Understanding Music Call Numbers

Use this guide to find music materials in the stacks at Cook Library

General Location Information

Locations of music materials at Cook Library:

- **STACKS** – print music materials kept on the 5th floor of the Cook Library
- **QUARTO** - oversized books and scores shelved at the very beginning of the M stacks section
- **FOLIO** - scores and books unique in size shelved in a wooden bookcase by the windows in the M stacks area
- **MEDIA** – AV items (CD’s, LP’s, DVD’s, etc.) available upon request at the 3rd floor Circulation Desk
- **Faculty Reserve** – Print (including both books and scores) and sound recording reserve items for in library use only kept at the 3rd floor Circulation Desk.

Note: **Bound music journals** are assigned a call number and shelved under that number within the 5th floor ML section. Loose journals (current year’s copies) are kept in the 2nd floor in the Periodicals Reading Room.

Music Call Number Breakdowns

Books and other materials in the USM system and most academic libraries are cataloged according to the Library of Congress Classification System. Every item in the library catalog has a Library of Congress call number. Call numbers for books, scores, and sound recordings are all part of the M category of the classification system.

Subgroups in the M category

The M STACKS areas on the fifth floor of Cook Library include musical scores, libretti, sheet music collections, songbooks, composer biographies, books on music education, and books on musical technique. These items are divided into three major subgroups listed below.

- **M** = Musical Scores
- **ML** = Literature on Music
- **MT** = Music instruction and study

The “M” area is shelved first in the STACKS, followed by “ML” and “MT.”

Finding a Musical Score in the Stacks

To find an M item (musical score) once you have a call number from the catalog:

- Look at the first letters on your call number and go directly to M Stacks areas.
- If your call number has a location of “Quarto” go to the very beginning of the entire M area; if it is “Folio” go to the wooden cases by the windows.
Within the M area, look for the numbers that match the first numbers after the letter “M” of your call number. Start with the numeral indicated before the first decimal point in the call number.

The numbers will run in sequential order, starting with single digits followed by a decimal point, then go to two digits, followed by three digits, then moving up to four digits before the decimal.

In the “M” section, the first set notes type of musical setting.

The second set notes the beginning letters of the composer’s last name and the first word of the title of the work.

Some call numbers may also have the publication year or edition year added at the end of the call number for greater specificity.

Example:
Here is a call number for the score titled Royal Winter Music by the composer Hans Werner Henze:

M127
.H4R6

Here is the breakdown of the call number:
- **M** = musical score (this is a piece of music, not a book about music)
- **127** = the musical setting, in this case, solo guitar
- **.H4** = the beginning of the composer’s last name, “Henze’
- **R6** = the beginning of the first word of the work title, “Royal”

Finding Books about Music Literature (ML) or Music Intstruction or Study (MT)

Most of the ML and MT titles will be in regular Stacks, rather than Quarto, but a few specially sized books may be shelved in the Folio section – be careful to note the exact location of your item:

- To find a book in the ML or MT Stacks sections, note the exact beginning letters of your call number (either ML or MT) and go to the beginning of that section.
- Look for the numbers that match the first numbers after the letters “ML” or “MT” of your call number. Start with the numeral indicated before the first decimal point in the call number.
- The numbers will run in sequential order, starting with single digits followed by a decimal point, then go to two digits, followed by three digits, then moving up to four digits before the decimal.
- In ML and MT areas, there will be a letter and number for the specific topic within that subject, followed by another set for the author of the work.

Example:
Here is a call number for a biography of composer Edvard Grieg titled Edvard Grieg: the Man and the Artist written by Finn Benestad:

ML
410
G9.B413

Here is the breakdown of the call number:
- **ML** = music literature, or a book about music
- **410** = subject area of musical biography
- **G9** = subtopic, in this case, the subject of the biography is Edvard Grieg
- **.B413** = the beginning of the author’s last name, “Benestad”