

## Cataloging 78 RPM recordings

[Music Cataloging at Yale](#) [1] ? [Sound recording cataloging](#) [2]

This document is for use by participants in the the Cataloging Historical Audio Collections project, a grant funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project funds the cataloging of historical 78 rpm sound recordings issued singly (e.g. not in sets).

[General information](#) | [What to do with OCLC records for Library of Congress preservation tapes](#) | [Examples of 300 fields](#)

---

### [General information](#)

The following information is excerpted and modified from: Mudge, Suzanne, and D.J. Hoek. Describing Jazz, Blues, and Popular 78 RPM Sound Recordings: Suggestions and Guidelines. Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, vo. 29, no. 3, 2001, p. 21-48. [Online text](#) [3] (requires subscription)

Relatively limited information is provided by 78 rpm discs, since most were issued in paper sleeves with no additional accompanying materials. However, there is a general consistency in the types of information included on 78 rpm labels and discs. The **record label name** (i.e., publisher's name or record-company name) is usually quite prominent.

The **title** of the sound recording is also clearly presented and the **genre or medium of performance** is sometimes indicated. **Performers** are often given equal or near-equal prominence to titles. **Composers, lyricists, and arrangers**, if included at all, are regularly listed by their last names only, in most cases smaller typeface than that used for titles and performers, often separated by dashes or in parentheses, with no indication of specific functions.

When the chief source does not include information about the **performers** or provides only an abbreviated roster, and a reference source includes a more complete listing, transcribe the statements of responsibility as they appear on the chief source, followed by any supplementary information taken from the reference source in brackets. Include a citation for the source of the information

**Place and date of publication** are less consistently printed on the chief source. [Discographies or record-label catalogs](#) [4] may be consulted. Careful consideration must be taken, however, when a date is determined using a reference source. Usually, the dates listed in discographies and label guides are not the actual dates of publication but, rather, are the dates of recording sessions. While such historical information is valuable, especially when no date of publication is available, a recording-session date provides only an approximation of the date of publication. (When information on the recording session is found in a discography or other reference source, record the information in a note and code the 033 field. Provide a brief citation for the source of the information.)

The **physical description** of 78 rpm discs is fairly straightforward. All are analog, monophonic recordings. Most are ten-inch discs, although 78 recordings of other dimensions, particularly twelve-inch, were issued.

Both **label and matrix numbers** [5] (Internet Archive version) can appear on a 78 rpm disc, and in a variety of ways. The **label number** is a unique identifier for the entire item that is usually printed on both sides of the label (e.g., the same number appears on both sides of the disc). The **matrix number** is a unique identifier for each side of the 78 that is generally imprinted into the shellac or plastic of the disc, on the smooth surface area between the label and grooves. Matrix numbers may also be printed on the label, and the number appearing on the label may be an abbreviated version of the complete matrix number. Matrix numbers appearing directly on the disc may provide additional information, such as recording locations or particular take designations, that can be used in the description.

## Cataloging 78 RPM recordings

Published on Yale University Library (<https://web.library.yale.edu>)

---

Though LCRI 6.7B19 states that matrix numbers should be recorded "only if they are the only numbers shown on the item," for archival and research purposes it is desirable to record all unique identifying elements appearing on the item.

The note "acoustic recording" should be included when describing any 78 rpm discs that were produced using acoustic recording processes, if such information can be ascertained from the item or a reference source.

---

### [What to do with OCLC records for Library of Congress preservation tapes](#)

LC has cataloged their preservation tapes of 78 rpm recordings. The bib records include information for the original format in the 300 field, with a 533 field for the preservation copy. Usually there are two 007 fields, one for each format:

LCCN 97705883

007 \_\_ s \$b d \$d d \$e m \$f s \$g d \$h n \$i n \$j m \$k s \$l l \$m u \$n b

007 \_\_ s \$b t \$d p \$e m \$f n \$g d \$h m \$i a \$j u \$k n \$l n \$m u \$n e

300 \_\_ 1 sound disc : \$b analog, 78 rpm, mono. ; \$c 10 in.

533 \_\_ Preservation master. \$b Washington, D.C. : \$c Library of Congress Magnetic Recording Laboratory, \$d 1963. \$e 1 sound tape microfilm reel : analog, 15 ips, 1 track, mono. ; 10 in.

According to Jay Weitz, these records are for the preservation master reel-to-reel tapes, not for the original 78s. The master records should not be edited to change them into records for the 78s themselves. If you are cataloging the actual 78s, separate records for them should be created if they do not already exist.

---

### [Examples of 300 fields](#)

300 \_\_ 1 sound disc : \$b analog, 78 rpm, mono. ; \$c 10 in.

300 \_\_ 2 sound discs : \$b 78 rpm, mono. ; \$c 12 in

300 \_\_ on 1 side of 1 sound disc : \$b analog, 78 rpm, mono. ; \$c 10 in. (see 6.5B3)

300 \_\_ 2 sound discs : \$b analog, 78 rpm ; \$c 12 in.

300 \_\_ 4 sound discs : \$b analog, 78 rpm ; \$c 10 in.

---

**Source URL:** <https://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/78cataloging>

### Links

[1] <http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music> [2] <http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/sound-recording-cataloging> [3] [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J104v29n03\\_03](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J104v29n03_03) [4]

<https://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/discographical-sources-78-rpm-recordings> [5]

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090401152953/http://www.cris.com/~oakapple/gasdisc/intromat.htm>