

# Guide to a Good Digital Copy of Music for You and Your Collaborative Pianist

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## I: Downloading Music from an Online Source

1. For instrumentalists, the first place you should be searching for a digital copy of your music is IMSLP (<https://imslp.org/>), you can simply do so by googling the name of your piece followed by “imslp.” Generally speaking, any works prior to the 20th century can be easily found on the platform.
2. If your piece is a selection from a larger body of work (e.g., a movement of a sonata/concerto, a selection from a song cycle, an etude from a set of etudes), you will need to google the name of the parental work. You can inquire about this information from your teacher.
3. When you have found your piece on IMSLP, you need to scroll down past the recording section until you see “**Sheet Music**.” If you are searching for the orchestral reduction of a concerto for your pianist, you will need to hit the “**Arrangement and Transcriptions**” tab and look for a version that indicates (name of your instrument) and piano.
4. Choose your editions: oftentimes there is more than one edition to choose from. In this case, look for the **publisher info**. A score that has any indication of the word “urtext” is better than those that have not. The hierarchy of publishers, from a pianist’s perspective is as follows:
  - Best: Bärenreiter Verlag and G. Henle Verlag (These are your King James version if you will)
  - Great: Breitkopf & Härtel
  - Generally Good: Edition Peters, Schirmer Library, International Music Company
  - Everything else

If you are looking for a French piece, look for the Durand edition. If you are looking for works by Russian composers, look for Russian Editions. If you are looking for works by Chopin, look for the Polish edition. Of course, inquire with your teacher regarding which editions they prefer and adhere to their preferences.

5. Click on the blue button on the top that indicates “**Complete Score**,” read and agree to the EUS and a PDF copy of your music should load up after the countdown. There is a way to bypass the waiting time with chrome browser but we will not get into the details here. Click on the upper right arrow button to download.
6. For singers, there are other online sources for more contemporary music such as [musicnotes.com](https://musicnotes.com), [musescore.com](https://musescore.com), and [ultimate-guitar.com](https://ultimate-guitar.com). Again, your teacher will guide you to the correct resource. Singers should also note that many songs, especially art songs, come in many different keys for different voice types. Make sure that you download the song in the correct key.
7. After the download, please rename the local file on your computer, as the generic title does not help you to locate the music when you try to find it later. Make sure you have a

designated folder where you store all of your downloaded music scores, which does not only help you to relocate them, but also help you to produce a repertoire list in the future.

## II: Scanning and Sharing from Hard Copy

1. One of the options is to scan your music into the digital format with a photocopy machine, there are also many free phone apps that help you to achieve the same quality with more convenience.
2. Although Apple Notes allows you to scan documents, the app that I personally prefer and recommend is Adobe Scan. It has paid features, but all of the functions for our purposes are free.
3. To start scanning, lay your physical copy of music flat on a surface, if the music does not lay flat, flip to the middle of the book, lay it cover up and push down to break open the binding spine; work your way to the outer pages of the book with the same technique. This will not break your book.
4. In the app, there are many formats of documents to choose from, select “**book**” if you are scanning from a book and “**document**” if you are scanning from single-page printouts. The “book” option offers you the ability to scan two pages at once by scanning horizontally and aiming the dotted line to the center.
5. Take the photos directly on top of your book with good lighting. After you are done scanning, click on the lower right corner to start the edit mode. Here you can scroll through the options for editing.
  - **Crop**: drag the frame to crop the outline of your score
  - **Delete**: delete single pages which is very helpful for the first and last page when scanning a book.
  - **Filters**: the most important one. You want to first select the slider to “**apply to all pages**” and then select “**Auto-Color**” or “**Grayscale**.” This is the step that makes your scan appear professional and easily readable.

You should also rename your file on the very top.

6. Click on the “**Save PDF**” button and click “**Share**,” then “**Share a copy**.” you can either hit “**Save to Files**” to save it locally to your phone, or use Airdrop, Google Drive, Messages, or email to share the music.
7. Please do not share your scanned music publicly over the internet, especially if the piece was composed in the last hundred years as it can cause you serious legal troubles.

## III: Miscellaneous

1. Splitting and combining PDF Files: there are many free online services that let you combine multiple PDF files into one, or splitting one big file into many. For instance, if you are playing one sonata, but you can only find the whole book on IMSLP, or you are singing one song from an entire song cycle, this service would be helpful. [www.ilovepdf.com](http://www.ilovepdf.com) is a great source that allows you to do both and more. Adobe also offers similar services if you are a registered user: <https://acrobat.adobe.com>.

2. It is always a good idea to use one pdf per piece when sharing with your pianist. You don't want every page of a piece to be a separate pdf file, and you don't need to combine all of your repertoire into one pdf file either.
3. Marking up your music is a great habit, however, you should consider scanning your music prior to learning it so that a clean, unmarked copy is always available to you.
4. Send/upload your music to your pianist as early as possible. They appreciate it!
5. For any further information, concerns, or comments, please email Dr. Zhong at [jidong.zhong25@rcschools.net](mailto:jidong.zhong25@rcschools.net). Good luck!