Harmonie Universelle by Marin Mersenne (Paris: 1636): First Edition, ML100 M3 OS1
  - Significance: Mersenne was a central figure in mathematics, physics, and astronomy in the early 17th century, corresponding with many other scientists and philosophers throughout Europe. He edited the works of numerous Greek mathematicians which all contributed to his research in the fields of acoustics and tuning. Suggested a ratio for the equally-tempered semitone that was more accurate than similar suggestions made by others of the day.

  - Significance: One of the first books to treat the subject of music history on its own.

Historia Musica by Giovanni Andrea Angelini Bontempi (Perugia, Italy: 1695): First Edition, ML159 B85 OS1
  - Significance: An early example of an actual book study of music history, and the first history of music written in Italian.

  - Significance: Printed just the year after Handel’s death, this book is an example of an early musical biography. Question of how this early scholarship so close to the composer’s life compares with our modern version and ideas of Handel’s life and career.

  - Significance: An early example of the growing debate on musical aesthetics, and is considered by Charles Burney to be the first essay of what we would consider “music criticism.” This edition also contains a letter to Avison by William Hayes and Avison’s reply to Hayes. The essay was important in that it established the primacy of the concept of “expression” in music and encapsulates the debate between the supporters of “ancient” and “modern” music.

  - Significance: An example of the mid-century reaction against what was seen as the artificial and formal nature of the Baroque style. This was an important essay that, as indicated by the title, was written in Italian but was so influential that is saw multiple translations into various European languages.

- Significance: Another example of the ongoing debate of opera in the 18th Century England.

**Liturgical Music and Worship:**

Breviary 12th Century, [Germany]: Thom 9

- Significance: Breviaries contained all the necessary materials for daily prayers used by bishops, deacons, and other church officials in their daily performance of the Divine Office. This included chants for the psalms, antiphons, hymns, etc. This manuscript includes unstaved neumes above parts of the text and guides for the chants.

Gradual late 13th Century, England: Ege 8

- Significance: Small book page, graduals are either part of the mass that is part of the Eucharist celebration, or are books containing all the musical portions of the mass itself. This item is most likely of the latter time, and given its small size was a book meant to be used during the mass.

Psalter mid 13th Century, Germany: Ege 10

- Significance: An illuminated Psalter, the psalms themselves were among the most often transcribed and then printed books of the Bible. Along with that, the psalms were chanted using Psalm Tones formulas as part of the Divine Office.

Hymnal early 14th Century, France: Ege 21

- Significance: Early hymnal that might have been used by a layperson during services.

Antiphonal early 15th Century, Italy: Ege 27

- Significance: Page from antiphonal, red four line staff with neumes.

Antiphonal late 15th Century, Italy: Plume MS 334

- Significance: Manuscript of Antiphonal for Passion Sunday. Has red four line staff with neumes.

Psalter late 15th Century, Germany: Ege 42

- Significance: Notice the changes in the staff in this MS.

Gradual 16th Century, Italy: Plume MS 329

- Significance: 5 line staff

Antiphonal 16th Century, Spain: Plume MS 331

- Significance: Printed manuscript (notice line breaks)

Kiev Psalter facsimile (Kiev, Ukraine, 1397): BS1425 C4 1978x OS1

- Significance: One of the most famous illuminated psalters, it contains numerous miniature illustrations with red lines indicating what portions of the text the miniatures
are meant to illustrate. In the Russian Orthodox church, there developed a different style of chant and notation called “znamenny” chant.

Gutenberg Bible facsimile (Mainz, Germany, 1450s): Plume OS Z241 B58 1961 v. 1
- Significance: The first major book printed using moveable type by Johannes Gutenberg.

- Significance: This was the first printed Book of Hours in Paris. The Book of Hours were used by individuals in private home worship as a mean of replicating elements of the monastic life. The Book would contain prayers, chants, and other things that would used during the course of the day and Liturgical calendar.

- Significance: The writings of Calvin along with the city of Geneva were of great help and comfort to English Protestants during the 16th century when the country was many times ruled by those hostile towards the Anglican Church and non-Catholics in general. When Elizabeth ascended to the throne and a slightly more tolerant view towards the Anglican Church took hold (though not all that favorable towards the Catholic church), the writings of Calvin flourished. His writings on the Psalms and how they should be used in services inspired the creation of the Metrical Psalters.

The Bible (London: 1599): Geneva Bible, UNCAT 94-3-54
- Significance: English edition of the Geneva Bible, that is the translation prepared in Geneva by Calvin and his followers.

Muley Zaiden Koran facsimile (Marrakech, Morocco: 1599): BP 100.5 1996 v. 1 OS2
- Significance: The Islamic Koran is usually sung be recited, though Muslim musical aesthetics make a distinction between what types of music are acceptable and even what is considered music. (Check facts with WMA notes)

Piesne Chwal Bozskych by Jan Roh, reprint (Prague, Czech Republic: 1541): 1927 reprint, ML3100 P54 1541 OS1
- Significance: This work is a 16th century song book compiled by the Bohemian Brethren, a Protestant church founded in the 15th century, and now the modern day Moravian Church. This book is a collection of songs for use in the church.

- Significance: Based out of the Protestant Reformation, especially inspired by the writings of Calvin, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter was among the most successful book of metrical psalms for much if the 16th and 17th centuries and went on to be included in many copies of the Geneva Bible and the English Book of Common Prayer. This edition includes music for the psalms.
  • Significance: Later edition of same book.

The Book of Common Prayer (London: [1717]): Creamer 926
  • Significance: Like the Book of Hours, the Book of Common Prayer, used by the Church of England, was a book for the lay person to help continue their prayers and worship on a daily basis. One of the features found in most Books was a complete edition of the Psalms, usually in a translation that would be sung. This edition was most likely owned by a wealthy family as it has numerous ornamentations and illustrations not found in many other editions.

The Bay Psalm Book (Cambridge, MA: 1640): Facsimile Edition, BS1440 B4 1640c
  • Significance: This psalter was the first book printed in the British colonies and is the earliest book still known to have been printed in the Americas. This is a metrical psalter with the psalms translated from the Hebrew into English in such a way to make them easier to sing. There are no melodies printed in the text, though, but the melodies used would have been those used with other metrical psalter translations.

Die Psalmen und Fest-lieder (Bern, Switzerland): 1820 Edition, M2138 P73
  • Significance: 19th Century Swiss psalter includes other songs used in worship for the city of Bern. Small book that could easily be carried in one’s pocket to and from services. The book is specifically intended for use in Bern, an example of Calvin’s program of integrating the church into the city government, which he famously did in Geneva.

  • Significance: This is a first edition of the Book of Mormon.

Ancient and Medieval Sources for Renaissance Music:

De Disciplina Scolarium by [Boethius] (Strasbourg, France: 1491): Plume PA 6231 Z7 1491
  • Significance: Boethius was an important philosopher of the 5th and 6th century, though his authorship of this volume is in dispute. He wrote on many subjects related to education and the preservation of ancient knowledge, which makes his writings and translations some of the most important sources of ancient Greek translations. In the realm of music his work De Institutione Musica was one of the first significant books of the period to be written on music, and more important, on the Greek theories of music, which are still the ultimate foundation on which Western music is built. It was one of the first books on music to be printed in Venice in the early 1490s.

Il Petrarca (Venice, Italy: 1560): PQ4476 B60 1560
  • Significance: The works of Petrarch were among the most important to be rediscovered in the Renaissance period. Promoted by Pietro Bembo two centuries on, Bembo’s ideas about Petrarch’s writing – rhythm, verse structure, etc – were highly influential on the development of the Italian madrigal in the 16th century. This volume reprints many of his poems with commentary by Alessandro Vellutello.
Le Tre Fontane by Niccolo Liburnio (Venice, Italy: 1526): PQ 4458 L6
  - Significance: Liburnio was an influential grammarians during the Italian Renaissance and this work, about the usage of words in the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, reflects that position. It also demonstrates how important Petrarch was in the conception of words and poetry during the period.

Folk Music:

  - Significance: Republished several times, this set contains an essay on English song and reprints the lyrics to numerous songs, grouped by category (the first volume here contains entirely love songs)

The Book of Ballads edited by Ron Gaultier (London: 1870): 96-4-28
  - Significance: This book collects ballad texts from Spain, the US, and elsewhere, and as such is an example of a folklorist type project. While there is no music to accompany the text, it is understood that most of the ballads would have been sung.

Letter from Zoltan Kodaly to George Barany, 1953: MS 209
  - Significance: Kodaly was one of the leading proponents in the 20th century of studying and collecting folks song (for him specifically Hungarian), and would actually travel with Bela Bartok as they would record and notate folk songs. This letter mentions the publication of a second volume of Hungarian folk songs collected and edited by Kodaly.

Race Relations in America:

Contraband’s Song of Freedom by Eastburn (Philadelphia, PA: 1865): M1628.3 E37 1865
  - Significance: Published the year of the end of the Civil War, this song’s lyrics celebrate the freedom of the slaves, but no music is included (though one could conceivably sing it to the tune of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” with little variation, a song which was written and popularized around 1861).

The Story of the Jubilee Singers With Their Songs by JBT Marsh (Boston, MA: 1880): Nilon M1670 M3 1880b
  - Significance: The Fisk Jubilee Singers were founded in 1871 at Fisk University (Nashville, TN) to tour and raise funds for the university. Over the years, the group continued to tour and helped to promote and popularize traditional African-American spirituals and folk-songs, which was a departure from the Black Face minstral type songs that many white Americans were exposed to. The group continues to exist and perform to this day.

- Significance: Prints words and music to a number of songs that seemingly could be sung to child by her nanny. The picture on the cover depicts what might have been typical in the day, an African-American nanny and a white child. Even 45 years after the Civil War, the stereotype of the African-American servant persisted.

Ben King’s Southland Melodies by Essie Collins Matthews and Leigh Richmond Miner (Chicago, IL: 1911): Scuba III 1528

- Significance: These three books reprint lyrics from Southern African-American songs with pictures illustrating them. To modern eyes the stylized English and photos seem highly insensitive, but the books were popular in their day.

On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs by Dorothy Scarborough (Cambridge, MA: 1925): Nilon M1670 S3 1925 c. 3

- Significance: A study about African-American folk songs complete with musical examples. In many ways, an ethnomusicological study of the subject, albeit one that is seemingly still in the shadow of the racism of the day.

Comedy Acts and Minstrel Show Material by Mort Lewis (Washington, D.C.: 1943) Nilon D 810 E8 S66 v. 6

- Significance: This was a booklet of material that could be used as shows to entertain the troops during World War II. As the title implies, the material was based on Minstrel Shows which would usually feature stock characters, in the case of the material in this book, a character named Molasses.


- Significance: Paul Robeson was an actor, concert singer, athlete, activist, and many other things in the 20th century. His recordings and films earned him acclaim and his political activities earned him a spot on the blacklist during the Cold War.


- Significance: A musical with book and lyrics by Hughes, one of the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance (music by David Martin).


- Significance: An interesting Children’s Book by Hughes about rhythm.
Concert Life and Fan Culture:

The State of Innocence and Fall of Man by John Dryden (London: 1678): ML50 A2 D87
- Significance: John Dryden was a poet and playwright and The State of Innocence, written in 1674, published 1677, was meant to be an opera (as indicated), but there is no evidence that the music was ever written, nor the work staged. There is also evidence to suggest that the staging and effects necessary for the work, itself an adaptation of Milton’s Paradise Lost, was beyond the financial and technical means of companies of the day.

The Beggar’s Opera by John Gay (London: 1729): ML 50.5 B3 1729
- Significance: A third edition of the libretti published the year after the work premiered. It includes music at the end of the libretti and also includes the libretti and music to Polly, a sequel to the Beggar’s Opera that was published by subscription but banned from performance during Gay’s lifetime. It was not staged until 50 years after it was written in 1729.

The Beggar’s Opera by John Gay (London: 1765): ML50.5 B35
- Significance: This is a copy of the libretti (with some music) to the famous work, published almost 40 years after the work first premiered, a testament to its continuing popularity in England. This copy of the libretti is bound with the test to three other plays. A patron in England would buy a work unbound and then could have it bound on his or her own, like this person did. They could then take the books to performances or familiarize themselves with the work beforehand.

Leipzig Scrapbook: MS 404
- Significance: Book is a collection of programs and other clippings from Leipzig, Germany, during the years of 1892-1894. The scrapbook gives a slice of concert life in a German town at the turn of the century.

Serge de Diaghileff’s Ballet Russe (New York, NY: 1916): ML63 N59 OS1
- Significance: A souvenir book for the Ballet Russe published by the Metropolitan Opera during the company’s first American tour in 1916. It features many photos and illustrations of the costumes used in productions and also lists the productions in its repertory with synopsis (which include Stravinsky’s Firebird and Petrouchka, though not the Rite of Spring).

True Norwegian Black Metal by Peter Beste (Brooklyn, NY: 2008): DHT 11831
Hip Hop – A Cultural Odyssey (Los Angeles, CA: 2011): DHT New
Significance: For music in the 20th century, especially mainstream and popular music, photography and fashion have been a major driving force. With Rock and Roll coming to the fore right as television was becoming the next big thing, how an artist looked became just as important as how they could sing or play. And in the past 60 years, especially since the advent of MTV and now the internet, fashion is even a bigger element of a record label’s marketing machine. Even with a movement such as punk that was supposed to resist such slick marketing, fashion was an inseparable part of the aesthetic. These books all collect images, both candid and posed, of 20th century musical artists which help to reinforce just how close fashion and image were tied into 20th century music.

Misc. Artifacts:

Broadsides from Austrian Revolution of 1848: NS 359
- Significance: The Austrian Revolution of 1848 was part of a larger movement that swept Europe that year. This collection of broadsides, or posters and pamphlets, chronologically depict the revolutionaries’ demands and response by the government. These all come from the capital of Vienna, one of the musical and cultural centers of Europe. Among other consequences, the revolution caused a rift between a young Johann Strauss II and his father, who died the following year. The Elder also composed his most famous composition, the Radetzky March, in 1848 in honor of the Austrian military leader of the same name who had to be called back with his troops from Italy in an attempt to restore order in the capital.

Letter from Franz Liszt to “Hochverehrter Freund” 9 May 1870: MS 45
- Significance: A rather enigmatic letter from Liszt to an unnamed conductor who has added “magic sign” to a 9th symphony, and upcoming performance with the friend conducting.

Every Man His Own Detective by George Antheil (New York, NY: 1937): HV 6143 A35
- Significance: Antheil was a leader in 20th century avant garde music in America, though, as demonstrated by this book, his interest ranged far outside that of music. The present book is about “glandular criminology,” rather being about to tell if someone is a criminal based on physical characteristics caused by the glands (Antheil wrote similar articles on female glands and being able to tell if a woman is single and available under titles like “The Glandbook for the Questing Male.”). The present volume is signed by the author.

- Significance: A glimpse into the marching band culture of the day. It is a complete handbook for formations, positions, and other material for a marching band director.
Tune Up – The Instruments of the Orchestra and their Players by Harriet E. Huntington (Garden City, NY: 1942): Scuba ML 3930 H86 T86 1942
- Significance: A children’s book, essentially, talking about every instrument of the orchestra, its sound, and function.