



### ACM Transactions on Recommender Systems

*Special Issue on Music Recommender Systems*

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Music recommendation is a vibrant area of research that drives innovation across many aspects of the music industry. Building on a strong tradition of cross-disciplinary work, the intersection of music and recommender systems offers a rich landscape of unique challenges and opportunities. This Special Issue explores the synergies between advances in recommender system methods and the domain-specific complexities of music, spanning algorithmic innovation, user experience, and evaluation.

Music recommender systems differ substantially from other recommendation domains. Music catalogs are vast and diverse, user feedback is largely implicit and noisy, and preferences are highly contextual and evolve over both short and long time scales. Music is often consumed for goal-oriented purposes, such as mood regulation, activity support, or identity expression, leading to rapidly shifting preferences. These challenges are further connected by music's subjective and affective nature, its multimodal representations, and strong cultural and regional influences. Moreover, the constant influx of new content further intensifies cold-start and evaluation challenges, making it difficult for any single model or metric to capture discovery, personalization, cultural relevance, and user experience simultaneously.

As music consumption becomes increasingly mediated by algorithmic curation, research has expanded to address broader emerging topics in music recommender systems, including personalization at scale, sequence-aware modeling, transparency and accountability, cross-platform discoverability, and impacts on creators. At the same time, music-specific complexities continue to spur methodological innovation, from multimodal and content-based approaches to the integration of large language models, generative AI, and temporally aware representations of listening behavior.

This Special Issue of ACM Transactions on Recommender Systems (TORS) invites contributions that advance the state of the art in music recommender systems through rigorous computational methods, domain-specific insights, empirical studies, and human-centered evaluation. Our goal is to consolidate cutting-edge research, foster collaboration across academia and industry, and shape the next decade of innovation in music recommendation.

#### Topics

We welcome submissions on (but not limited to) the following areas related to music recommender systems:

##### *Foundations and Core Methods*

- Advances in online and offline evaluation methods for music recommendation
- Bandits and reinforcement learning for music recommendation
- Engineering and systems aspects of large-scale music recommendation
- Large language models for music recommendation
- Multimodal and cross-modal approaches to music recommendation
- Multi-stakeholder and multi-objective optimization in music recommender systems
- Music representation learning and similarity metric learning for recommendation

- Music content understanding and automatic tagging for recommendation
- Sequential music recommendation

#### *Applications and Use Cases*

- Conversational music recommender systems
- Cross-domain (including music) recommendation
- Cold-start and popularity-bias mitigation
- Homepage personalization
- Music search, browsing, and discovery
- Music recommendation on social media platforms
- Playlist generation and continuation
- Recommender systems for the live music industry and record labels
- Recommender systems for music creation, co-creation, and generative workflows
- Virtual and augmented reality listening experiences

#### *User Modelling, Experience, and Interaction*

- Human-centric evaluation of music recommender systems
- Listener taste modelling
- Listener intent modelling (session-level and long-term) and context understanding
- User studies on music consumption and interaction patterns
- Psychological aspects in user modeling and recommendation
- Personas, emotion, and mood modeling

#### *Societal, Ethical, and Cultural Dimensions*

- Cross-cultural music recommendation
- Empirical studies on the societal impact of algorithmic music recommendation
- Ethical considerations in music recommender systems
- Fairness, transparency, interpretability, and explainability in music recommendation
- Local and regional music recommendation
- Socially-aware music recommender systems
- AI-generated music in the recommendation ecosystem

#### **Important Dates**

- **Abstract deadline:** May 7, 2026
- **Submission deadline:** May 14, 2026
- **First-round review decisions:** July 2026
- **Deadline for revision submissions:** September 2026
- **Notification of final decisions:** December 2026

Submissions that are received before the first deadline will be directly sent out for review; papers will be immediately published online after acceptance.

#### **Submission Information**

The special issue welcomes technical research papers, industry papers, survey papers, and opinion/reflective papers. See <https://dl.acm.org/journal/tors/author-guidelines> for discussion of paper types.

This special issue follows a three-stage process. First, authors are asked to submit an abstract via e-mail to [TORS-MusicRecSys@acm.org](mailto:TORS-MusicRecSys@acm.org). Second, authors are invited to submit a full article. Third, submitted papers will undergo a single-anonymized review process.

Full article submission must be prepared according to the TORS submission guidelines (<https://dl.acm.org/journal/tors/author-guidelines>) and must be submitted via Manuscript Central (<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/tors>).

When in doubt whether a paper is indeed a good fit for this special issue, we encourage potential authors to contact [TORS-MusicRecSys@acm.org](mailto:TORS-MusicRecSys@acm.org).

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