

American Music Research Center Collection Development Policy

An Addendum to the Collection Policies
of the University Libraries

INTRODUCTION

The American Music Research Center (“AMRC”) exists at the University of Colorado to celebrate the role of music in the history, culture, and experience of the United States. Core to the Center’s mission is the collection of rare and archival music materials that document that experience. This document sets forth policies under which the AMRC acquires—through gifts-in-kind, purchase, or any other means—material for inclusion in the Center’s collections. This collection policy supersedes the previous collection policy for the AMRC, last revised 10 July, 1997.

The AMRC is devoted to the celebration and study of music from the United States. As stated in its mission statement, the Center:

...is a rare music repository dedicated to exploring and celebrating the rich traditions of American music. We are a joint venture between the University Libraries and the College of Music devoted to discovering, sharing, and preserving American music of all kinds: classical, popular, and traditional. As a repository of precious and unique music materials, the AMRC seeks to preserve American music and enhance its cultural and transformational potential for future generations. Our collections are housed and curated in the University Libraries on the CU Boulder campus where students, visiting scholars, and the public are welcome to visit by appointment. We regularly sponsor public events and community outreach activities such as concerts, conferences, publications, and lectures—all based on the AMRC collections.

The permanent AMRC personnel currently consists of a director (appointed by the College), an archivist (appointed by the Libraries), an assistant to the director, and an advisory board. Along with the dedicated personnel, the deans of the College and the Libraries, the Head of the Waltz Music Library, and certain others closely associated with the Center serve on the Board on an *ex officio* basis.

GENERAL POLICIES

Collection is generally restricted to the areas identified within this document. Materials outside the scope of this document may be considered. For the benefit of scholarship, the AMRC generally will avoid collecting significant material where other centers have established predominance.

The Center's chief priority is to serve the research needs of students and faculty at the College of Music. However, archives are, by nature, unique to the repository. Stronger foci increase value, both to the scholarly community and to the collections, and so the Center's existing strengths form the primary focus in our collecting. Because of the unique nature of archives, the greater community of music scholars, many of whom visit Boulder from around the country and even overseas, is also an important stakeholder in our collecting.

ACTIVE COLLECTION STRENGTHS

The following areas are identified as strengths in which the Center will actively collect:

Classical music of Colorado and the American West

Any recordings, personal papers, business records, artifacts, or other records documenting composers, performers, scholars, or musical organizations from or associated with the Rocky Mountain region (roughly defined as the area that comprises Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Northwestern Arizona, and New Mexico) and the Western plains (Western portions of Nebraska, South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Kansas), especially those associated with the Denver and Boulder areas, and with the College of Music (faculty, students, alumni, etc.). Also includes music about Colorado.

American Popular Music 1700–1950

Primarily songs in the form of music sheets printed in the United States or amassed by significant American collectors. Generally excludes instrumental-only music. Especially includes songs documenting significant American wars (especially the Civil War); antebellum Colorado and the American South; early twentieth century racism and Jim Crow; the Women's Suffrage movement; immigrants and immigration; and prohibition. Includes individual music sheets and sheet music binders' volumes.

American Music Printing and Sacred Music 1690–1900

Songs, song books, and hymnals printed in the United States or in one of the colonies. Especially includes manuscript tune books; significant revolutionary war music; and music by significant colonial composers.

American big band and Swing Era music

Music, musicians, and ensembles from the Swing Era, especially those with significant connection to former CU student, Glenn Miller, and his orchestra. Rare recordings from this era are especially considered, particularly war recordings (V-Discs, VOA, radio transcriptions, etc.), test pressings, and good-quality acoustic recordings. Generally excludes modern releases and formats.

Music of stage and screen (1850–present)

Manuscripts, full scores and parts, and supporting documentation for music from film, television, or theatre music traditions. Generally excludes theatre music after 1950; published scores; selections compilations. Especially includes music from silent film and 19th century theatre orchestras, music from early television, music from early “talkies”, and any full film scores. The Center currently houses one of the preeminent collections of silent film music in the world, and as such this is a very high priority.

Recordings

The AMRC contains many thousands of commercially-published recordings from the cylinder era to the present, as well as hundreds of unique and archival recordings. The Center has especially strong collections from the swing era (especially Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey), and from the College of Music (recital recordings, ensemble performances). Many individual collections of personal papers and manuscripts are accompanied by recordings, and the Center has other teaching collections for demonstration of old recording formats.

The Center generally does not accept new collections of recordings unless they tie very specifically to one or more of the collections or collection foci identified in this document. Collections consisting exclusively of sound recordings generally are not accepted. Exceptions include any acoustically produced recordings; exemplars of rare and unusual formats; highly significant collections of swing-era music; test pressings; V-discs; radio transcription discs; and archival collections from significant music organizations, performers, and critics. Collections of commercial 12” disc recordings may be considered by the Waltz Music Library but are not generally accepted by the AMRC.

Collections of magnetic media are considered only when they constitute archival records or otherwise usefully document the history of a particular organization or person closely associated with the donor. For example, a radio announcer’s air checks may be accepted; recordings taped off the air by a fan generally will not. Master tapes from record labels, radio stations, or other music producers or recording artists will be strongly considered.

Other materials

The AMRC selectively accepts working music vintage playback devices, such as cylinder players, Victor players, Victrolas, Wire tape players, as well as unusual and interesting musical inventions and curiosities as space and resources allow. Periodicals, pamphlets, photocopies and facsimiles, and books are generally not accepted.

GROWTH PRIORITIES

Redefining “American”

The AMRC has, since its founding, understood American music to be that music contained within the United States of America. Some centers have attempted to include the music of the entire Western hemisphere. For many reasons, the AMRC has avoided taking such a broad definition for purposes of its collecting mission.

However, the Center’s definition of what constitutes music of the United States has aged, and is in great need of reimagining in order to serve our community of scholars and in order to serve the Colorado music community. Though there are some notable exceptions, the Center’s collections focus nonetheless primarily on a narrative of American music that excludes the stories of vast numbers of Coloradoans and other Americans—women, people of color, first nations, and immigrants, among others. In a state and country as diverse as ours, the Center needs to work diligently to collect more diversely.

The American West was built by great Americans who were immigrants, slaves, and former slaves, and was built on lands previously inhabited by Americans such as Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Lakota, Navajo, Nez Perce, Pueblo, Ute, and others. Today, it is flourishing thanks to its diverse populations. The Center will actively seek and collect materials that tell the story of the west and all her people. Special attention will be paid to the stories of currently marginalized populations, and in particular Americans (documented and undocumented) who have arrived from elsewhere in the Western hemisphere. The Center’s Helen Walker-Hill collection of compositions by black women composers is one example of a collection of particular interest.

Formal Repository for the College of Music

The Center currently serves as the *de facto* archives for the College of Music, already housing the manuscripts and personal papers of numerous faculty, an extensive ongoing oral history, and the master recordings for recitals and other performances sponsored by the college from the 1950s to the present.

The AMRC will oversee and collaborate in creating a *de jure* repository of record for scholarship in the College of Music at the University of Colorado, as part of the development of a formal University Archives. As such, the Center will generally accept personal papers, manuscripts, records, and recordings from music faculty, as well as significant student projects, recital recordings, and other material documenting scholarship at the College. Of primary interest are manuscripts from theory and composition faculty and students, field recordings and notes from ethnomusicology students and faculty, and other unpublished works (such as commissions).

Music Performance of Colorado

Colorado is blessed with music performance of extraordinary quality and variety, with a range including numerous performing musical organizations, individual performers of national and

international importance, and the numerous music festivals that dot the Rocky Mountains and represent a wide variety of musical styles and idioms.

The Center has so far focused primarily on music composition, but not exclusively. The story of Glenn Miller, for example, is a story of an important performer as well as an arranger. The AMRC will actively pursue documentation of the great tradition of music performance in Colorado.

The Center will actively pursue documentation of music performance in Colorado by documenting the performers, performing organizations, significant venues, and other arts institutions that make Colorado's music so vibrant. Examples of interest include festivals in Lyons, Nederland, Boulder, and Trinidad, local performing organizations (the Boulder Chorale, the Boulder Philharmonic, the Ars Nova Singers), and schools (Aspen Music Festival and School, Vale Jazz).

DORMANT INITIATIVES

The following initiatives identified in the previous collection statement are no longer considered active. The collections may be retained, moved, or deaccessioned, as opportunities and resources dictate: California Mission Music; Moravian music; early country music; American guitar music; and American piano music

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Being a repository for records, manuscripts, and personal papers of American music and musicians, the AMRC is the caretaker for the physical manifestations of many thousands of artistic and creative works. Because these properties carry often valuable economic benefits to their creators, benefits which the creators may wish to retain or invest in their heirs or estates, the AMRC accepts physical collections with or without a transfer of exclusive rights in the intellectual property contained therein. The Center will not accept collections that do not include non-exclusive licenses to make broad use of the materials in furtherance of its mission, or which contain unreasonable restrictions on the use of the material by third parties.

The AMRC encourages donors to transfer exclusive rights in their donated creative works to the University with their donation. This allows the Center the greatest latitude in promoting the scholarship and dissemination of the works.