

chicago manual style for music scholars

The Chicago Manual of Style for Music Scholars: A Comprehensive Guide

Chicago manual style for music scholars is an indispensable resource for anyone engaged in rigorous academic work within the field of musicology, theory, or performance. This style guide, often referred to as CMOS or the Chicago Style, provides a comprehensive framework for presenting research, ensuring clarity, consistency, and scholarly integrity. For music scholars, adhering to its principles is not merely a matter of formatting but a crucial step in establishing the credibility and accessibility of their work, from dissertations and journal articles to conference presentations and books. This guide will delve into the specific applications of the Chicago Manual of Style as it pertains to musical notation, citations, bibliographies, and the unique challenges of documenting musical sources. Mastering these elements ensures that your scholarly contributions are not only well-articulated but also readily understood and verifiable by your peers.

Table of Contents

- Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Music Scholars
- Core Principles of CMOS for Musical Research
- Citations and Referencing in Music Scholarship
- Footnotes and Endnotes for Musical Sources
- The Bibliography in Musicological Writing
- Formatting Musical Examples and Scores
- Special Considerations for Music Notation
- Citing Unpublished Musical Materials
- Citing Recorded Music and Performances
- Style for Musicological Journals and Publishers
- Common Pitfalls for Music Scholars Using CMOS
- Resources for Chicago Style in Music

Understanding the Chicago Manual of Style for Music Scholars

The Chicago Manual of Style serves as a foundational text for a vast array of academic disciplines, and its adaptability makes it particularly well-suited for the nuanced demands of music scholarship. Unlike styles that might rigidly prescribe every comma, Chicago offers a flexible yet authoritative approach, emphasizing clarity, consistency, and accuracy. For music scholars, this means navigating not only standard textual citation but also the complexities of musical examples, performance recordings, and the historical context of musical works. Understanding the core philosophy of Chicago—that the writer's voice should be clear and the evidence transparent—is the first step to applying it effectively to musical research.

The Chicago Manual of Style provides two primary systems of citation: the notes-bibliography system and the author-date system. While both are acceptable, the notes-bibliography system is overwhelmingly preferred in the humanities, including musicology. This preference stems from its ability to seamlessly integrate explanatory notes, which are often essential for providing context, discussing alternative interpretations, or offering tangential but relevant information pertinent to musical analysis or historical background, without disrupting the main text's flow. Music scholars

frequently find the depth of explanation afforded by footnotes and endnotes invaluable.

Core Principles of CMOS for Musical Research

At its heart, the Chicago Manual of Style champions clear prose and precise documentation. For music scholars, this translates into a meticulous approach to identifying musical works, composers, performers, and sources. It demands consistency in how musical terms are presented, how editions are referenced, and how sonic evidence is described. The goal is to ensure that any reader, regardless of their specific expertise within music, can easily follow the argument and locate the cited materials.

Key to applying CMOS in music scholarship is recognizing the importance of full bibliographic information. This includes not just standard author and title, but also specific details relevant to musical works. For example, when citing a symphony, specifying the movement, key, and opus or catalogue number is critical for unambiguous identification. Similarly, for vocal music, identifying the librettist or lyricist alongside the composer is standard practice. The style guide encourages a thoroughness that anticipates reader questions and facilitates verification.

Consistency in Musical Terminology

One of the most significant challenges for music scholars is the consistent application of musical terminology. CMOS, while not dictating specific musical lexicons, implies that a scholar should adopt a standard and use it uniformly throughout their work. This includes tempo markings (e.g., adhering to Italian terms or providing translations consistently), dynamic markings, and formal analysis terms. If an English translation is provided for a foreign-language term, it should be done consistently, often in the first instance of its use.

Accuracy in Source Identification

The accuracy of source identification is paramount in academic writing, and music is no exception. Whether referencing a printed score, a manuscript, a recording, or a secondary scholarly article, each element must be precisely identified. This means including details such as the composer, work title, specific edition, publisher, publication year, and page numbers for scores. For recordings, details like the performing ensemble, conductor, soloists, recording label, and release date are crucial. Accuracy ensures that others can find and consult the exact sources you have used, thereby supporting the replicability and validity of your research.

Citations and Referencing in Music Scholarship

The notes-bibliography system of the Chicago Manual of Style is highly effective for music scholars because it allows for detailed annotations and comprehensive bibliographic entries that can capture the multifaceted nature of musical sources. This system involves using numbered footnotes or endnotes to cite sources within the text, followed by a complete bibliography at the end of the work. This dual approach provides both immediate reference and a consolidated overview of all consulted materials.

When employing the notes-bibliography system, scholars must be diligent in transcribing information precisely. The first mention of a source in a note typically includes full bibliographic details, while subsequent mentions are abbreviated. This practice not only saves space but also streamlines the reading experience. For music, this means carefully noting down all relevant identifiers for each source type.

Elements of a Musical Citation in Notes

A footnote or endnote for a musical score, for instance, might include the composer's full name, the title of the work (often italicized), the movement or section, the specific edition used, the publisher, and the year of publication, followed by the page or measure numbers. For example: Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, ed. Rudolf Kirckpatrick (New York: G. Schirmer, 1968), Prelude and Fugue no. 1 in C Major, BWV 846, p. 10.

Similarly, citing a secondary source about music would follow standard humanities citation practices. A journal article might be cited with author, article title, journal title, volume, issue, year, and page numbers. A book citation would include author, book title, publication city, publisher, and year, along with specific page references. The key is to be consistent and complete.

Footnotes and Endnotes for Musical Sources

Footnotes and endnotes serve a dual purpose in Chicago-style writing for music scholars: they cite the origin of specific information and can offer supplementary commentary. In musicology, these notes are frequently employed to provide additional context about a musical passage, discuss performance practice issues, or clarify complex analytical points without interrupting the primary narrative. The choice between footnotes (at the bottom of the page) and endnotes (at the end of the chapter or document) is usually determined by publication requirements or author preference, with consistency being the paramount concern.

When citing musical scores in footnotes or endnotes, precision is key. Beyond the standard bibliographic details, it is often crucial to specify the exact location within the piece being referenced. This can be done using measure numbers, which are universally understood in musical contexts. For example, a note might refer to "measures 34-42 of the first movement." This level of detail ensures that readers can pinpoint the exact musical material under discussion, which is vital for analytical arguments.

Citing Specific Musical Passages

When referencing a specific musical passage, the footnote or endnote should clearly indicate the work, composer, and the precise location. This might include movement numbers, tempo markings, and measure numbers. For example: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550, I. Molto allegro, measures 56-64. If the citation is for a particular edition, that should also be included. The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes providing enough information for the reader to easily find the cited material.

The Bibliography in Musicological Writing

The bibliography in a Chicago-style document for music scholars serves as an alphabetized, comprehensive list of all the sources consulted and cited in the text. It is a critical component for academic integrity, allowing readers to explore the foundation of the scholar's research. For musicological works, the bibliography will typically include a diverse range of materials, from primary musical sources and historical documents to secondary scholarly literature and recordings.

Organizing the bibliography requires adherence to specific formatting rules. Entries are typically arranged alphabetically by the author's last name. When multiple works by the same author are listed, they are then arranged chronologically by publication date. For works without a clear author, such as collections or edited volumes, the entry is alphabetized by the first significant word of the title. This systematic arrangement ensures that the bibliography is easy to navigate and consult.

Structure of Bibliography Entries for Musical Sources

The structure of bibliography entries for musical sources should mirror the detail provided in the notes but presented in a format suitable for a list. For printed music, this includes composer, title of work, edition information, publication details (city, publisher, year), and potentially a specific opus or catalogue number. For example: Beethoven, Ludwig van. *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67*. Edited by Jonathan Del Mar. Bärenreiter Urtext. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2007.

Entries for secondary sources like books and articles follow standard CMOS formats. For books: Author Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publication City: Publisher, Year. For journal articles: Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Journal Title* Volume, no. Issue (Year): Page numbers.

Formatting Musical Examples and Scores

Presenting musical examples and scores within academic writing requires careful attention to formatting to ensure they are legible and accurately represent the musical content. The Chicago Manual of Style provides guidelines for incorporating these elements, emphasizing clarity and consistency. This often involves using specialized music notation software and embedding images or figures correctly into the document. Each musical example should be clearly labeled and referenced in the text.

When preparing musical examples, scholars should strive for professional-looking output. This means using consistent engraving styles, clear fonts for text (like tempo or dynamic markings), and appropriate spacing. The quality of the engraving directly impacts the reader's ability to analyze the music, so investing time in this aspect is crucial for scholarly presentation. CMOS encourages the use of figures for all musical examples that are not a direct quotation of a standard score.

Numbering and Captioning Musical Examples

Musical examples, like other figures, should be numbered consecutively throughout the document (e.g., "Example 1," "Example 2"). Each example should have a caption that provides essential information, including the composer, title of the work, the specific section being illustrated (e.g., "First movement, measures 1-8"), and the source from which the example is taken. The caption

should be concise yet informative, guiding the reader to the musical material being discussed.

The text should then refer to these examples by their number, for instance, "As seen in Example 1, the main theme is presented in the tonic key." This cross-referencing is vital for building a coherent argument and allowing readers to easily locate the musical evidence supporting the text's claims.

Special Considerations for Music Notation

Music notation presents unique challenges for standard text-based style guides. While CMOS does not dictate the specifics of musical engraving, it provides principles for how these visual elements should be integrated into scholarly prose. This includes decisions on when to embed a brief musical excerpt directly in the text (rarely advisable for anything more than a few notes) versus presenting it as a separate, clearly labeled musical example (figure).

Key considerations include the clarity of the notation itself. If a scholar is analyzing a historical manuscript, for instance, they might need to represent its unique notational features accurately. The Chicago Manual of Style implicitly supports this by valuing accuracy and fidelity to the source material. Any deviation from standard modern notation should be clearly explained.

Representing Early Music Notation

When dealing with early music notation, such as mensural notation or neumes, scholars must ensure their representations are both accurate and understandable to their audience. CMOS would advocate for consistent methods of transcription or representation. This might involve using specialized fonts or providing clear glossaries if unusual notational practices are employed. The goal is to convey the original musical information faithfully, with any editorial interventions clearly marked and explained.

Citing Unpublished Musical Materials

Unpublished musical materials, such as manuscripts, personal papers, or correspondence related to music, require careful and detailed citation. The Chicago Manual of Style provides a framework for documenting these unique sources, which are often found in archives and special collections. Accuracy in identifying the physical location and contents of these materials is crucial for future researchers.

When citing an unpublished manuscript score or a composer's personal papers, the citation should include information about the collection where it is housed, the specific item's title or description, the date of creation if known, and any relevant collection/box/folder numbers. This level of detail ensures that another scholar can retrieve the exact same material from the archive.

Archival Citations

A typical archival citation in a footnote might look like this: Igor Stravinsky, Sketch for *The Rite of Spring*, ca. 1911–1912, Igor Stravinsky Papers, Box 12, Folder 4, American Music Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York. The bibliography entry would follow a similar structure but would be alphabetized under the collection name or composer, as appropriate.

Citing Recorded Music and Performances

Documenting sound recordings and live or archival performances presents its own set of challenges within the Chicago Manual of Style framework. These sources are increasingly central to musicological research, and CMOS provides guidance on how to cite them thoroughly. The key is to provide enough information for the reader to identify the specific recording or performance being referenced.

For recorded music, this typically involves identifying the work, the composer, the performers (including conductor and ensemble), the recording label, the album title, the catalogue number, and the year of release. For live or archival performances, details about the venue, date, and any specific archival identifiers are essential.

Formal Recording Citations

In a footnote, citing a commercial recording might appear as: Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 2 in C minor, "Resurrection,"* conducted by Leonard Bernstein, with Christa Ludwig and Janet Baker (vocals), Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Grammophon, CD, 1987, 423 976-2. The bibliography entry would list the recording artist/ensemble as the main entry if no specific composer or conductor is being emphasized, or by composer if the focus is on the composition itself.

Style for Musicological Journals and Publishers

Many musicological journals and academic presses have specific editorial guidelines that are based on, but may deviate from, the general Chicago Manual of Style. Scholars preparing manuscripts for publication must consult these specific guidelines meticulously. Journals often have preferences regarding the type of citation system used (notes-bibliography vs. author-date), the formatting of musical examples, the use of abbreviations, and the style of bibliographic entries.

Adhering to a journal's or publisher's specific style sheet is not just a matter of following rules; it demonstrates professionalism and respect for the editorial process. Publishers invest considerable resources in making manuscripts publishable, and a submission that is already formatted according to their house style significantly eases this process and increases its likelihood of acceptance. Therefore, always check the author guidelines for any publication venue.

Common Journal Deviations

Some common deviations found in musicological journals include: a strict preference for measure numbers over page numbers when citing music; specific requirements for the formatting of scholarly editions; mandates on how to cite dissertations and theses; and particular rules for abbreviating frequently cited musical works. For example, a journal might require that all references to Bach's Brandenburg Concertos be abbreviated as "BWV 1046–51" after their first full mention.

Common Pitfalls for Music Scholars Using CMOS

Despite its comprehensiveness, music scholars can fall into several common traps when applying the

Chicago Manual of Style. One frequent issue is inconsistency in notational formatting, particularly when dealing with different editions or transcriptions of the same work. Another pitfall is insufficient detail in citing musical sources, leading to ambiguity for the reader. The failure to consult specific journal or publisher guidelines is also a common oversight.

Moreover, the temptation to use informal language or to omit necessary bibliographic details for the sake of brevity can undermine the scholarly rigor that CMOS aims to uphold. Music scholars must constantly remind themselves that the goal is not just to present information, but to present it in a way that is transparent, verifiable, and easily accessible to a scholarly audience. This requires diligence and attention to detail in every aspect of citation and formatting.

Inconsistent Use of Measure Numbers

A recurring problem is the inconsistent use of measure numbers. While many scholars understand their importance for pinpointing musical passages, they may fail to use them consistently across all citations or may use them incorrectly (e.g., citing a range of measures without specifying the start and end points clearly). Ensuring that every musical reference is precisely located using measure numbers, where applicable, is a hallmark of precise musical scholarship.

Resources for Chicago Style in Music

While the Chicago Manual of Style itself is the primary authority, music scholars can benefit from additional resources that specifically address the application of CMOS to musicological contexts. These resources often provide tailored examples and address common issues encountered in the field. Consulting these aids can significantly simplify the process of adhering to the style guide.

Beyond the official CMOS, many university music departments and scholarly organizations offer style guides or workshops that can be invaluable. These materials often distill the most relevant rules for music scholars and provide practical advice for formatting citations, musical examples, and bibliographies according to the Chicago system.

Specialized Music Citation Guides

Some academic publishers and musicology departments have developed their own supplementary guides or style sheets that expand upon CMOS with specific advice for music. These can be found on departmental websites or through academic libraries. They often offer pre-formatted templates or detailed examples for citing scores, manuscripts, and recordings, which can save scholars considerable time and effort.

FAQ

Q: What is the primary citation system recommended by the

Chicago Manual of Style for music scholars?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style recommends the notes-bibliography system for music scholars, as it allows for detailed explanatory notes and a comprehensive bibliography, which are particularly useful for the complexities of musical research.

Q: How should musical works be identified in citations according to Chicago style?

A: Musical works should be identified by composer, full title of the work, key, opus or catalogue number, movement or section, and specific edition used. Measure numbers are crucial for pinpointing passages within a piece.

Q: What are the key elements to include when citing a musical score in a footnote or endnote?

A: Key elements include the composer, title of the work (italicized), movement, specific edition, publisher, year of publication, and page or measure numbers.

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style handle the formatting of musical examples?

A: Musical examples are generally treated as figures, requiring sequential numbering, clear captions that identify the musical material and its source, and proper integration into the text through referencing their figure number.

Q: Is it acceptable to use abbreviations for frequently cited musical works when using Chicago style?

A: Yes, abbreviations are acceptable for frequently cited musical works, but they must be defined in the first full citation and used consistently thereafter, often following established scholarly conventions or journal-specific guidelines.

Q: What information is essential when citing a sound recording in a bibliography?

A: Essential information for citing a sound recording includes the composer, work title, performers (conductor, ensemble, soloists), recording label, album title, catalogue number, and year of release.

Q: Do musicology journals always strictly follow the Chicago Manual of Style?

A: No, musicology journals often have their own specific editorial guidelines that are based on the

Chicago Manual of Style but may include deviations or additions tailored to their field. Scholars must always consult the journal's author guidelines.

Q: What is the best way to cite unpublished musical manuscripts in Chicago style?

A: Unpublished musical manuscripts should be cited with detailed information about their archival location, including the collection name, creator, date of creation, and specific folder/box numbers, followed by the holding institution.

Q: How should tempo and dynamic markings be presented in musical examples and text?

A: Tempo and dynamic markings should be presented clearly and consistently. If using Italian terms, they should be used according to standard practice. If translations are provided, they should be consistent and noted where appropriate.

[Chicago Manual Style For Music Scholars](#)

Chicago Manual Style For Music Scholars

Related Articles

- [chicago style academic writing](#)
- [chicago manual style for engineers](#)
- [chicago style abstract submission guidelines](#)

[Back to Home](#)