

ANSS Subject Heading and Bibliographic Access Committee
Cataloging Question
January 2007

How does LC handle the subject cataloging for the music of diverse ethnic groups?

The Library of Congress has developed a specific set of guidelines for providing subject access to works on music: “works that consist of or discuss the music of ethnic groups, music with national emphasis, religious music of certain groups, and non-western art music, including works about the musical instruments of these groups.” A combination of headings from the following categories are assigned:

1. Ethnic or national group subdivided by place and “Music.”
2. Music of individual religious group(s) subdivided by place.
3. Heading(s) for “musical genre, type, or style, for ballads and songs, or for songs implying national emphasis.”
4. Headings as described in #3 “qualified by language of text” and including the form subdivision “Texts.”
5. Musical instruments subdivided by place.

For works concerning the music of ethnic and national groups, headings from all of the above categories may be assigned “as applicable” with the addition of appropriate subdivisions such as “History and criticism,” “Bibliography,” “Discography,” etc. (for more subdivisions check under “Music” in *LCSH*).

Note: You may not assign the subject heading “Musical instruments” to a work on the music of ethnic and national groups unless at least twenty percent of the work is “devoted to the musical instruments themselves.”

Examples:

1. [Ethnic or national group]--[place]--Music
 Appalachians (People)--Kentucky--Music
 Saramaka (Surinam people)--Music

Do not assign this arrangement of headings to an “individual nationality within its own country,” instead rely on geographic subdivision.

Music--Germany Not Germans--Germany—Music

A special case is “national groups outside their own country” where headings are assigned to “bring out both localities.”

German Americans--Colorado—Music
Folk music—Colorado

Folk music—Germany

For music of Native Americans, the name of the specific tribe/nation is used and if the work is not limited to a specific tribe/nation, to the “major group” which the work covers.

Cherokee Indians--Music

Indians of North America--Oklahoma--Music

2. [Religious group name] music (subdivided by place or form subdivisions if applicable)

Buddhist music--Discography

Additional headings for specific musical forms or genres may be added.

Buddhist hymns

“Do not assign such headings to the music of or about Christian denominations.”

3. [Genre, type, or style of music]--[place]

Folk music--Texas

Patriotic music--France

Note: “The practice of assigning the headings for folk music to the music of cultures where art music, popular music, or folk music, are not differentiated has been discontinued. Instead, the general term ‘music’ is used.”

4. [Ballads, folk songs, children's songs, or songs],[language]

“If the work is composed entirely or primarily of ballads, folk songs, children's songs, or songs, assign up to two headings for that form qualified by the original language of the text”

Songs, Russian

Folk songs, Magahi

Note; If three or more unrelated languages are used, the work is not qualified by language. If the languages are related, the broader term is used.

Ballads, Slavic

This may be subdivided geographically as appropriate.

Children’s songs, Slavic--Ukraine

5. [Musical instruments] The following combination of headings is used for works solely devoted to musical instruments of a people.

[ethnic of national group]--[place]--Music--History and criticism

[musical instruments]--[place]

[specific musical instrument(s), if applicable]

Note: The heading “History” not the heading “History and criticism” may be applied to the heading “Musical instruments” or to headings for specific musical instruments.

African Americans--Mississippi--Music--History and criticism

Musical instruments—Mississippi--History

Harmonica—Mississippi--History

Related headings include “Ethnomusicology” used for the scholarly, comparative study of music; “Ethnomusicologists” used for works on individual ethnomusicologists (e.g., Bruno Nettl) and collectively about ethnomusicologists (e.g., a membership directory of the Society for Ethnomusicology); and “Sound recordings in ethnomusicology” which refers to the use of sound recordings in the study of ethnomusicology or sound recordings made by ethnomusicologists. “World music” is used for the popular commercial music of the non-western world.