

Music Library Rescue Kit

A practical first pass for church, school, ensemble, and studio music collections

created by



Start small to make a big impact

You do not need to catalog every score before your library becomes useful. Start with one shelf, box, cabinet, or digital folder. Give each item a reliable home and record enough information to find it again. Then repeat the process in small sessions.

This kit helps you decide what to capture, build a useful catalog, and organize your music collection for growth.



Know what music you have. Know where it is. Put it to work.

3 tips for success

1 Start simple

Cataloging a large music collection takes time. Begin with the details that help you identify and find each piece: title, composer or arranger, voicing or instrumentation, publisher, and current location. You'll have a chance to capture the more in-depth info as you consider and program pieces. A tool like Sage Score can also help you fill in those other details later.

2 Keep cataloging & reorganization separate

It can be really tempting to reorganize your library as you go along, but if you try to organize before you understand the full scope of your library, chances are high that you'll end up doubling your work, and nobody wants that. To make it easier when it comes to reorganize, capture each piece's current location as you catalog even if that location is "the back table".

3 Expand as you go

As you work with pieces, save the more in-depth details like key, genre, duration, and occasion. The more you program or assign, the richer your library data becomes. If you use practice tracks, digital scores, or other resources for yourself, your students, or your ensemble members, be sure to store those in a place that will be easy to track down the next time you program or assign the piece.

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The anatomy of a library

Musical pieces hold a wealth of information, but what is actually worth capturing when building your catalog?

Key details

Start with the details that identify the piece and distinguish its edition or arrangement.

- Title
- Composer
- Arranger
- Publisher
- Voicing / Instrumentation
- Parent work (if applicable)

Organizational details

Organizational details keep your library clean and usable. These details help you locate music, track availability, and manage copies and ownership.

- Location
- Checked in/out status
- Licensing requirements
- Owner
- # of copies

Rich metadata

Additional musical details that help you choose repertoire for programs and student assignments. Add them as you work with each piece.

- Genre
- Meter
- Difficulty
- Tags
- Occasion
- Duration
- Key / Tonality
- Language
- Preference rating
- Learning objectives



Overwhelmed by the thought of capturing rich metadata?
Sage Score generates rich metadata for your pieces so you don't have to.



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Storage for a library that grows

When choosing how to store your music, the following strategies can help you organize your library in a way that allows it to grow as your program does.

Sorting & grouping

There is no “right” way to sort a library, so choose the way that works best for your collection. Choose a primary sorting property as well as a secondary sorting property to break ties. Using **Title** and **Composer Last Name** as your sorting properties in either order will give you a clean and consistent system.

Sorting by occasion or genre can give your physical library immediate context, but can cause confusion as a piece can fit several categories. Because of this, use your digital records to capture occasion and genre while using a more concrete approach for your physical organization.

Creating storage groups, each stored in unique locations and sorted independently, can also be useful for:

→ Ensemble

→ Ensemble type

→ Ownership

Location labels

Choose a clear naming system that is both easy to interpret and maintain. This could be something as simple as Stack A - Shelf 1.

Maintenance

One of the hardest things to plan for is how your library will grow, but strategic organization can make it easy to maintain a clear storage system as new pieces are added.

As you place pieces in your physical library, leave space at the end of each shelf to allow for new pieces.

Pro tip: Sage Score can calculate your used vs. available shelf space to evenly distribute empty space.



Still have questions? Email us at hello@sagescore.io.

Scan or visit sagescore.io to explore Sage Score, see the workflow in action, and sign up for your **free** 30-day trial.