005
NX511.S26 H57 2005
✓ available, Music Library

162 Stodola, Randy.
Nightmare City / The Alley Cats.
2008
CDA 27394
✓ available, Music Library Circulation Closed Stacks Sound Recordings

163 Human music.
1988
CDA 27463
✓ available, Music Library Circulation Closed Stacks Sound Recordings

164 Suicidal Tendencies (Musical group)
How will I laugh tomorrow when I can't even smile today [sound recording] / Suicidal Tendencies.
1988
CDA 27610
✓ available, Music Library Circulation Closed Stacks Sound Recordings

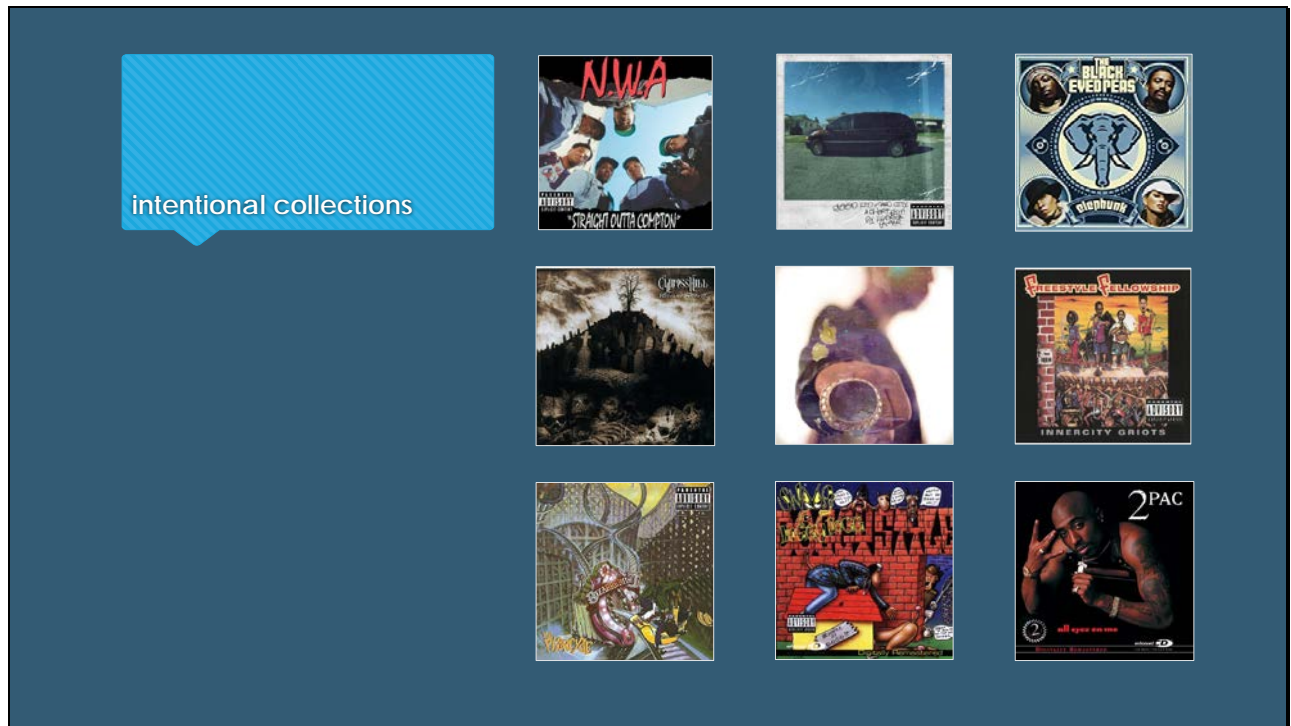
165 Electrify me / The Plugz.
1989
CDA 27609
✓ available, Music Library Circulation Closed Stacks Sound Recordings

166 TSOL (Musical group)
Revenge [sound recording] / TSOL.
1986
CDA 27608
✓ available, Music Library Circulation Closed Stacks Sound Recordings

167 More beer [sound recording].
1988
CDA 27603
✓ available, Music Library Circulation Closed Stacks Sound Recordings

While the collection is inter-shelved with the rest of our collection, we have added special codes to the records so the collection can be pulled together virtually within our catalog, allowing patrons to browse it.

This code also makes the collection easy to promote to patrons.



Building on the success of this collection, we next moved to Hip Hop. Again, Los Angeles has a long and storied history of Hip Hop, rivalling New York for importance of output, although again critical interest has focused more on the East Coast. Like with punk, it has tended to be created by locals rather than transplants, which makes it a strong genre for exploring local music-making. There is a lot of scholarly interest in the genre at UCLA too, as there have been classes on Hip Hop offered in multiple departments.

Los Angeles Hip Hop Collection



For Hip Hop we stayed mostly with Los Angeles county, as that is where most of the music was made. We again kept the definition of Hip Hop broad, and most of the recordings are from the mid-1980s through to the present, although we included a few predecessor albums, such as the Watts Prophets, who were active in the late 1960s. So far we have collected more than 400 items from over 150 different artists.

Los Angeles Hip Hop Collection

The album cover for 'Fun With Dumb' by Dumbfoundead features a black and white illustration of a person with a large, expressive face, surrounded by a dense, chaotic pattern of lines and shapes.

Fun With Dumb by Dumbfoundead (2009-08-29) 2009
by Dumbfoundead
Currently unavailable

Results for "dumbfoundead" in All Departments (See all 258 results)

The album cover for 'We Might Die' by Dumbfoundead shows a black and white illustration of a person in a dark, hooded garment, standing in a doorway or hallway.

We Might Die [Explicit] Nov 10, 2016
by Dumbfoundead
\$9.49 MP3 Music
Available for download now.
★★★★☆ 1

The album cover for 'Old Boy Jon' by Dumbfoundead features a black and white illustration of a person's face, looking directly at the viewer, with a dark, textured background.

Old Boy Jon Oct 12, 2015
by Dumbfoundead
\$8.99 Prime Music Prime
Available for download now.

The album cover for 'Dfd' by Dumbfoundead shows a black and white illustration of a person's face, looking directly at the viewer, with a dark, textured background.

Dfd Nov 1, 2011
by Dumbfoundead
\$8.99 Prime Music Prime
Available for download now.
★★★★☆ 5

The album cover for 'Take the Stares' by Dumbfoundead features a black and white illustration of a person's face, looking directly at the viewer, with a dark, textured background.

Take the Stares [Explicit] Oct 16, 2012

The album cover for 'Safe' by Dumbfoundead shows a black and white illustration of a person's face, looking directly at the viewer, with a dark, textured background.

Safe May 20, 2016

The album cover for 'Safe' by Dumbfoundead shows a black and white illustration of a person's face, looking directly at the viewer, with a dark, textured background.

Safe May 20, 2016

One interesting problem that we ran into was the number of albums available only as digital downloads, particularly within the category of mixtapes. At this point our library has no way to acquire, store, or provide access to digital downloads, so unfortunately there is a fair percentage of available materials we are unable to acquire, something we hope to address in the future.

opportunistic collections



Collections budgets are finite, however, so we cannot rely entirely on starting new collections to make our collection distinctive. As noted before, at UCLA we have a sizable collection already, with close to 70 years of active collecting. So another approach we are taking is to find 'hidden' collections within our existing materials, and call attention to them.

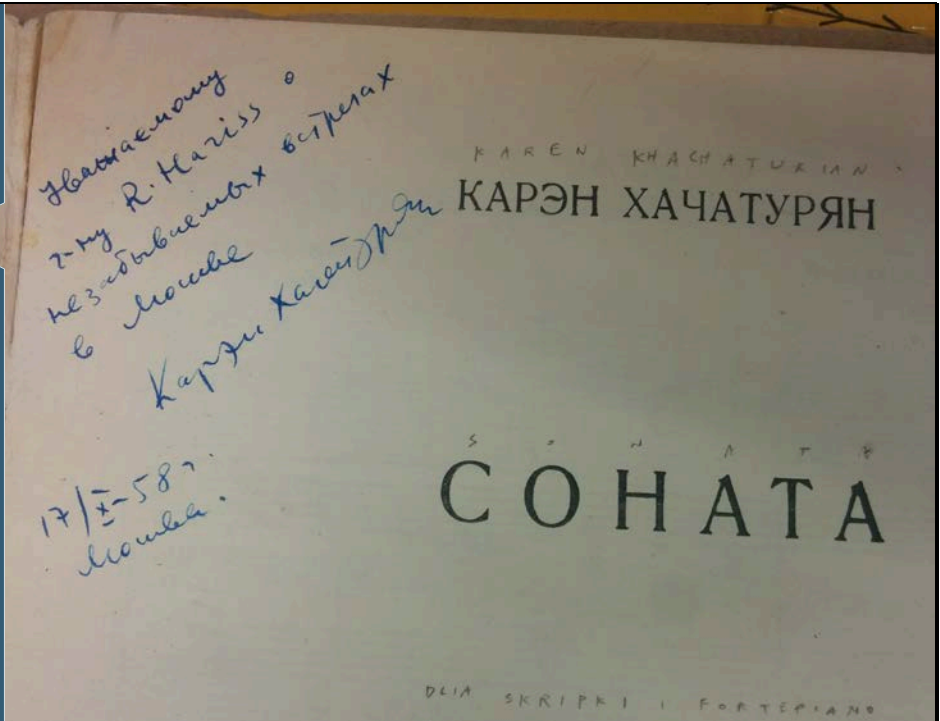
The first such 'collection' we've started working with is comprised of scores published by the former Soviet Union. This is not an intentional collection - these scores came in over the years through a variety of sources. Some were bought; a fair percentage of the others came in as gifts.

inscription by
Karen
Khachaturian
to Roy Harris

"Uvazhaemomu g-nu R.
Hariss [sic] o
nezabyvaemykh
vstrechakh v Moskve.
Karen Khachaturian
17/X-58 g. Moskva."

"To respected Mr. R.
Hariss [sic] on the
occasion of
unforgettable meetings
in Moscow. Karen
Khachaturian October
17, 1958, Moscow"

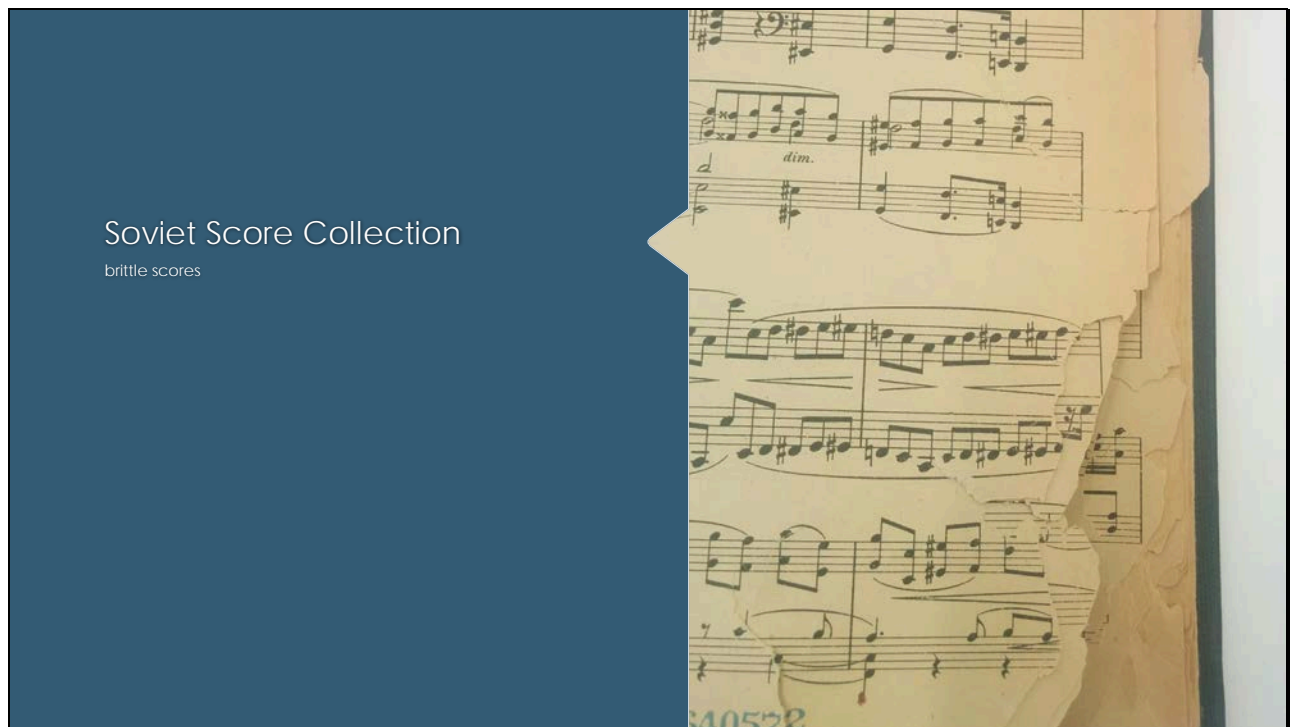
transcription and translation
by Margarita Nafpaktitis



For example, this score came in as part of a gift from Roy Harris, the noted American composer and a former UCLA faculty member, as it is inscribed to him by Karen Khachaturian. I wonder what those “unforgettable meetings in Moscow” he mentions might have entailed...



But many of these Soviet scores came in on an exchange program that the UCLA Library had with the former Soviet Union. Throughout the Cold War, numerous US libraries had serial and book exchange programs with institutions within the Soviet Union, enabling both sides to acquire materials they often had no other way of obtaining. The UCLA Library participated in such a program, started in the 1960s, continuing through to the early 1990s, with scores included as a part of that exchange. As many as half of UCLA's Soviet scores probably came in through this exchange program.



This collection came to my attention in a somewhat round-about way. I had been working in our stacks, finding candidates in our aging collection for preservation treatment, and I seemed to be finding quite a number of these Soviet scores which were too brittle for rebinding. It occurred to me that many of these may no longer be replaceable, and so I proposed a project to digitize these scores both for preservation and to improve access. I figured there were probably a couple hundred such scores, a manageable enough project.

Over the next few months, my naivety became apparent. I decided that the best way to find all these scores within our collection was to search in our catalog by publisher. I figured these were all published by the state, so there was only one publisher, right?

hunting for scores via publisher

Expected

- Muzyka

Reality

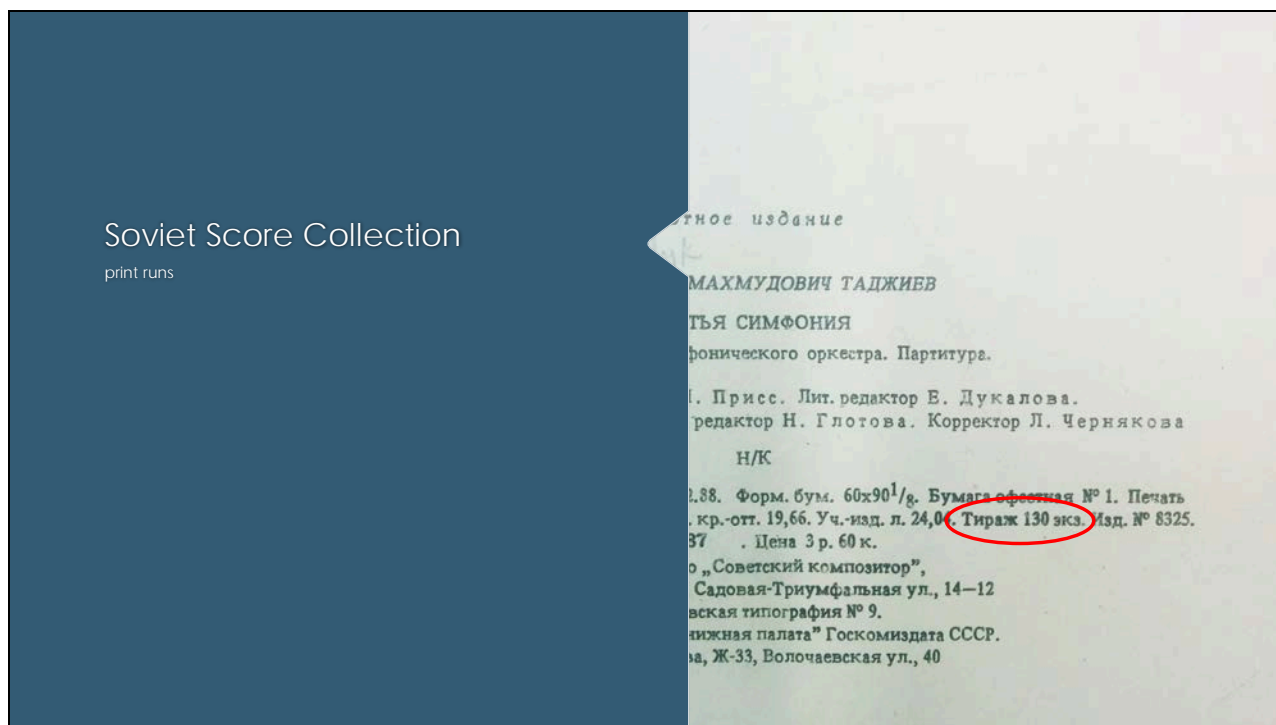
- | | |
|--|--|
| ○ Gosudarstvennoe Muzykal'noe Izdatel'stvo | ○ Gos. muz. izd-vo |
| ○ Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo | ○ Gos. muzyk. izd-vo |
| ○ Gos. Muzykal'noe izd.-vo. | ○ Gos. izd-vo kul'turno-prosvetitel'noĭ lit-ry |
| ○ Gos. Muzykal'noe Izd-vo | ○ Muzgiz |
| ○ Gos. muzykal'noe izd-vo. | ○ Muzyka |
| ○ Gos muzykal'noe izd-vo | ○ Sovetskii kompozitor |
| ○ Gos. Muz. Izd. | ○ Sov. Kompozitor |
| | ○ Sov. kompozitor |

Not exactly. While they were published by the state, I eventually learned that the name used for the publishing body changed over the years. To make matters worse, there is no authority control for publisher names, so between varying transliterations and abbreviations, there were about fifteen variations of the names in our catalog. Then, as I continued my research, I realized that these were simply the Russian published scores, not those published by the governments of the other republics within the Soviet Union. So I had to develop new searches to track down those scores.



Ultimately, I found over 1600 scores, published between 1922-1991, representing composers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, although the vast majority were of course from Russia.

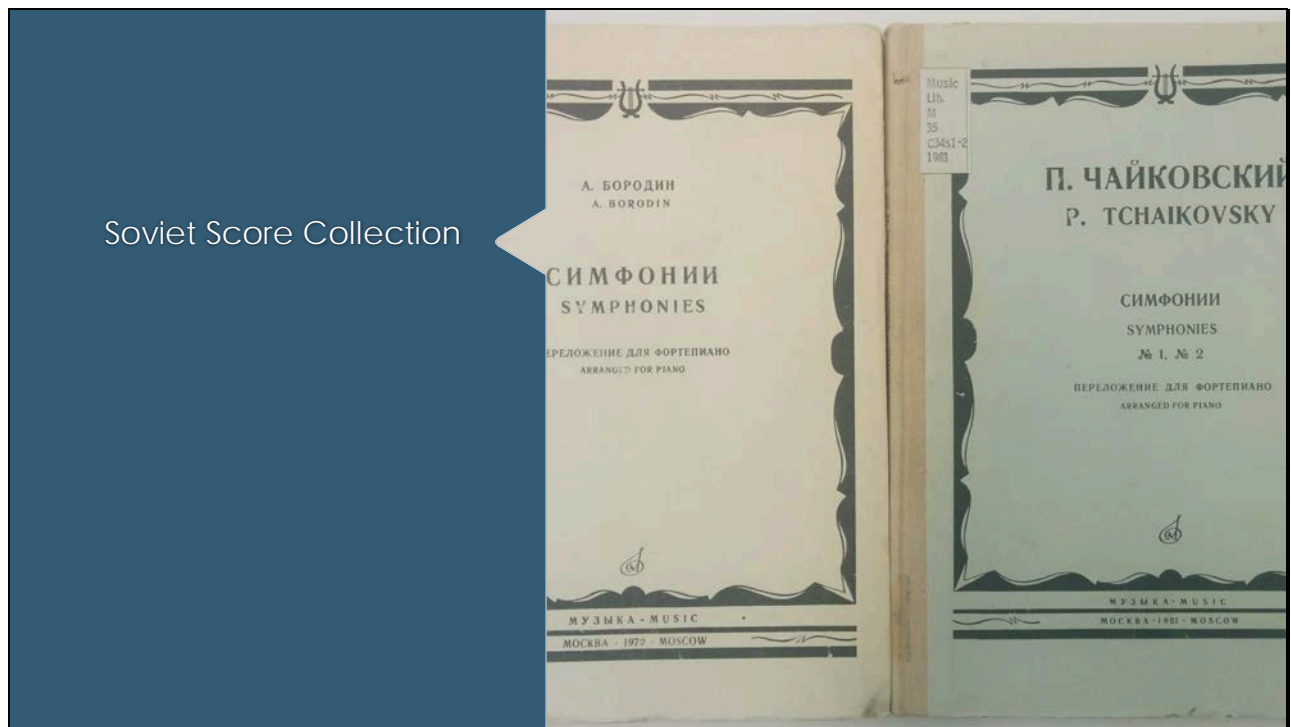
A fair amount of these works are reprints of 19th century composers, but the imprint Sovetskii Kompozitor, which was started by the Soviet Composers Union in 1956, printed new works by contemporary Soviet composers; many of these works were never published elsewhere. Typically the titles in this Soviet Score Collection had small print runs - while the largest was 100,000, the average was around 3,000 and the smallest



was 130 copies total .



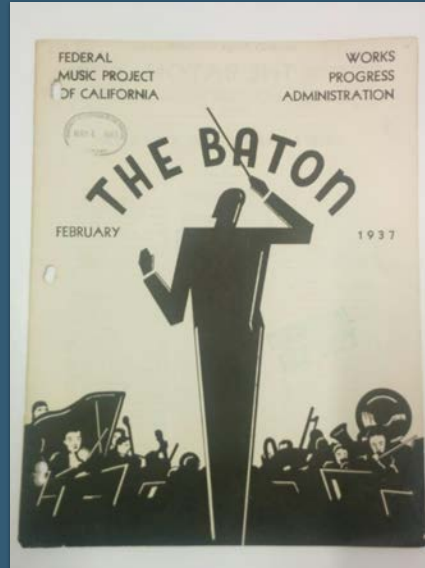
As I gathered these scores together, I kept a spreadsheet to track them and relevant metadata, including noting which scores were brittle. Ultimately, only 20% of the scores were brittle, which is relatively in line with the rest of our collection. However, my research showed that many of these scores were fairly rare. In general these scores are not widely represented in OCLC, with an average of 11 copies being held globally. Two-thirds of our collection have 10 or fewer copies total, with almost 100 instances where ours is the only copy. Furthermore, few other institutions in OCLC seem have as large a collection as ours.



After pulling together the collection, I formally pitched the proposal to our Library's digitization team, proposing that the public domain items be made fully accessible to the public via the Web, and those still under copyright to only the UCLA community. While there was enthusiasm for the project, there was concern about the rights assessment, particularly as it would require assessing each individual score.

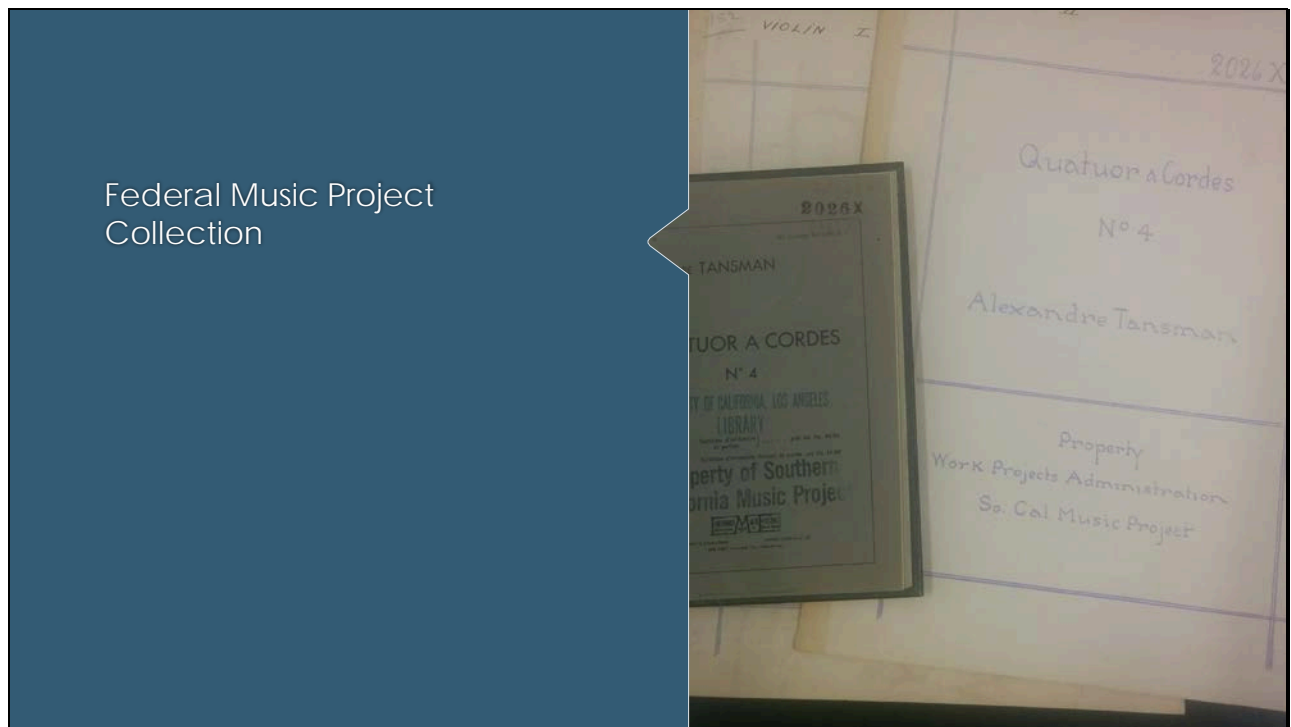
However, I knew a fair percentage of the scores were simply reprints of public domain works with no added intellectual work. Ultimately we decided to start by digitizing the brittle items, which were at the greatest physical risk. This work is currently underway. Meanwhile, I am chipping away at the rights assessment, and we hopefully will be able to make the public domain scores freely available in the near future.

opportunistic collections



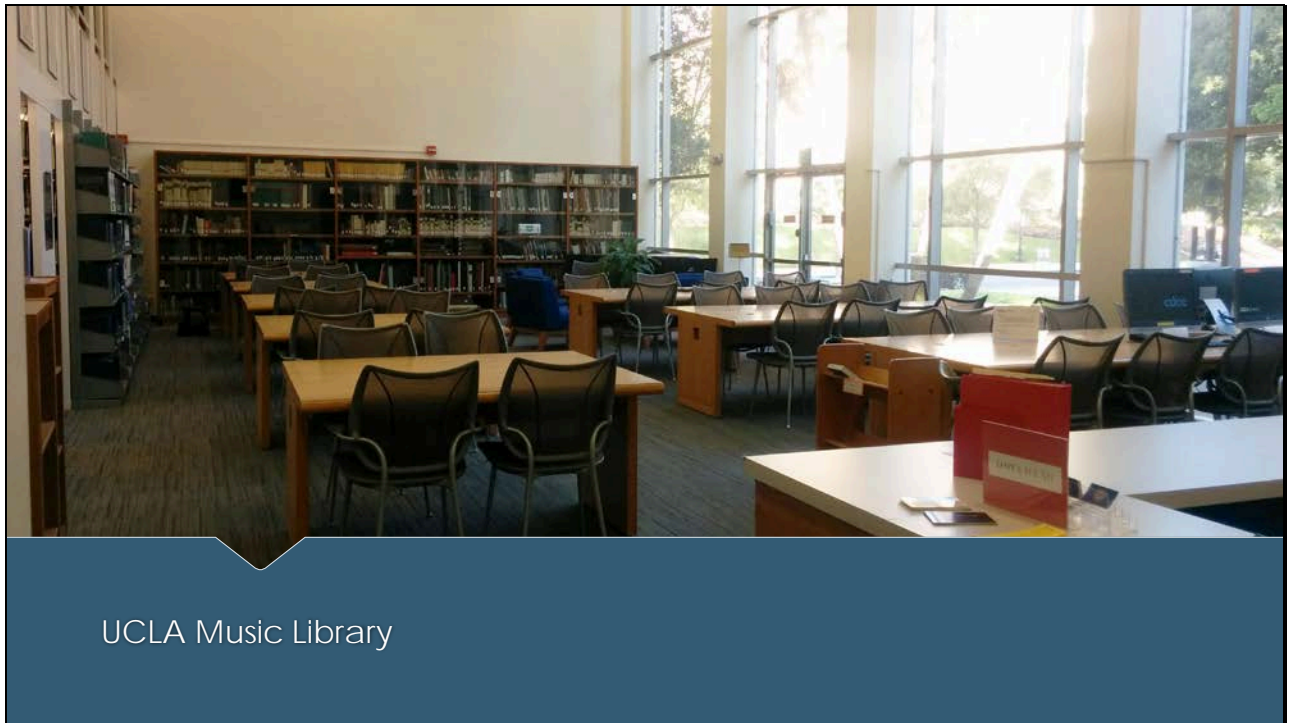
Another hidden collection we've recently 're-discovered' dates back to the 1930s and the Federal Music Project. During the Great Depression in the United States, President Roosevelt started the Works Project Administration (WPA) as part of his New Deal plan. The Federal Music Project was part of the WPA, and focused on employing musicians, mainly through performances and education, but also through compiling and copying music scores for music libraries.

When the Federal Music Project was disbanded in the mid-1940s, the large orchestral and operatic library developed by the Southern California chapter of the Federal Music Project was given to the UCLA Library. This collection of 8000 scores formed the start of the UCLA Music Library, and was made available for performance to music organizations outside of UCLA.



Once more, serendipity helped us to discover this collection. While again looking for scores for rebinding, we noticed some had a stamp "Southern California Music Project" on the covers. Additionally, many seemed to be atypical, more akin to an ozalid than regular printed scores. By searching some key phrases, we were able to uncover a few more of these scores still present in our circulating collection.

Looking through our University Archives, we discovered that about half of the performance parts sets from this original collection had been transferred to the Los Angeles Public Library in 1964, and apparently much of the remaining collection was transferred to UC Riverside sometime later. We are planning to continue our research to learn more about this collection and its history. We are particularly interested because we see this collection as the 'birth' of our Music Library, making 2017 our 75th year anniversary, which could be a 'tool' for outreach opportunities.



UCLA Music Library

We believe that the approaches we have taken at the UCLA Music Library can be adapted to other locations and collections. We encourage other librarians to be both intentional and opportunistic with their collection development and maintenance - to find ways to support new scholarship and to promote existing collections that lay outside of the canon. We believe that this is an excellent time to be critical and thoughtful about our assumptions about music collections and to take the risk to wade and even dive into areas outside the canon.

We will leave our sources up while taking questions.

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