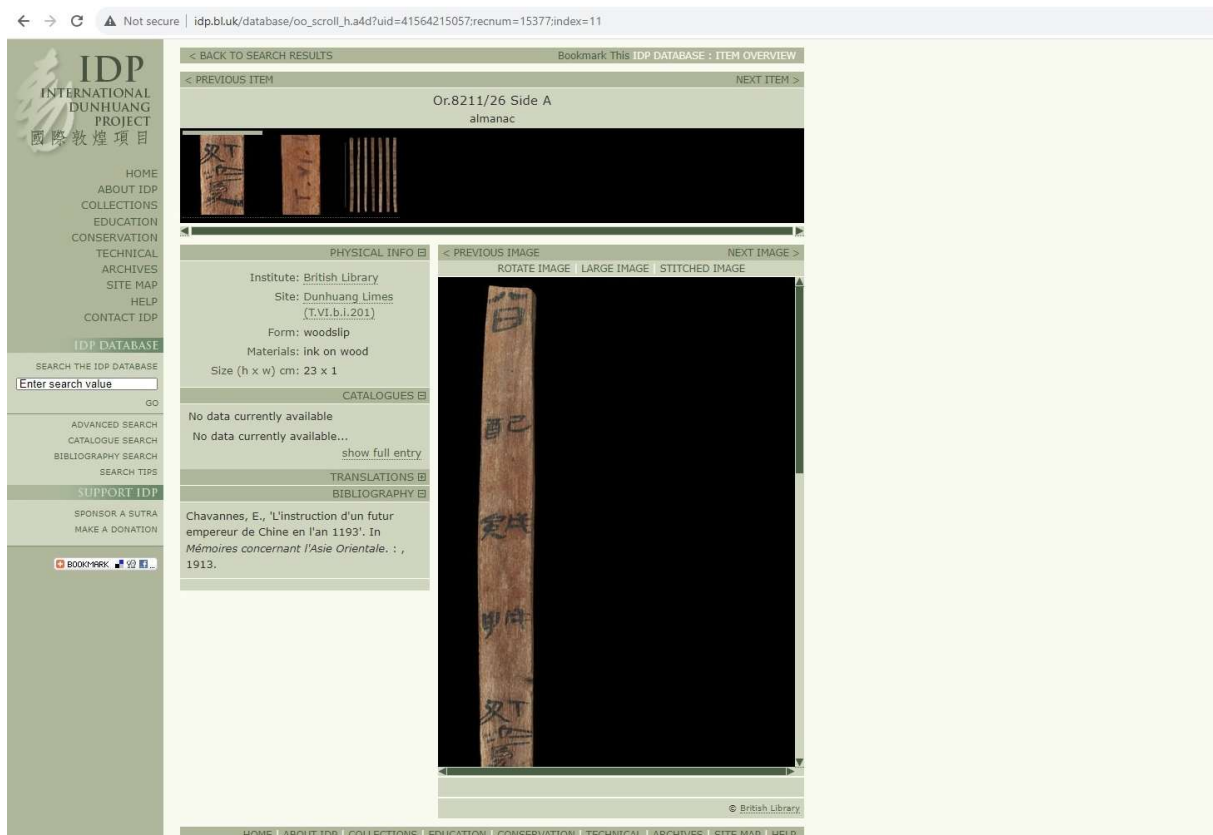


# Digitisation: past, present and future. Reflections on 20 years of music digitisation at the British Library and questions for the coming years

Dr Sandra Tuppen  
Head of Music Collections  
The British Library

# International Dunhuang Project, 1994-

BRITISH LIBRARY



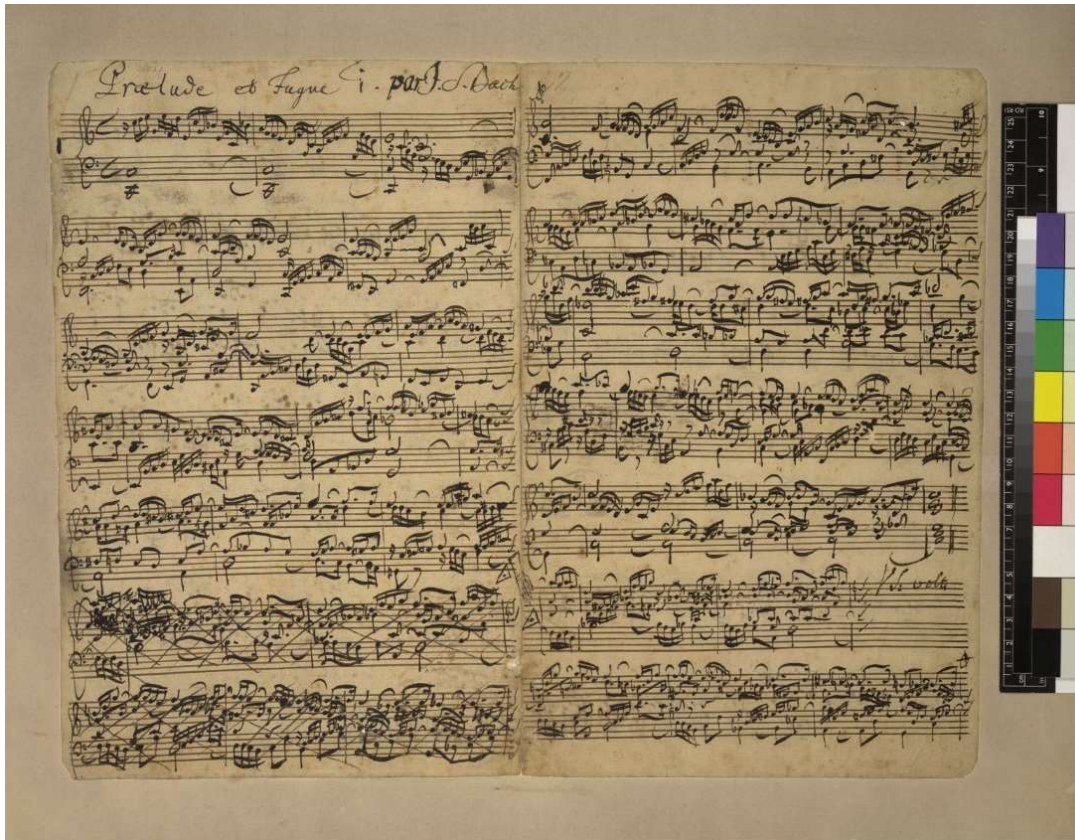
Digitisation of  
manuscripts from  
the Eastern Silk  
Road

idp.bl.uk

# Turning the Pages™ - Lindisfarne Gospels



# J.S. Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2, digitised 2000



British Library Add MS 35021

The first BL music manuscript to be digitised (along with Bach's Cantata BWV 5, Zweig MS 1)



# Victorian Popular Music, 2001-4

← → ↻ webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20141118224106/http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/vicpopmus/index.html

UKWA Victorian popular music 11/18/2014, 10:41:06 PM

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**BRITISH LIBRARY** ONLINE GALLERY See 30,000 items from our collection Search the Online Gallery

Online Gallery Home Virtual books Online exhibitions Highlights tour Personal galleries

bl.uk > Online Gallery Home > Online exhibitions > Victorian popular music

**Victorian popular music**

Leaf through illustrated sheet music for 188 songs and piano pieces from the heyday of Victorian Music Hall to discover an entertaining insight on Victorian society.

**Steve Cork**  
**Curator, Music Collections**

Under successive acts of Parliament since the late 18th century, all music published in Britain has been deposited formerly at the British Museum and now, at the British Library. The Library's Music Collections are enormous: some one-and-a-half million items of printed music, ranging from a beautifully printed songbook of 1530 to the latest pop chart hit.


Victorian popular music is a particular strength of the collections. Much of the sheet music has illustrated covers, often of artistic merit or historical interest. From this rich resource, we've chosen songs and piano pieces that evoke a sense of location by virtue of their subject matter, lyrics, cover design, or all three.


[Read the full curator's introduction](#)

**Curator's choice**


Steve Cork highlights personal favourite items from the collection


[See all of the items in this exhibition](#)


**The Lights O' London part 01**  
This beautiful illustration depicts the noisy and crowded streets of London. This would probably ...


**The Manchester Ship Canal part 01**  
The Manchester Ship Canal was one of the greatest engineering projects of the Victorian period, w...


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# Victorian Popular Music, 2001-4


← → ↻ webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20141118224157/http://gallery.bl.uk/viewall/default.aspx?e=Victorian%20Popular%20Music&n=2&r=10

**UKWA**  
UK WEB ARCHIVE


**Victorian Popular Music - See all of the items in this exhibition**  
11/18/2014, 10:41:57 PM



**A Walk Round Nottingham part 01**  
Nottingham during the 19th Century was a manufacturing city, coal mining and lace making were jus... [More details]

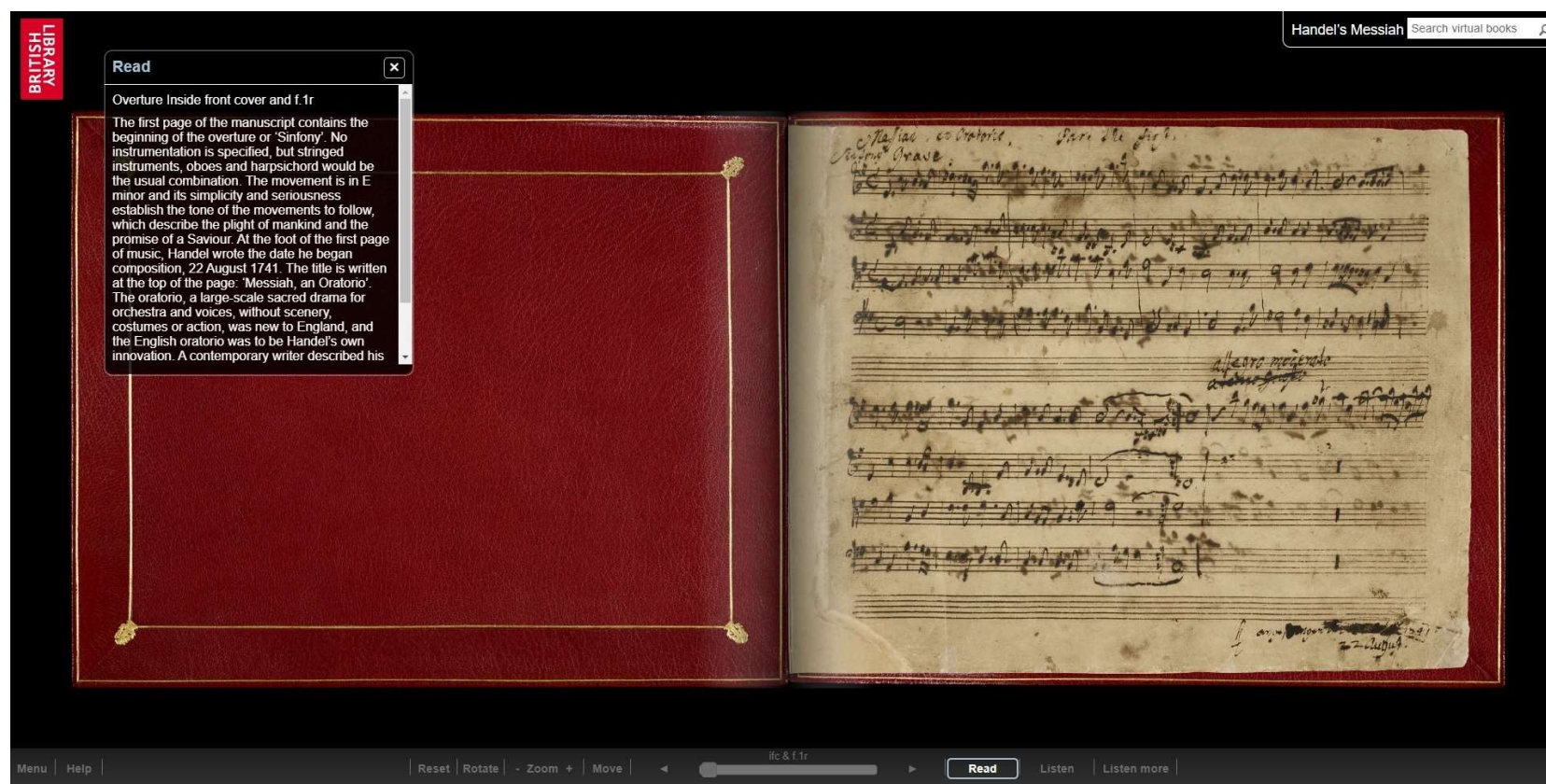


**A Walk Round Nottingham part 02**  
Nottingham during the 19th Century was a manufacturing city, coal mining and lace making were jus... [More details]

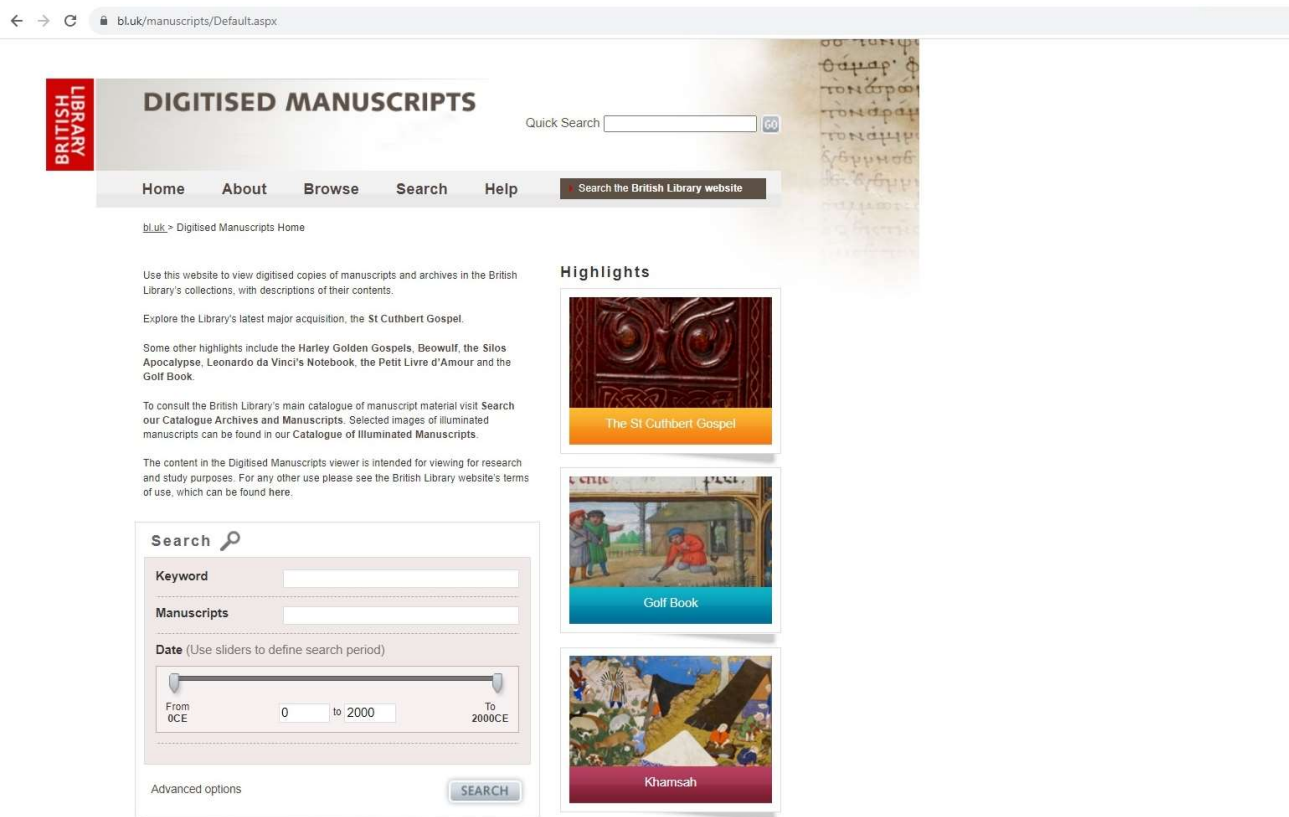


**A Walk Round Nottingham part 03**  
Nottingham during the 19th Century was a manufacturing city, coal mining and lace making were jus... [More details]

# Turning the Pages™ – Handel's *Messiah*, 2008



# Digitised Manuscripts platform





# Universal Viewer platform

The screenshot displays the Universal Viewer platform interface for a manuscript from the British Library. The central area shows a page from 'British Library MS Mus. 1591 My Ladye Nevells Booke' with handwritten musical notation on staves. The title 'my ladye nevells grownde:--' is visible at the top of the page. The interface includes a thumbnail gallery on the left, a central manuscript view, and a right-hand sidebar with metadata.

**THUMBNAILS**

- front
- front-1
- fs.1r
- fs.1v
- fs.2r
- fs.2v
- fs.3r
- fs.3v
- fs.4r
- fs.4v
- f.1r
- f.1v
- f.2r
- f.2v
- f.3r
- f.3v
- f.4r
- f.4v

**British Library MS Mus. 1591 My Ladye Nevells Booke**

my ladye nevells grownde:--

**ABOUT THIS ITEM**

Identifier  
MS Mus. 1591

Held by  
The British Library

Title  
My Ladye Nevells Booke

Date

Language  
English

Catalogue record  
[View the catalogue record](#)

Citation  
British Library MS Mus. 1591,  
<[http://access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc\\_100054718159.0x000001](http://access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc_100054718159.0x000001)>

Digitised by  
The British Library

Description  
William Byrd (b. circa 1540, d. 1623):  
'My Ladye Nevells Booke', a  
collection of music for keyboard;

... MORE

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Licence  
<https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-reuse-images-of-unpublished-manuscripts>

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Exit Full Screen

# Early Music Online, 2011

BRITISH  
LIBRARY

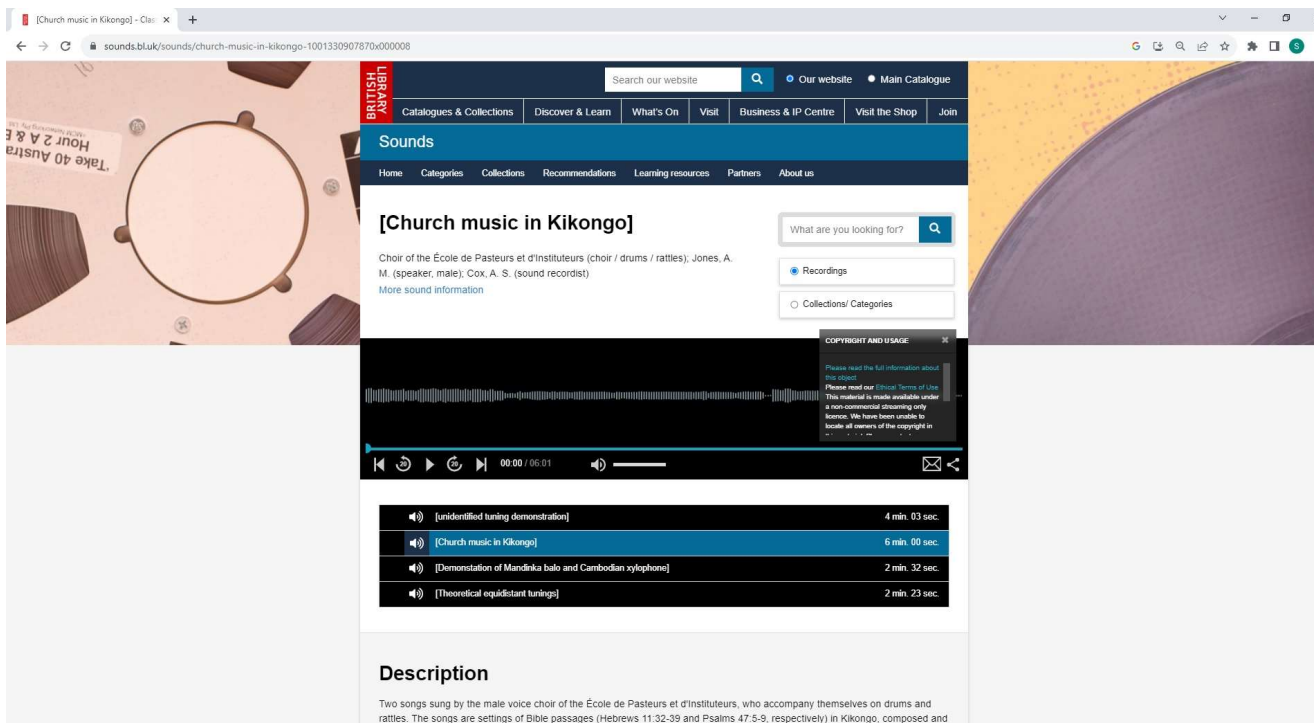
The screenshot displays the Early Music Online interface. On the left, a 'THUMBNAILS' panel shows a grid of 10 document thumbnails. The main area features a digital score titled 'Lodi della musica a 3 voci / composte da diversi ecc. ti musici con l'intavolatura del cimbalo e liuto'. The score is written in Italian and includes vocal parts with lyrics such as 'i dolci e uaghi acenti', 'finge fuggi tui bor mostra len', and 'Ben compofte. Armo ni'. The interface includes navigation controls at the top (back, forward, search, etc.) and a sidebar on the right with metadata. The sidebar lists the identifier 'Digital Store K.8.d.7', the publisher 'Raccolto, intagliato et stampato da Simone Verovio', the date '1595', and the language 'Italian'. It also provides links for 'View the catalogue record' and 'Exit Full Screen'.

Digitised **325**  
pre-1600  
anthologies  
(ca. **12,000**  
works)

Funded by  
JISC

# Unlocking our Sound Heritage, 2017-2023

BRITISH  
LIBRARY



Digitised **368,620**  
at-risk sound recordings at  
BL and 10 UK partner sites

Funded by National  
Heritage Lottery Fund,  
Foyle Foundation and  
British Library

# Philanthropically-funded digitisation

BRITISH LIBRARY

The screenshot displays the British Library's digital archive interface. The central focus is a digital image of a manuscript page from 'Sacrarum symphoniarum continuatio / Diversorum excellentissimorum authorum. Quaternis, v. vi. vii. viii. x. & xii. vocibus tam vivis quam...'. The page features a large, ornate initial 'D' and musical notation with Latin lyrics. The interface includes a left sidebar with thumbnails of other manuscript pages, a top navigation bar with page number '14 of 437', and a right sidebar with metadata. The metadata section, titled 'ABOUT THIS ITEM', lists the publisher as 'Apud Paulum Kautmannum', the date as 'M.DC. [1600]', and the language as 'Latin'. It also includes a 'Citation' section with the full title and a 'Digitisation funded by' section where 'The Derek Butler Trust' is highlighted with a red circle. Other sections include 'Digitised by The British Library', 'Description', 'Item supplied by the British Library', 'Usage Terms', 'Public Domain' (with a Creative Commons logo), and 'Licence' (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). At the bottom, there are icons for Print, Download, Feedback, Share, and Embed, along with an 'Exit Full Screen' button.

Funded by the  
Derek Butler  
Trust



# Research grant-funded digitisation

← → ↻ chopinonline.ac.uk/cfeo/browse/

CFEQ Chopin's First Editions Online

Chopin's First Editions Online About Contexts Works Help Enter keywords 🔍

Filter by

- ▼ Work
  - Rondo Op. 1
  - Variations Op. 2
  - Introduction and Polonaise for Piano and Cello Op. 3
  - Sonata Op. 4
  - Rondo Op. 5
  - Mazurkas Op. 6
  - Mazurkas Op. 7
- Genre
- Publisher

Browse sources

Selected filters 🔗

Work: Sonata Op. 4 🔗

Key

Sonata Op. 4 📖

▼ Grande Sonate en Ut mineur pour Piano, Op. 4 4-1-R ⓘ

Front matter

- p. [i] Title page
- p. [ii] blank
- p. [iii] blank

Mvt 1

- p. 2 Mvt 1, bs 1-19
- p. 3 Mvt 1, bs 20-42
- p. 4 Mvt 1, bs 43-66
- p. 5 Mvt 1, bs 67-89
- p. 6 Mvt 1, bs 90-117
- p. 7 Mvt 1, bs 118-141
- p. 8 Mvt 1, bs 142-166
- p. 9 Mvt 1, bs 167-194
- p. 10 Mvt 1, bs 195-222

Mvt 2

- p. 11 Mvt 2, bs 223-248
- p. 12 Mvt 2, bs 0-37
- p. 13 Mvt 2, bs 37-69

Mvt 3

- p. 14 Mvt 3, bs 1-23
- p. 15 Mvt 3, bs 24-42

Mvt 4

- p. 16 Mvt 4, bs 1-32

Chopin's First Editions Online

Digitisation funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council

# Public-Private Partnerships: Gale Cengage

BRITISH  
LIBRARY

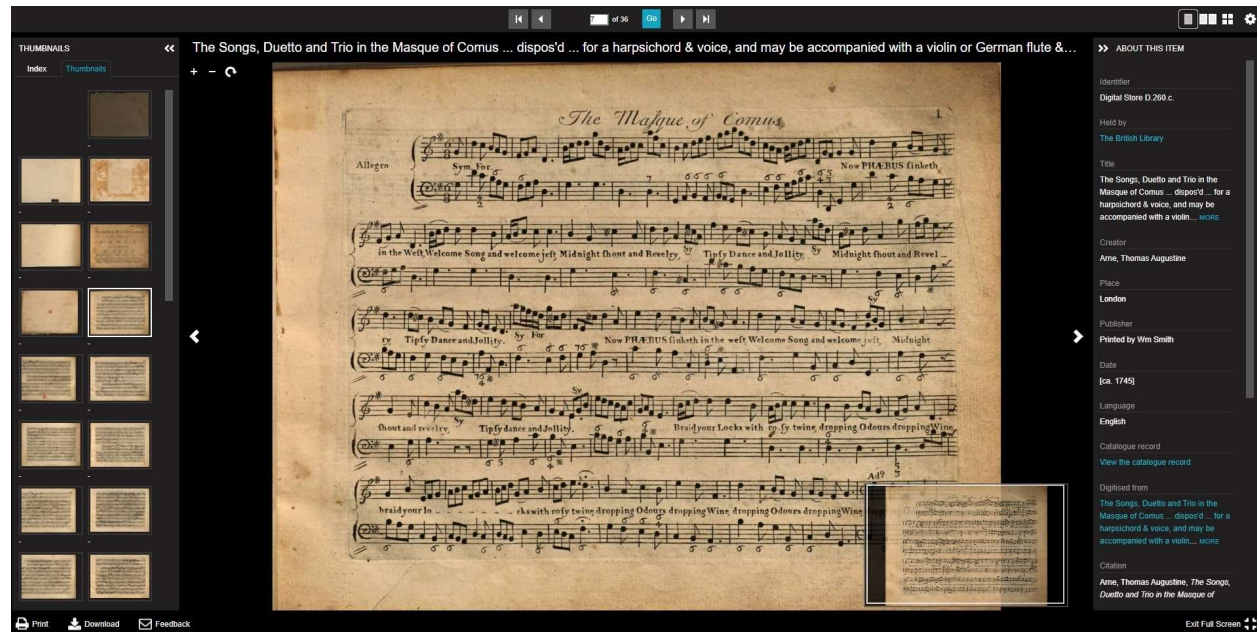
The screenshot displays the 'Nineteenth Century Collections Online' interface. At the top, the header reads 'GALE PRIMARY SOURCES' and 'Nineteenth Century Collections Online'. Below this is a search bar and a navigation menu. The main content area shows the title 'Symphony no. 98. Full score' by Joseph Haydn. Metadata includes 'Manuscript Number: RPS MS 66', 'Date: 1841', 'Source Library: British Library', 'Archive: British Theatre, Music, and Literature: High and Popular Culture', and 'Collection: Royal Philharmonic Society Music Manuscripts'. On the left, an 'EXPLORE' sidebar offers 'VIEWS' (Document Image, Plain Text (OCR)), a 'Search within document' field, and 'Related Subjects'. The main viewing area shows a handwritten musical score page with the title 'Haydn's Syn. No. 98' and 'Copied by Frederick Nicholls Crouch, Music Copyist'. The page is numbered '23' in the top left corner.

*Nineteenth  
Century  
Collections Online*

Features over  
1,000 BL music  
items, incl. Royal  
Philharmonic  
Society MSS,  
Drury Lane  
Theatre Archive  
and more

# Public-Private Partnerships: Google

- Google Books partnership began in 2011
- Over 600,000 items digitised to date, including **17,500** pieces of printed music
- Extension for five more years from 2023



# Today

About **12%** of BL's 13K+ volumes of music manuscripts are digitised (excludes uncatalogued items)

About **1.2%** of BL's 1.5 million+ items of printed music are digitised



# Questions for the future

- How should we and other music libraries prioritise what to digitise, when resources are limited?
- Are there ways in which we could collaborate more on digitisation initiatives to better serve our users?
- How can we ensure that we are meeting user needs?
- How can we act in a more sustainable way from a climate perspective?
- How can we better promote what we have already digitised?

**Thank  
you**