

# U.S. SHEET MUSIC COLLECTION

Ruth T. Watanabe Special Collections  
Sibley Music Library

Draft finding aid in progress since Summer 2007:  
spreadsheet compilation by  
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# DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Shelf location: begins at M5A 1,1

## **Provenance**

The collection is comprised of items that the Sibley Music Library has acquired over an extended period of time from various sources. Acquisitions range from gifts of single items to substantial collections that were given to the Sibley Music Library by different donors.

## **Scope and content note**

The U.S. Sheet Music Collection contains more than 100,000 pieces of sheet music published in the United States, dating from the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. The collection encompasses a wide variety of musical literature, including art song, parlor song, folk song, and popular song, as well as numerous genres of instrumental compositions (both original works and sets of variations on known themes). This material presents a significant perspective on American history and culture, reflecting the many interests, attitudes, and musical tastes of each era.

In addition, the collection includes a substantial series of local imprints, including an extensive sequence of sheet music published in Rochester, NY, and Buffalo, NY, as well as several imprints from publishers across western New York and eastern Pennsylvania. These items are a unique and invaluable source of information about publishing in upstate New York.

## **Restrictions and use**

There are no restrictions on use of the collection. The provisions of the United States Copyright Law (1976) and its revisions apply in each instance of reproduction and performance. For all items published in 1923 or later, obtaining copyright clearance is a necessary prerequisite before requests for reproductions (in whatever format) will be granted.

## **Associations**

The Ruth T. Watanabe Special Collections department holds several smaller collections of published sheet music, both U.S. imprints as well as European imprints. The James W. Phillips Collection contains nearly 3,000 items of sheet music dating from approximately 1890 through 1980, the bulk of which is music of a popular vein, namely songs for voice and piano from musical theatre, revues, motion pictures, and other productions. The individual collections of Charlotte Stafford and Hazel Munger Burke contain popular sheet music, both vocal and instrumental, the bulk dating from the early twentieth century. The World War II Sheet Music Collection consists of over 500 items of popular sheet music published during the years of World

War II relating to the war or general patriotism. The Sam Forman Dance Orchestra Collection contains full and partial sets of performance parts for nearly 200 popular compositions, the bulk of either French or Spanish origin, published between 1910 and 1960.

Certain other collections also contain significant amounts of sheet music published in the U.S. The Robert Schwartz Collection contains exclusively popular sheet music titles from the twentieth century, the bulk dating from the 1960s and 1970s. The Maude Wilson Collection contains late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century music for piano solo and piano four-hands. The Carl Dengler Collection contains many sheet music imprints, both in their original published manifestations and in manuscript form arranged specifically for ensemble (dance band) performance. There is also a separate series of music composed by Irving Berlin, but at the time of this writing, this music has not been processed.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

So as to address the growing body of sheet music received over time by the Sibley Music Library, SML staff members established the given organization and arranged the sheet music accordingly, a project undertaken in the 1970s.

The collection at large is subdivided into three broad sub-groups, each of which is subdivided into various series.

### **SUB-GROUP I: CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT**

Sub-group I is subdivided chronologically into five series of sheet music:

#### Series 1: pre-1801 imprints

The sheet music items in Series 1 are arranged in a sequence according to the page numbers found in the published reference work *A Bibliography of Early Secular American Music* by the renowned American music librarian Oscar Sonneck (1873-1928). The bibliography, which was revised and enlarged by William Treat Upton, cites sheet music imprints together with bibliographic descriptions and holding library sigla. The individual entries in the Sonneck bibliography lack entry numbers. See Oscar George Theodore Sonneck, *A Bibliography of Early Secular American Music (18th Century)*, revised and enlarged by William Treat Upton (New York: Da Capo Press, 1964).

#### Series 2: 1801-1825 imprints

The sheet music items in Series 2 are arranged in sequence according to entry numbers in the published reference work *Secular Music in America, 1801-1825* by Richard J. Wolfe. The Wolfe bibliography cites sheet music imprints together with bibliographic descriptions and holding library sigla. See Richard J. Wolfe, *Secular Music in America, 1801-1825: A Bibliography*, vols. I-III (New York: New York Public Library, 1964).

#### Series 3: 1826-1860 imprints

##### Sub-series A: Instrumental

This sub-series contains titles arranged exclusively for instrumental performance. The bulk are for piano, but several others are for stringed or plectral instruments or solo instrument and piano. Some of the holdings represent U.S. publications of European art repertory. Others represent U.S. publications of newly composed music. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by surname of known composer or else arranger, in those instances when a composer attribution may be lacking. Anonymous compositions are inserted in alphabetical order by title.

### Sub-series B: Vocal

This sub-series contains titles scored for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment (most frequently for the piano) or vocal ensemble. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by surname of known composer or else arranger, in those instances when a composer attribution may be lacking. Anonymous compositions are inserted in alphabetical order by title.

## Series 4: 1861-1890 imprints

### Sub-series A: Instrumental

Similar to the instrumental works held within Series 3, this sub-series contains titles scored exclusively for instrumental performance. The bulk are for piano, but several others are for stringed or plectral instruments or solo instrument and piano. Some of the holdings represent U.S. publications of European art repertory. Others represent U.S. publications of newly composed music. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by surname of known composer or else arranger, in those instances when a composer attribution may be lacking. Anonymous compositions are inserted in alphabetical order by title.

### Sub-series B: Vocal

Similar to the vocal works held within Series 3, this sub-series contains titles scored for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment (most frequently for the piano) or vocal ensemble. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by surname of known composer or else arranger, in those instances when a composer attribution may be lacking. Anonymous compositions are inserted in alphabetical order by title.

## Series 5: imprints from 1891 onwards

### Sub-series A: Instrumental

Similar to the instrumental works held within Series 3 and 4, this sub-series contains titles scored exclusively for instrumental performance. The bulk are for piano, but several others are for stringed or plectral instruments or solo instrument and piano. Some of the holdings represent U.S. publications of European art repertory. Others represent U.S. publications of newly composed music. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by surname of known composer or else arranger, in those instances when a composer attribution may be lacking. Anonymous compositions are inserted in alphabetical order by title.

### Sub-series B: Vocal

Similar to the vocal works held within Series 3 and 4, this sub-series contains titles scored for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment (most frequently for the piano) or vocal ensemble. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by surname of known



composer or else arranger, in those instances when a composer attribution may be lacking. Anonymous compositions are inserted in alphabetical order by title.

**Sub-group II: Thematic arrangement**

This sub-group is organized by designated special subjects, wherein each individual subject constitutes a series within itself. It should be noted that additional items associated with the Sub-group II special subjects may be found in Sub-group I and Sub-group III. The sub-categories include:

Patriotic:

- Leading national songs (i.e., America, Hail Columbia, The Star-Spangled Banner, Yankee Doodle)
- Other patriotic music

National government:

- Presidents
- Other national figures
- Revolutionary War
- War of 1812
- Mexican War
- Civil War
- Spanish-American War
- World War I
- World War II

Persons and personal names

(e.g., Jenny Lind, Charles Lindbergh)

Corporate:

- General
- Colleges and universities
- Fraternities and sororities
- Commercial entities
- Firemen
- Fraternal orders
- Women's groups
- Militia groups
- Musical groups
- Clubs
- Other societies and clubs

Places

(e.g., U.S. states, towns, landmarks)

Events

(e.g., U.S. Centennial, Great Exhibition 1851)

Rochester imprints and connections

Western/Upstate New York imprints and connections

Pennsylvania imprints and connections

Selected topics:

Abolition

Crime

Sports

Fashion

Temperance

Miscellaneous

### **Sub-group III: Popular music**

In contrast with the titles contained within Sub-group I, the titles in this sub-group are of a more consciously popular vein, including popular dance forms; selections from operettas, musical stage plays, and motion pictures; and songs composed on prevalent topical themes (e.g. social movements and trends). The division between items included in Sub-group I and the popular sheet music categorized in Sub-group III is somewhat indistinct, and it should be noted that some items in Sub-group III are also included in Sub-group I. The titles are subdivided into two series:

#### **Series 1: Instrumental**

This series contains titles scored exclusively for instrumental performance. The bulk of the individual items are for piano, but compositions for solo instrument and piano are also included. The titles are arranged alphabetically by title.

#### **Series 2: Vocal**

This series contains titles scored for solo voice with instrumental accompaniment (most frequently for the piano) or vocal ensemble. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order by title.