

Introduction

Welcome to Music Collection



Music Collection is a free program that allows you to archive your music collection. Using it you can enter in a collection any kind of music media that you own or you intend to. Also you can add or edit any information concerning the albums in the collection. The album info can be manually entered or automatically via the Internet.

After saving the albums, you can browse them, filter albums by all possible criteria and search for particular album tracks you are interested. Also the program can display and print all data from your music collection in different ways, so you can pick the desired one. For more click [here](#).

Program requirements

- MS Windows(2000/NT/XP/VISTA/7) 32-64bit
- Minimum hard disk space 10MB or more.

The program is freely available without restriction.

The use of the program is at the user's own risk and does not imply any responsibility for the author.

[Icons by: FastIcon.com](#)

Features


The main features of **Music Collection** are:

- Creates the collection's database in a Microsoft Access format, so if you want later, you can use it, without the help of the program.
- The user can create as many as different collections wants.
- Accepts all kinds of musical media (cd, lp, dvd-a, etc.).
- Specially customized to add and edit classical music albums.
- For every album the program saves all media contained, every medium tracks and the lyrics for every track.
- Presents albums using filters or without.
- Lists selected albums in a grid or using images (default setting).
- Presents all items contained in the album, in one page for an easy album overview. The details that are shown there are: the album cover, album artists, notes, tracks of each media, the lyrics of each track and the duration of each one, as well as the total duration of the album.
- Exports album info to html file.
- Manages all program data, such as a list of singers, composers, etc.
- Manages artist information (biography, best albums).
- Prints all the data shown in each table..
- Creates reports, which you can configure by your preference..
- Manages album loans.
- Shows collection statistics.
- Searches for tracks and opens the album medium that contains them.
- Advanced album searching, using every possible criterion.
- Exports database albums.
- Submits albums to freedb.
- Retrieves data from the Internet, such as cd info, album cover, artist information, album tracks, the lyrics of each track, artist info etc.
- Adds new albums automatically by scanning the medium barcode.
- Skinable. The user can select from 20 different skins.

Create new collection



In the first opening, the program loads a sample album collection(sample.mdb). This is to be able to show the basic operation of the program before you insert your own albums. You can add or remove albums in this sample collection, or you can create a new empty collection with the name of your choice.

Create a new album collection

To create a new collection you select in the main menu [Files | New Collection](#) or click in the toolbar's icon . In the dialogue that appears, select the name of the collection and the directory where you want to be saved.

Album's view

The albums you have entered in the collection can be displayed in the program in two different ways. These can be selected with the view selector buttons, that are located on top right above the album table.

- **View with images** (default setting). In this way, each album appears with the picture you have assigned for it. If you haven't assigned a picture, the album appears with a default picture. Also displays the artist name and the album title. To select this display option, click on the  icon .
- **View in grid** In this way the albums are shown in a table with the basic album information (a small picture, media type, title, artist, genre, and label). Here, apart from displaying the information, you can rate the album by selecting the appropriate number of stars (from 1 to 7). There is also the possibility to print the table data. Moving through the rows of the table can be done with the mouse or with the appropriate buttons on the toolbar. To select this display type, click on the  icon.

The albums that show in each type of displaying, can be either all the collection albums or the albums of your interest, using [filters](#) or the [extensive search](#).

In whatever way the albums are displayed, we can select one of them, [delete](#), [edit](#) or [present](#) them with all their information.

Using filters

By default the program loads the last 20 albums at the startup.(this number can change in program settings), but you can display the albums you want, using filters.

Simultaneously with the appearance of the albums, they are grouped according to what has become a choice in the [Group By](#) field.

The grouping can be done by :


- Artist (default)
- Composer
- Performer
- Group
- Conductor
- Genre
- Format
- Label
- Rating
- Sound_Quality
- Release year
- Packaging
- Bands
- State
- Title

When you pick one of these groupings, you can see in the left panel of the program, a tree list, that contains all the filters of the selected grouping. Picking one of them, you load only those albums, that have a property which matches the filter.

According to the albums that you have entered in the collection, you may not receive any filter options in some groupings. (for example in the [Loaned to](#) grouping, if you have not set any album medium as borrowed, then you will not see any filter).

Print tables

To print the current displayed albums you must first select the desired [view](#), in order to print the albums in the same way. The table columns will be printed in the same order they are in the table. The column order and width can be customized by selecting on the main menu [View | Columns | Customize columns](#).

Next press the  toolbar icon or select on menu [Files | Print](#). It opens a preview page, where you can check the pages that will be printed and change the default print settings.

If not all the table columns can be fit to be printed, you can set the print orientation to Landscape, in the page setup dialog.

There is also the option to save the pages to a file, so you can load them later for printing, or to export them to a pdf file.

Maintain collection

Maintaining a database you can repair any errors that may have occurred and keep the database file size as small as it can be.

To maintain a database, select the menu option [Files | Compact and repair database](#). You can also check at program settings the option for automatic database maintenance at the program's closing.

You can also configure how often the automatic maintenance will be performed, by picking the preferable value at the relative text box.

Create collection backup

Sometimes there is a need to restore the database to a previous state. For example, if you by accident deleted an album, the only solution is to restore it from a database backup.

Backup the database

To backup a database, you should first set at program's settings, the backup folder, where your backup will be saved to. Then go to menu option [Files | Create collection backup](#).


You can also check at program settings, the automatic backup creation at the program's closing.(recommended). This task can be performed, as often as you like, by picking the preferable value of days in the relative box.

*You can save only one database backup to a folder.

Restore database backup

If you have created a database backup, then you can restore it selecting [Files | Restore collection from backup](#) . Before the restoration starts, the program shows the database's backup creation date and the option to cancel the action.

Add new album manually

To add a new album in the collection, select the toolbar icon , or select on the main menu [Albums | Add album manually](#) .


General album information

In the first tab, you should fill the basic album info. The album title and the genre, should definitely be given, otherwise the album will not be saved.

If the format of the album is different from CD, you should give it in the [Media format](#) box . Also if the album media number is greater than 1, then you should pick it in the [Media number](#) box.

Medium information

To fill in the details of the medium or mediums (for an album with more than one mediums), go to the second tab and select the medium number, to which you want to

enter data eg. **Medium No** 

The general data of the medium (state, location, loan status, duration and track number) are not necessary, but you should fill the medium title and the singer or composer name(if it is a classical music album). If you want, you can insert the [album cover](#) on the third tab, but this can be done later.

Important. When you enter the names of the composers, performers, etc., the input should be in format [**Last name** **First name**]. Applying this pathway, you achieve improved search and retrieval of data.


Finally press the [Save](#) button to store the album and the current medium.

If the album has more than one mediums, whenever you fill the data for a new medium, you should after press the [Save](#) button to store it.

The input of medium [tracks](#) and [lyrics](#) can be done only after the album is saved.

Add album automatically


The album information retrieval may be used, only if the media type of the album is CD. First you must be connected to the Internet and then insert the cd disk in the disk drive.

After the drive reads the disk , click on the  toolbar icon, or select on menu [Albums | Add album automatically](#) to start the retrieval of album info from the internet. Once the data retrieval is completed, the downloaded data will be automatically filled in the new album.

Before saving the album, you should first check if the retrieved data are filled correctly in the second tab and especially if the names that have been completed there, are in format **[Last name First name]**. (The program obtains the album data as those have been uploaded by the users on FreeDB).

Finally press the [Save](#) button to store the album and the current medium.

If the album contains more mediums, then you should select the medium number, to

which you wish to enter data (eg **Medium No** ) and then press the button [Download info](#), which is in the last tab of the album properties and save the album.

If you change medium before you save the current one, the current medium data that have been retrieved, will not be saved .

Album web search

If for any reason, you can not add an album automatically, you can use this feature to find the album details.

To open the search dialog, select on menu [Albums | Add album - web search](#).

Before you start searching, you must pick one of the following search methods:

- **Search by Artist/Title**(default). If you pick this method, you have to give at least the artist name. But if you want to limit the search results, you should give the albums title or part of it.
- **Search by barcode**. With this method you can find exactly the album details you are looking for (if they are available) and the album is automatically loaded to be saved.

If you have chosen the first method, press the [Search](#) button.

The search returns the albums that match the search criteria. If any albums found you can pick from the list, the album you want and find the selected album details(tracks,cover..).

To do that, you have to double click on the album.

After the album tracks are loaded in the track list, press the [Save selected album](#) button, in order to load the album for saving.

If the selected list item is part of a multiple mediums album and you want to add it to an already saved album, press the [Add to saved album](#) button and select the album to load for saving.


Using a barcode scanner

If you have a barcode scanner, you can easily add a new album in the collection, without typing anything, by just scanning its barcode.

To add a new album using the barcode scanner, you just have to open the program's main window and scan the barcode number.(It won't work, if you have open another window).

You don't have to set anything, since most barcode scanners end the output string by default with the (return) or the (newline) character. If your barcode scanner ends with a different character or a combination of characters, you have to change it (if it's possible), in order to get it working with the program.

Edit album

To edit a previously saved album, first select it in the table and then press the  icon in the toolbar, or select on menu [Albums | Edit album properties](#).

In the opening window you can edit the general information of the album, change the [album cover](#) and the details of the first medium of the album. (If the album has more mediums, choose the one you want to edit) .


For each medium included in the album, you can add or remove [tracks](#) and add or edit the [lyrics](#) of a track.

After processing any medium, press the [Save](#) button.

Update medium data.

During the edit process, is enabled the [data retrieval](#) over internet for every medium in the album.(you should first choose the medium you want). After the download is over, you should press the Save button, otherwise the downloaded data will be discarded. If you choose to save, the current medium data will be substituted by the new data.

Delete a medium.

To delete an album medium, it must be the current one. Select first the medium you want to delete and then press the  button.
If the album has only one medium and you delete it, after closing the album properties, that album will be deleted too.

Delete album

To delete an album from the collection, simply select it and then click the  icon on the toolbar, or select on menu [Albums | Delete album](#).

WARNING! After deleting an album is not possible to undo the action. For this reason it is recommended to [create collection backup](#).


Album presentation

Double-clicking on any of the albums listed, or selecting on menu [Albums | Album presentation](#), loads a page with the overall presentation of that album.

Depending on the information you have entered in the album, can be displayed: notes for each medium included in the album, the participants, the album state (eg loaned, lost), and a list of tracks, with their duration.

If you entered lyrics for some tracks, then they appear underlined. Clicking on these tracks, a new window opens with the track lyrics. This window can close simply by clicking on it.

Also if any of the album artists exist in the [artist database](#), you can see a biography for the specified artist, just by pressing on the artist name.

Finally there is the ability to print the currently shown page by clicking the  toolbar icon.

The presentation page closes automatically if you perform any action that loads albums. If you just want to close the page, click on the view [selector button](#), which is currently selected.

Add tracks

To add tracks in a album medium, that medium should be previously saved.

To insert a new track in the medium, press the [Add track](#) button located on the third tab, and then give the track title (necessary) and the track duration. If you check the box [Mark this track as favorite](#), then this track will be shown on track list with a red icon.

Finally press the [Save](#) button to store the track or the [Close](#) button.

If you want to delete a previously saved track, select it on the table and press the [Delete track](#) button.

Album cover

When adding a new album, a default cover is set for it, with which will be displayed in the albums table.

If the album is automatically entered, the album cover is probably saved, otherwise you can download it later.

Assign album cover

If you want to change the current cover, go to the fifth tab of the album properties and select one of the following ways to search for the album cover.

- **Seek cover.** The search in this case will be made through your computer to a previously saved image. In the dialogue that will appear, select the image and press the [Open](#) button. (The picture should be in the format jpg, jpeg or bmp).
- **Search in Goggle images.** This will search in Goggle images for covers that are related to the current album title. The user should download the image and then load it with the first option(seek cover).
- **Download cover from internet .** In this case, the program will try to retrieve the album cover over the internet. The search can be done:
 - using the artist name and title . (Usually the needed data are imported automatically, but if you want, you can change them)
 - using the barcode (recommended). This code is found in most CD's, in the back side.

Once you click the [Download from Amazon](#) button, the search results (if any), will appear in the box below. Usually you will have to choose one of the many results that will appear there.

Clicking each radio button, loads the cover along with some other album information. After finding the desired cover, you leave that radio button checked.

You can also delete the current album cover by clicking on the [Clear cover](#) button. This action resets the album cover to the default one. If you want the cover to be also deleted in the disk you choose the [Delete](#) button in the dialog.

If you made any changes you have to press the [Save](#) button before closing the album properties.

Track lyrics


In order to insert a track lyrics, go to the fourth tab and choose from the track list, the desired one.

You can perform one of the following tasks:

- Enter the track lyrics by typing them in the text area underneath.
- Download lyrics, by pressing the [Download lyrics from the internet](#) button . If no lyrics found, a relative message will appear on the screen.
- Load track lyrics from a text file by pressing the button [Load from file](#).
- Edit the track lyrics listed.
- Delete the track lyrics, clearing the text box.

In any case you should press the [Save Lyrics](#) button to save the changes.

Export album to html file

If you want to export the currently selected album with all its information to an html file, go to menu [Albums | Export album to html file](#) or click on the  toolbar icon

In the dialog that appears, you select the folder where the file will be saved and the file name.

By default the exported file name is "[Album_albumid.htm](#)".

Submit album to Freedb

If you want to submit a CD album to Freedb database, you insert the album CD in the disk drive and you press on menu [Albums | Submit to Freedb](#) .

Submission Settings

Before submitting an album you must configure some settings in the second tab of the submit dialog.

1. Set the submit mode to
 - **Test** : If you want only to see if an album submission can be accepted without creating a new entry to Freedb database.
 - **Submit** : If you want to submit the album to the Freedb database.
2. Give your email address(required). When you submit an album you get a message that the submission has been sent. But if there is a mistake in the submitted data, the album submission will be rejected. You can only be sure that the submission was accepted, if it is verified in the e-mail you will receive right after.
3. Check the option to save your e-mail address, so you will not have to give it every time you need to submit an album.

Submitting an album

You can submit a new album entry to freedb database, or edit an existing one. If you choose to add a new entry, then the album data are automatically loaded. If you edit an existing entry, then the selected entry data are automatically loaded. In this case, if you don't make any changes to the loaded entry data, you will not be able to submit it.

If you did not filled all the required values or you haven't provided an e-mail address, the submission will not be sent. The same will happen if you leave the track names to the default values (track1) .

To submit the album you press on the [Submit album](#) button. In any case you will receive a message from the freedb service, if the album was submitted or not.

Export albums

To export albums from the current database in a different format, you select on the main menu [Albums | Export albums](#).

First you have to select the export format. You have four options:

- **html**. The albums are saved in html file/s. The number of html files that will be created depend on the setting on the [Maximum albums per page](#) field. if the setting is 0 then all the albums will be exported to a single html file.
- **excel**
- **csv**
- **txt**

You can select the fields that you want to be included in the export, by checking them in the fields box. The field order can be changed too, by using the [Move Up / Move Down](#) buttons.

You can also select the albums that will be exported. You can select to :

- Export all the albums (default setting)
- Export the albums that are currently shown in the album grid.

In any case you have to give the export location, where the files will be saved.

Finally you press the [Export](#) button to create the selected type of file.

The created file will be opened, if you have checked that option before exporting the albums.

Search albums

To make an extensive album search using all possible criteria, go to the menu option [Tasks | Search album](#) .

In the dialog that opens, you can choose which albums will show, using one of the following criteria, or by a combination of them.

- Title or part of the Title
- Genre
- Sound Quality
- Rating
- Packaging
- Release year
- Album state
- Genre
- Media format

- Album bands
- Extra features
- Composer
- Lyricist
- Singer
- Performer and other criteria depending on the type of music

At any time you can reset the criteria to their original settings by pressing the [Set initial values](#) button.

Once you have defined the combinations of criteria you want, press the [Search album](#) button. If you find any albums that match the selected criteria you did, then these albums will appear in the main window album table.

Search tracks

To search for a specific medium track, click on the menu option [Tasks | Search track](#) .

On the dialog that opens you can view only selected tracks, that meet one or a combination of the following criteria.

- Title or part of the track title.
- Tracks that are marked as favorite.
- Tracks with duration equal to the one you specified.
- Tracks with duration greater or equal to the one you specified.
- Tracks with duration less or equal to the one you specified.

At any time you can reset the criteria to their original settings by pressing the [Reset initial values](#) button.

By pressing the [Search track](#) button, the pieces that match the criteria you have selected, will appear in the table below.

If you want to open the album - medium, that contains a specific track that you see in the table, then double click on it, or select it and press the [Open album](#) button.

Manage loans

The Loan manager enables the user to see an overview of all loaned albums in the collection and work on them.

To open the loan manager, click on the menu option [Tasks | Manage Loans](#) .

In the loan list are shown the album mediums that are loaned and not the entire album. This is because we may not have loaned the entire album, in the case of multiple medium album.

The definition of an album as loaned can be done in two ways:

- In the album properties, in second tab, you can set the medium as loaned. (You can not define the details of loaning)
- Through the Loan manager, by pressing the button [Add Loan](#) and by selecting the medium from the list displayed. The list is arranged by artist, for an easy medium location. There you can also give the borrower name, the loan date and the due date.

Loan list actions

- *See overdue items:* By pressing the [Overdue Loans](#) button, you can see only those mediums that have not been returned to the specific due date.
- *Delete an item:* Delete an entry in the loan list by pressing the button [Remove Loan](#).
- *Print list:* Print the items in the list, by pressing the button [Print list](#).
- *Save changes:* After the input of a loan, if you make any changes, you should press the [Close & Save](#) button to save them, otherwise just press [Close](#).

Edit program's data

The program uses some files, that store similar lists of data concerning the albums. There are files for every data type, such as files with lists of composers, companies, genres, etc.

When installing the program, these files contain predefined lists of data, but during the program operation, with the input of new albums, the program automatically imports new data on these lists.

If for any reason you wish to add, modify or delete the data in one or more of these data files, select the menu option [Tasks | Manage program data](#).

In the dialogue that appears, are shown all the available lists of files that the program uses. Clicking on anyone of them, you get the contents of each file.


You can edit these lists, like you do in a word processor. Make any changes you want, but be careful not to delete the data that are stored in a saved album, because when you edit that album, the deleted data will not show.

For every change you do in a list, you must then press the [Save](#) button, otherwise moving to another list of data, the modifications you did, will be lost.

Manage artists

The program can retrieve information about album artists. This can be done in the artist management form.

You can access the artist management form in two ways:

- By selecting the menu option [Tasks | Manage artists](#). In the form that appears, there is a tree list with all the saved artists categorized according to genre. If you click on any artist, you will see the artist biography and best albums. There you can download a new artist information by typing the artist name in the [input format \[First name Last name\]](#) and pressing the button [Download info](#). You can also delete an artist from the database, by selecting the artist in the tree list and pressing the button [Delete artist](#). If you want to update an existing artist information, just press the button [Update artist](#).
- If you are in the second tab of the album properties, you can press the  button which resides beside the artist box. This automatically opens the specified artist information. If the artist doesn't exist in the database, the program enters the artist name in the download artist input field.

The program obtains the artists information from **Last.fm** web services.

Statistics

Opening the menu option [Tools | Statistics](#) you can see the statistical data about an album collection.

All you have to do is to select in the field box, the album/medium field you want to see statistical data for.

The statistics are presented in two ways

- Graphical presentation(default setting): The data are represented in a chart. The chart type can change from the default (Vertical bar) to Pie from the chart type box.
- Presented in a grid: You open the second tab with the name [Field data](#).

There is also the option to print either the chart or the grid data by pressing the button [Print](#).

Reports

To create custom reports for your collection of albums, select on the menu the option [Tools | Reports](#) .

In the dialog that opens, you can set initially, if the report orientation will be vertical or horizontal (in landscape orientation can fit more data per album).

Then you can define whether the report will include just the currently shown albums or all the albums in the collection.


Next you should select from the list of available fields, the ones that you want to see in the report, by double-clicking on each one of them or by selecting them and pressing the



button.

The chosen fields will appear in the selected fields list with a default decimal field length and zero margins. (The margin is the distance from the initial field position, where data will start printing). The field length value and the margin can be changed according to your preferences and both accept decimal values.

As you add fields to the selected fields list, you can respectively see in the text boxes shown below, the selected fields number and the remaining page length that is available, after you added them. (The remaining length is a function of the selected page orientation).

If you want to remove any of the fields in the selected fields list, select it and press the  button. You can even restore all fields to the available fields list, by pressing the [Initial values](#) button. This action will also restore the default values of page orientation and the albums that will appear in report.

After defining all these settings, press the [Create report](#) button to view the report. In the window that appears, you can do the following tasks:

- select the page number you want
- enlarge / shrink the report page
- customize report look to the page height
- customize report look to the page width
- save the report to file
- load a previously saved report
- print all pages of the report or just the selected ones .

Skins

The appearance of the program may change according to your preferences by selecting in the [Settings| Look & Feel](#) the preferred skin.

You can choose from 30 different skins that appear on the list.

If you don't want to use any of the skins, just select the top list option [Select no skin](#).

As you select a skin, the dialog is presented visually according to the selected skin, so you can select the desired one.

After you choose the skin you want, press the [Ok](#) button to activate it, otherwise press the [Cancel](#) to keep the current appearance.

* The selected skin will be applied on program restart.