



Background of The Morgan Library & Museum's Music Manuscripts and Books Collection

The Morgan Library & Museum houses one of the finest collections of music manuscripts in the country. It also owns a large collection of musicians' letters and a small but growing collection of first and early editions of scores and librettos. The Morgan has the world's largest collection of Mahler manuscripts and substantial holdings of Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849), Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Franz Schubert (1797–1828), and Richard Strauss (1864–1949). The collection spans six centuries and many countries. The Library's holdings of materials relating to the lives and works of the dramatist William S. Gilbert (1836–1911) and the composer Arthur S. Sullivan (1842–1900) is the most extensive archive of its kind in the world.

Although Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913) is not on record as having evinced any notable interest in music, he did make two important purchases that began his collection: the two earliest dated letters of the thirteen-year-old Mozart and the manuscript of Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770–1827) Violin Sonata no. 10 in G Major, op. 96.

The Morgan's music collection is the result of the generosity of several donors and lenders. In 1962 the Dannie and Hettie Heineman Collection, a small but exceedingly well-chosen selection of music manuscripts, was placed on deposit and formally given to the Morgan in 1977. In 1968 the Morgan became a major repository of music manuscripts with the donation of Mary Flagler Cary's extraordinary collection of manuscripts, letters, and printed scores. In 1972 Robert Owen Lehman put on deposit his stellar collection of music manuscripts, the greatest private collection of its kind. In 1989 the Morgan agreed to purchase the James Fuld Collection, by all accounts the finest private collection of printed music in the world.