

# The Music Archive of Monash University creates a community of digital archives to further scholarship

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## Key Points

- **Digitising archives**  
Helps preserve artefacts from deterioration.
- **Accessible research through 3D imaging**  
3D imaging allows those who can't visit the artefact in person to study and understand it.
- **Sharing furthers research**  
By sharing images of the artefacts, it encourages others to further research.

## About MAMU

The Music Archive of Monash University (MAMU) is a collection of musical instruments, scores, field recordings, and diverse other materials acquired soon after the foundation of the University's original Department of Music in 1965. The aim of the project is to digitise much of this content and make it available via an online portal for search, discovery, and access.

The idea for the Music Archive of Monash University web portal began back in early 2014. Professor Margaret Kartomi has been collecting musicological artefacts and recordings from Indonesia since the 1970s. With data collected by colleagues throughout Asia, Margaret set up an archive space within the Faculty of Arts to centrally archive, manage and showcase this data.



Kekayon or Gunungan (feminine) - Tree of Life (shadow puppet)  
found on MAMU

## Providing structure and permanence to data

Being able to use figshare gives it a DOI so people can reference it within their research. It also allows us to present the collections as collections and have it in a structure and order that we like with the metadata that we select. It also puts it into an online space which is specifically for research, which is very handy. With printed materials, it's very difficult for musicians and musicologists to reference the music they're talking about. So we like the idea of making

any digitised audio and audio/visual examples described and discussed in scholarly publications accessible to readers. We can do that by including the automatic DOI links generated by figshare in those publications. People can easily listen to or observe the musical examples on figshare while they read the associated books, chapters, or journal articles. The permanence of the data is also important.

## Tips for doing it yourself

### 1. Create a complete inventory of the archive's content and identify priority collections/items for digitisation.

At the moment, we want to start small. In our Jeune Scott-Kemball collection, we have a finite number of shadow puppets made of leather. We thought they were very interesting to look at and not many people would know about them (we want it to be semi-unique).

Even though Indonesia has many shadow puppets now, the collection we have is very, very old. One of the puppets even has a date on it - 1918. The collection was a good place to start because it wasn't too big and it wasn't too cumbersome. It helps to have a complete collection - this is, in and of itself, complete.

We've got another small collection: the Jeff Pressing collection - that's books, albums, sheet music, notations - that we've just finished documenting. It was donated as a bequest. Some of our material we've acquired through bequests.

A lot of our material consists of recordings - recordings made in the field by researchers (either staff or students) and they mainly focus on areas in Southeast Asia (mainly Indonesia) because the driving force for Indonesian music is Prof Margaret Kartomi. But, there are other collections by students some of whom have become staff. From the various field trips, we have Indonesian instruments that we'd like to take photos of and put onto figshare. We try and highlight the rarer items.

One of the rarest items we have is something called the Gamelan Digul, which is an orchestra created in a prison camp in Irian Jaya by Indonesian political prisoners of the Dutch in the 1920s. It's the only one of its kind in the world. That's got a huge story behind it, so we'd like to put photos of that onto figshare too. By putting photos up, we want to grab people's interest, get them to come and see our collections, use them as a resource for further research and publications, and all this can foster scholarship in general.

Our collection is blossoming and as it gets larger, people are becoming more interested and aware of us.

*“By putting photos up, we want to grab people's interest, get them to come and see our collections, use them as a resource for further research and publications, and all this can foster scholarship in general.”*

## **2. Amass a variety of content forms and collections in preparation for loading into MAMU figshare model.**

In our archive, we have instruments, books, a lot of recordings - basically, it's multimedia. Anything you can think of, we seem to have. Our plan is to digitise as much of it as possible either by photo, digitising the recordings, audio visual or 3D imaging.

I think it would be amazing because other people would be able to, if they had printers, to be able to print the data. If we have instruments that are unusual, they would be able to build their own version of it, even though it isn't the same material and look at it and look at the ergological aspects of it. It's a way of handling an instrument without having to handle the actual artefact. It's a way of preserving it without it suffering from deterioration. The more you touch something old and rather fragile, the more dangerous it is for its longevity.

## **3. Be very aware of the resources that academics have.**

In the initial stages, you need experts around you. As a library, you would be looking to provide advice - technical and policy, best practice examples from within your own collections or what peers are doing in other universities - and setting archivists and research assistants up with a solution that they can spend a couple of hours a day on. We think figshare works really well for that - you don't need a lot of training to use it.



Rambut Geni - Wayang Kulit (shadow puppet)  
found on MAMU

## **4. There's that and then there's pitching the right solution.**

A lot of standard institutional repository solutions are just the wrong thing for faculty staff to work with, being too complex and requiring specialist staff skills to use successfully. Figshare offers a friendly user interface with relaxed metadata and collection management functionality allowing even the most time poor researcher an easy path to get started with the work.

Find out more:

[monash.figshare.com/mamu](https://monash.figshare.com/mamu)  
[info@figshare.com](mailto:info@figshare.com)