It is the responsibility of the librarian to know all things. Or, at the very least, to know where to find the answers to all things.

Every library should have some basic resources—books, monographs, websites—to help answer the questions that arise in the course of the day from conductors, music directors, personnel managers, players, and the music itself. This pamphlet lists fundamental resources for the performance library to help answer those questions.

The resources below are in three categories: Reference, for basic musical information; Bibliography, for lists of repertoire of various ensembles; and Professional Education, to teach performance library practices and procedures.

The categories are divided in two classifications: Essentials—items that should be in every library—and Advanced—a deeper dive into resources for libraries that serve a large and diverse clientele.

Within each category, the resources appear in order of their importance to the library, considering comprehensiveness, accuracy, and ease of use.

**Finding the resources**

For the websites listed below, the specific resources will be found further inside the site, past the main page. Because URLs occasionally change, lengthy addresses were truncated to the root site.

Most books can be purchased from music dealers or bookstores. Local independent bookstores can be located through www.indiebound.org. If the book is out of print, try online used book dealers, such as Alibris.com or AbeBooks.com.

For some of the advanced resources (especially the expensive multi-volume sets), it may be helpful to foster a professional or personal relationship with a local college or university library that supports a music degree program. Membership in a library consortium or a Friends of the Library group may allow access to their print and online collections.

Books in libraries can be located through WorldCat.org, which displays holdings from public, research, college, and university libraries. Create a free account to save information about your searches and to identify items in libraries near you.
ESSENTIALS

Reference

These items provide basic music information, useful to librarians for cataloging and to their players and conductors who need quick definitions of terms and other facts.


A handy, portable dictionary for the performer, containing many terms found in orchestral and ensemble music. Includes guides to Italian, German, and French pronunciation.


A comprehensive, single volume music dictionary that includes terms, personal and corporate names, and music titles. Useful for quick reference, there are citations in the text for web links that lead to in-depth information.


A helpful guide to the instruments, terminology, and the activities of the symphony orchestra, arranged in dictionary format.

Bibliography


This is the essential guide to the orchestral repertoire. It provides instrumentation, duration, and publisher contact information, with appendices that classify the works by duration, instrumentation, and nationality. The online edition is regularly updated and expanded.

Professional Education


This pamphlet gives recommendations on formatting, proofreading, and binding parts and scores for music performance. It is essential information for performance librarians, but also a helpful guide for composers and arrangers who submit their work to your ensemble.


A monograph explaining the copyright law as it pertains to music performance materials for rent, for sale, and in the public domain. It defines simple and grand rights as they relate to performing ensembles.

ADVANCED

Reference


The Grove Dictionaries are a family of scholarly reference books comprising the definitive music encyclopedias in the English language. Libraries may purchase the individual sets that best suit the needs of their ensemble(s):

The New Grove Dictionary of Opera. (1992, 4 volumes)

Or, if more than one dictionary is necessary, a subscription to Grove Music Online might be more practical, as it allows access to the Grove database that includes all of the books above, as well as The Oxford Companion to Music (2011) and the Oxford Dictionary of Music (2006). Subscription information and pricing is available at https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.


A detailed examination of common practice music notation, with many examples taken from contemporary repertoire.

Del Mar describes the instruments and explains their typical individual and ensemble functions within the symphony orchestra. There are many examples of common and uncommon performance practice, notation, and terms found in the orchestral literature.


Written by and for radio announcers, this guide has phonetic pronunciations for people, places, and composition titles. The accompanying essays describe how to form the sounds and include grammatical rules for each language.

**Bibliography**

These resources are for large performing groups, arranged by ensemble, so that libraries who support opera, ballet, or pops can easily locate the best resources for their repertoire.

**ORCHESTRAL MUSIC**


A catalog of 4,000 works, written after 1900, for seven or more players. Entries are divided into chamber orchestra (16+ players), ensemble (7–15 players), and string orchestra (any size). The appendices index works by instrumentation, duration, and soloist.


A catalog of 6,380 compositions from the 1600s to 1970, written for a minimum of ten players, with a minimum of three string parts and a wind section of two to twelve parts. Entries are by composer only and there is no title index or other supplemental appendices included. It is not as detailed as Meyer, but covers more repertoire.


IMSLP houses digital copies of public domain music. You can download scores and parts, and examine bibliographic information about those music editions. Use it for cataloging information, to replace missing parts in your library or, with some extra effort, to print performance materials for your ensemble.

The Fleisher Collection is “the world's largest circulating collection of orchestral performance sets.” They will loan music for performance, but their catalog is also helpful for researching information on standard orchestral repertoire and their own unique holdings.

**ORCHESTRAL POPS MUSIC**


A bibliography of orchestral music for light classics, popular songs, Broadway and film themes, and other “pops” repertoire. Each entry includes instrumentation and publisher, along with a subject classification and several helpful indexes, although some information is incomplete or unconfirmed.

MOLA Pops Resources.

Available in the members only area of the MOLA website. Search the Contact Directory using the delimiter “Pops.” https://mola-inc.org.

**OPERA MUSIC**


An update of *The Da Capo Opera Manual* (Da Capo Press, 1997), now with complete instrumentation and publisher information in the format of Daniels' *Orchestral Music*. Some new works were added to this publication and other older works were removed. Includes indexes to arias and librettists.


A comprehensive guide to more than 1,750 excerpts from 450 operas. Each entry gives instrumentation, publication and edition information, keys, likely stop and start points, and the location of the excerpt in full and vocal score editions.


A guidebook for singers studying this repertoire, examining more than 400 arias arranged by voice type. Entries include vocal range, tessitura, and fach, along with a translation of the text and performance notes about the aria.
**BALLET MUSIC**


This is the invaluable resource for the ballet librarian, not only for information on the repertoire, but for the introductory chapters that explain how ballet works, its terminology and structure, and how it differs from the orchestral and opera world.

**WIND ENSEMBLE AND BAND MUSIC**


A catalog of more than 13,000 wind ensemble works from 1650 to the 1990s, based on an exhaustive examination of library collections and published editions. Background on the composers and their eras is in the authors’ *Wind Ensemble Sourcebook and Biographical Guide* (Greenwood Press, 1997).


A detailed survey of notable wind chamber music, including repertoire with soloists and with voices. The entries are arranged by size of ensemble, then by specific instrumentation, with duration, difficulty, publisher, and the author’s comments on each work.


This is the most extensive bibliography of band music. It typically shows publisher and publication date, and often includes composer biographies and bibliographic citations, but it does not include instrumentation. An updated version is available online by subscription at http://www.hebm.info.


This is a catalog of the published works commissioned by Robert Boudreau and his American Wind Symphony. The repertoire is contemporary and challenging, typically scored for a large orchestral wind section. Most of these works are available on a rental basis from C. F. Peters.


A revision of the author’s D.M.A. dissertation, updated to include repertoire mostly from the 1990s to the 2010s. The entries follow the Daniels model, but some abbreviations differ and the instrumentation is often unreliable.

This compilation combines and expands on repertoire covered in Green’s previous six books, which examined choral repertoire from 1600 to the present.


An annotated bibliography of nearly 2,000 works by 76 composers, written between 1920 and 1993. Includes performing forces, publisher, duration, and source of the text, supplemented by an extensive bibliography.


An annotated bibliography of nearly 1300 works written from ca. 1800 to 1920, mostly by art music composers familiar to modern audiences (Beach, Chadwick, Griffes, etc.). DeVenney’s other books on American choral music offer additional insight to this repertoire.


An examination of nearly 600 choruses from 218 operas by 90 composers, identifying works that can be performed on their own, extracted from the context of the opera. Orchestral accompaniment instrumentation is not included.

**Professional Education**


A great introduction to preparing opera materials, with information on finding performance music, helpful reference sources, terminology, and warnings of potential pitfalls.


A detailed guide for the librarian working with ballet repertoire. It explains the structure and often confusing terminology of the field, and includes information on licensing and finding music, with suggestions on preparing the performance materials.


A collection of articles by more than thirty professional librarians, editors, copyists, and conductors describing specific facets of library work.

This is bibliography of books, articles, and web resources classified by common tasks of the performance librarian, identifying appropriate readings on processes and common practices. Other library articles discuss choosing editions, errata, cataloging, and notation resources.


Interviews with seventeen professional performance librarians who describe their background, experience, and the characteristics and responsibilities of their work in a variety of ensembles. A valuable way to learn this profession is to study how others do the job.