

## Subject headings for vocal music

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

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[Instrumental accompaniment of vocal works](#) | [Subject headings for liturgical works](#)  
**Works for one voice** with or without accompaniment: [Songs](#) | [Accompaniment](#) | [Solo cantatas](#) | [Accompaniment](#)  
**Works for two or more voices, one to a part** with or without accompaniment: [Accompaniment](#)  
**Works for two or more voices, two or more to a part** with or without accompaniment: [Choruses](#) | [Accompaniment](#) | [Cantatas](#) | [Accompaniment](#) | [Oratorios](#) | [Accompaniment](#)  
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Vocal music is assigned form headings or [medium of performance headings](#) just as instrumental music is.

<u>Form headings</u>	<u>Medium of performance headings</u>
Songs	Vocal trios, Unaccompanied
Oratorios	Choruses
Cantatas	Vocal duets with harp
Masses	Sacred vocal ensembles

[Form heading](#) are usually qualified by medium of performance (vocal range or vocal grouping) unless it is implied:

Choruses (Mixed voices)	no vocal group is implied; it must be stated
Songs (High voice)	no vocal range is implied; it must be stated
Masses	chorus is implied

[Subject headings](#) for vocal music may also indicate:

number of voices:	Choruses, Secular (Mixed voices, <a href="#">4 parts</a> [6])	
type of accompaniment:	<hr/> ___ with piano Unaccompanied	
secular or sacred use:	Choruses, <a href="#">Secular</a> Songs [ <a href="#">secular is implied</a> ] Vocal trios [ <a href="#">secular is implied</a> ] Secular oratorios	Choruses, <a href="#">Sacred</a> Sacred songs Sacred vocal trios Oratorios [sacred is implied]

[Medium of performance headings](#) are *not* assigned to works that are

- not composed in a specific form of composition  
OR
- in a form of composition not in LCSH

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OR

- when the form heading in LCSH (eg. Psalms (Music)) is not to be qualified by medium of performance.

[» Note: It is not LCSH practice to bring out the medium of performance in the majority of headings assigned to popular music.]

**Subject headings for liturgical music** are added when applicable. Most are given in the singular, with no medium of performance:

Holy-week music.

Magnificat (Music)

Nunc dimittis (Music)

Song of Solomon (Music)

Christmas music.

These headings can also be assigned to instrumental music.

**The** subject heading "Psalms (Music)" is given in the plural, with no medium of performance. When appropriate, subdivide the heading by the specific psalm:

650 0 Psalms (Music) ‡v 23rd Psalm

The numbering in subject headings for psalms follows the Authorized version (e.g., the Hebrew and Protestant Bible) and to the table under BS1450 in the LC Classification schedule. [Wikipedia](#) [7] gives a summary:

- Catholic official liturgical texts follow the Greek numbering, but modern Catholic translations often use the Hebrew numbering, sometimes adding, in parenthesis the Greek numbering as well.
- Eastern Orthodox translations are based on the Greek numbering.
- Protestant translations are based on the Hebrew numbering.

Hebrew (and Protestant)  
numbering

Greek/Latin (Catholic)  
numbering (also referred to as "vulgate")

1–8

1–8

9-10

9

11-113

10–112

114-115

113

116

114–115

117-146

116–145

147

146–147

148-150

148–150

### **Instrumental accompaniment of vocal works**

A **single instrument** is named following the word "with":

with accordion

with violoncello

The name of **two of the same keyboard instrument** follows the word "with" and is qualified with "(2)":

with pianos (2)

with harpsichords (2)

Use "keyboard instrument ensemble" when there are **two different keyboard instruments**:

with keyboard instrument

*Note:* previous practice was to name each, in alphabetical order:

\_\_\_\_\_ with organ and piano

When there are

» two or more of the **same non-keyboard instrument**

with string ensemble

This would include string quartets, quintets, etc.

OR

» **two or more non-keyboard instruments from the same**

with woodwind ensemble

This would include woodwind quartets, quintets, etc.

**instrumental family** [8]

use the instrumental family name followed by "ensemble":

When there are **two or more instruments from different**

with instrumental ensem

**instrumental families (one to a part)**, use "instrumental ensemble":

When there are **two or more instruments from different**

with orchestra

**instrumental families (two or more to a part)**, use the name of the

with band

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ensemble:		
When there are <b>two or more of the same solo instruments (one to a part)</b> , use the name of that instrument followed by "ensemble":	_____ with violoncello ensemble	
<a href="#">Works for one voice with or without accompaniment</a> See also <a href="#">Songs vs. solo cantatas</a> [9]		
<b>Songs</b>		
The heading "Songs" implies secular; for sacred works use "Sacred songs". Note that "Sacred songs" is not in inverted order	Songs	
	Sacred songs	
The range of the solo voice, when known, is indicated as high, medium, or low.	Songs (High voice)	
Even if the specific voice type is known, it is not designated in a subject heading, unlike in a uniform title, in which either specific voice type or vocal range may be indicated.	Sacred songs (Low voice)	
<b>Other forms</b>		
	Variations (Voice ...)	
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
<b>Unaccompanied</b>		
Unaccompanied songs are qualified as such:	Songs (Medium voice), Unaccompanied	
<b>Accompanied</b>		
Accompaniment is indicated by the phrase "with _____."		
Accompaniment of <b>one</b> instrument:	Songs (High voice) with piano	
	Sacred songs (Low voice) with violoncello	
Accompaniment of <b>one to two keyboard</b> instruments:	Songs (High voice) with pianos (2)	
	Sacred songs (Medium voice) with organs (2)	
Accompaniment of <b>one keyboard</b> instrument and <b>one non-keyboard</b> instrument OR	Songs (High voice) with instrumental ensemble	
<b>two or more non-keyboard</b> instruments is indicated as	Variations (Voice with instrumental ensemble)	
"instrumental ensemble"	Songs (High voice) with piano and harp	
→ "Instrumental ensemble" could mean piano and violin; or flute and harp; or string quartet; or four horns. Indicating each would be incorrect:	Songs (High voice) with string quartet	
<b>Solo cantatas</b>		
The heading "Solo cantatas" implies neither secular nor sacred. Both must be indicated, and the headings are in inverted form.	Solo cantatas, Secular	
	Solo cantatas, Sacred	
The range of the solo voice, when known, is indicated as high, medium, or low.	Solo cantatas, Secular (High voice)	
Even if the specific voice type is known, it is not designated in a subject heading.	Solo cantatas, Sacred (Low voice)	
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
Accompaniment for solo cantatas is not indicated in the subject heading.		
<a href="#">Works for two or more voices, one to a part</a> See also <a href="#">Vocal ensembles</a> [10]		
<b>Form headings</b>		
These are some of the form headings for works for two or more solo voices:		
<b>Part songs</b>		
The heading "Part songs" implies secular.	Part songs	
For sacred works use "Part songs, Sacred." Note that it is in inverted order	Part songs, Sacred	
For secular Part songs all in one language, qualify the heading by that language.	Part songs, English	
Latin is implied in the heading "Part songs, Sacred"	Part songs, Sacred <i>not</i> : Part songs, Sacred, Latin	
For sacred Part songs in other languages are assigned 2 headings:	Part songs, Sacred	
	Part songs, English	
<b>Specific forms of Part songs</b>		
These headings may also be used for works for choral ensemble (two or more voices, two or more to a part). Accompaniment is not indicated in subject headings for Part songs or any of the specific types of Part songs.		
Secular:	Polyphonic chansons	
Sacred:	Motets	

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	Anthems	
<b>Other forms</b>		
Canons, fugues, etc. (Vocal quartet)		
<b>Medium of performance headings</b>		
The headings "Vocal duets," "Vocal trios," "Vocal quartets," etc. are used for groups of two to nine solo voices. For ten or more solo voices, use "Vocal ensembles." Neither the vocal range nor voice type is designated. These headings imply secular works. For sacred works, use "Sacred vocal duets," "Sacred vocal trios," "Sacred vocal quartets," etc., and "Sacred vocal ensembles"		
Secular:	Vocal duets Vocal quintets Vocal ensembles	
Sacred:	Sacred vocal duets Sacred vocal quintets Sacred vocal ensembles	
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
Unaccompanied works are qualified as such:	Vocal duets, Unaccompanied Sacred vocal quintets, Unaccompanied Sacred vocal ensembles, Unaccompanied	
Accompaniment is indicated by the phrase "with _____."		
Accompaniment of <b>one</b> instrument:	Vocal sextets with piano Sacred vocal quartets with harp Vocal ensembles with guitar	
Accompaniment of <b>one to two keyboard</b> instruments:	Sacred vocal trios with pianos (2) Vocal quartets with harpsichords (2)	
Accompaniment of <b>one keyboard</b> instrument and <b>one non-keyboard</b> instrument OR	Vocal trios with instrumental ensemble	
<b>two or more non-keyboard</b> instruments is indicated as "instrumental ensemble"	Vocal trios with <del>piano and harp</del>	
→ "Instrumental ensemble" could mean piano and violin; or flute and harp; or string quartet; or four horns. Indicating each would be incorrect:		
<a href="#">Works for two or more voices, two or more to a part</a> See also <a href="#">Choruses vs. cantatas</a> [11]		
<a href="#">Choruses</a> See also <a href="#">Those darn chorus subject headings!</a> [6]		
The heading "Choruses" implies neither secular nor sacred and is used without designation of secular or sacred for collections of both secular and sacred works.		
For individual works or collections that are either secular or sacred, the term "secular" or "sacred" is added to the heading, in inverted form.		
Collections for <b>more than one voice grouping</b> which do not all have the same accompaniment:	Choruses, Secular Choruses, Sacred	
Do not add: voice grouping number of voices accompaniment		
→ Do not consider solo voices in formulating subject headings for choruses.		
Single works and collections for <b>one voice grouping</b> :	Choruses, Secular (Mixed voices) Choruses, Secular (Equal voices)	
Add: voice grouping mixed voices, women's voices, men's voices, children's voices, <a href="#">equal voices</a> , unison [not unison voices] number of voices <i>may</i> be added.	Choruses, Sacred (Children's voices)	
→ Do not consider solo voices in formulating subject headings for choruses.		
Number of voices is indicated only when these conditions apply: a. 8 parts or fewer AND	Choruses, Secular (Women's voices, 4 parts) with piano Choruses, Sacred (Men's voices, 4 parts) with pianos (2)	

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b. accompaniment of either one instrument (i.e., piano, violoncello, harp, etc.) two of the <i>same</i> keyboard instrument continuo	Choruses, Secular (Children's voices, 3 parts), Unaccompanied.	
OR		
c. unaccompanied		
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
Unaccompanied choruses are qualified as such:	Choruses, Secular (Mixed voices, 4 parts), Unaccompanied	
	Choruses, Sacred (Men's voices), Unaccompanied	
Accompaniment is indicated by the phrase "with _____."	Choruses, Sacred (Women's voices) with piano	
	Choruses with organ	
	Choruses, Secular (Mixed voices, 4 parts) with violoncello	
Accompaniment of <b>one or two of the same keyboard</b> instrument:	Choruses, Sacred (Men's voices, 5 parts) with pianos (2	
Accompaniment of <b>two different keyboard</b> instruments (indicated as "keyboard instrument ensemble"):	Choruses, Sacred (Men's voices) with keyboard instrument ensemble	
Accompaniment of <b>one keyboard</b> instrument and <b>one non- keyboard</b> instrument OR	Choruses, Secular (Mixed voices) with instrumental ensemble	
<b>two or more non-keyboard</b> instruments is indicated as "instrumental ensemble"	Choruses, Sacred (Children's voices) with instrumental ensemble	
→ "Instrumental ensemble" could mean piano and violin; or flute and harp; or string quartet; or four horns. Indicating each would be incorrect; use "keyboard instrument ensemble" for two or more different keyboard instruments.		
→ The number of vocal parts is not indicated when the accompaniment is two or more instruments (other than two of the same keyboard instrument or continuo)		
<b>Cantatas</b>		
The heading "Cantatas" implies neither secular nor sacred and is used without designation of secular or sacred for collections of both secular and sacred works.		
For individual works or collections that are either secular or sacred, the term "secular" or "sacred" is added to the heading, in inverted form.		
Collections for <b>mixed voices</b> or for <b>more than one voice grouping</b> and	Cantatas, Secular Cantatas, Sacred	
Single works for <b>mixed voices</b>		
Single works and collections for <b>one voice grouping other than mixed voices</b>	Cantatas, Secular (Women's voices) Cantatas, Sacred (Unison)	
Add: voice grouping (other than "mixed voices") women's voices, men's voices, children's voices, <a href="#">equal voices</a> , unison [not unison voices]		
→ The number of voices is not designated in subject headings for cantatas.		
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
Type of accompaniment or lack of accompaniment is not designated in subject headings for cantatas.		
<b>Oratorios</b>		
The heading "Oratorios" implies a <b>sacred</b> text. The heading is used without the designation "sacred."		
For oratorios with <b>secular</b> texts, use "Secular oratorios." Unlike the subject headings for choruses and cantatas, the heading in direct order (not "Oratorios, Secular")		
Vocal grouping (mixed voices, women's voices, etc.) is not indicated in subject headings for oratorios.		
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
Type of accompaniment or lack of accompaniment is not designated in subject headings for oratorios.		
Works with accompaniment reduced for a keyboard instrument include the <a href="#">subject subdivision</a> [12] "Vocal scores with ..."	Oratorios ꝓ Vocal scores with organ Secular oratorios ꝓ Vocal scores with piano	
<b>Other forms</b>		
Works in a specific form are assigned with the medium of	Canons, fugues, etc. (Chorus ...)	

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performance "Chorus" added.	Waltzes (Chorus ...) Polkas (Chorus ...)	
<b>Accompaniment</b>		
Unaccompanied works are not indicated as such:	Canons, fugues, etc. (Chorus) Rondos (Chorus) Waltzes (Chorus)	
Accompaniment is indicated by the phrase "with _____."	Polkas (Chorus with orchestra) Waltzes (Chorus with piano) Waltzes (Chorus with piano, 4 hands)	

**equal voices:** voices of the same type when employed in a polyphonic work, e.g., all sopranos or all tenors; sometimes also merely all male or all female (New Harvard Dictionary of Music)

### Unaccompanied works

The qualifier "unaccompanied" is used with vocal music subject headings **except** for with these forms: cantatas, musicals, operas, oratorios or with subject headings in which lack of accompaniment is already implied (e.g., Canons, fugues, etc. (Voices (3)))

Do not add "Unaccompanied" to parenthetical qualifiers in headings of this type (for two or more solo voices) when voice is the sole medium of performance (H1917.5, 8)

### Musicals and revues

**Musical:** a theatrical production consisting of musical numbers (songs, ensembles, and dances) integrated into a dramatic framework

**Revue:** a theatrical production featuring a series of songs, dances, and other entertainments without any unifying dramatic element

### Arrangements

The qualifier "Arranged" is not used with vocal music subject headings.

The subject heading is assigned for the medium into which the work has been arranged.

A work originally for high voice and harp, arranged for voice and piano:

Correct: Songs (High voice) with piano

Incorrect: Songs (High voice) with piano, Arranged.

A work originally for chorus and orchestra; arranged for chorus and organ

Correct: Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices) with orchestra & Vocal scores with organ.

Incorrect: Choruses, Sacred (Mixed voices) with organ, Arranged.

However, LC is using "Arranged" in the subject heading "Oratorios":

An oratorio with accompaniment originally for piano or organ, arranged for orchestra

Oratorios, Arranged.

### Qualifying by language of text

Source: *LC Subject Cataloging Manual* H 1916.3

Vocal works are qualified by the language of the text when they are:

- entirely or chiefly ballads, folk songs, children's songs, or songs
- in the original language
- in one or two languages
  - when three or more languages all from the same language group are involved, add the name of that language group [e.g., Scandanavian, Slavic, etc.]

Vocal works are **not** qualified by the language of the text when they:

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- imply national emphasis
- are translations
- are in three or more languages from different language groups

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

### Links

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