



Free music composition & notation software

Retrieved from <http://musescore.org> on Tue, 03/13/2012

Handbook

This handbook is for MuseScore version 0.9.4 and above. In order to help improve or translate the handbook, leave a post in the MuseScore [Documentation](#) resp. [Translation](#) Forum and apply to become a handbook contributor/translator.

Chapter 1

Getting started

This chapter helps you install and run MuseScore for the first time. The chapter will also show you how to create a new score.

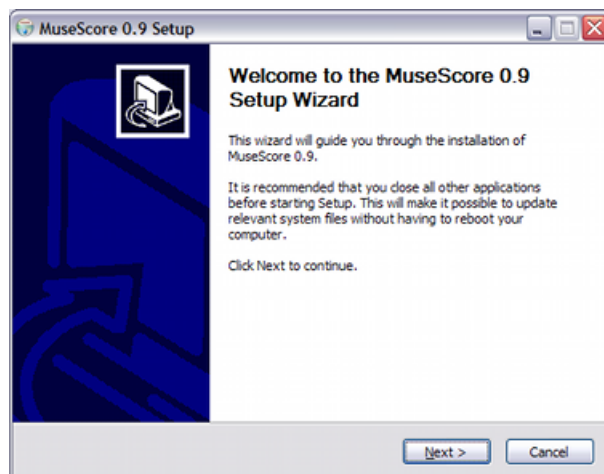
Installation

MuseScore works on many different computer systems including, Windows, Mac OS, and Linux.

Windows

You can get the Windows installer from the [Download](#) page of the MuseScore website. Click on the link to start the download. Your Internet browser will confirm that you want to download this file. Click "Save File".

When the download finishes double click on the file to start the installation. Windows may open a security window and ask you to confirm before running the software. Click "Run" to continue.



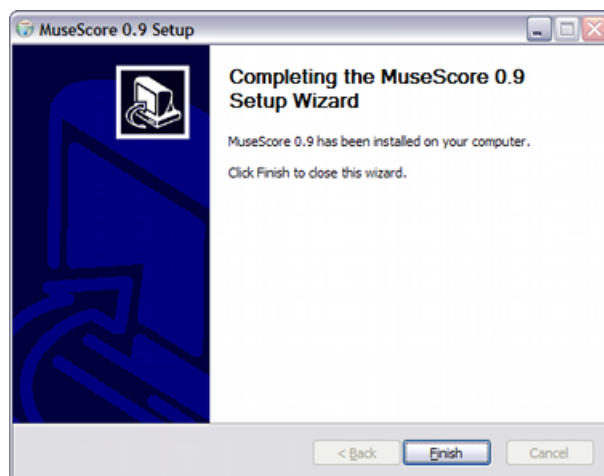
The installer recommends that you close all other applications before continuing. After you close the other applications click "Next" to continue.

The setup wizard displays the terms of the free software license which you may review. Click "I Agree" to continue.

Next it confirms the location for installing MuseScore. If you are installing a newer version of MuseScore but still want to keep the old version on your computer then you should change the folder. Otherwise click "Next" to continue.

Next it confirms the name for the MuseScore folder that appears in the Windows Start menu list of programs. Click "Install" to continue.

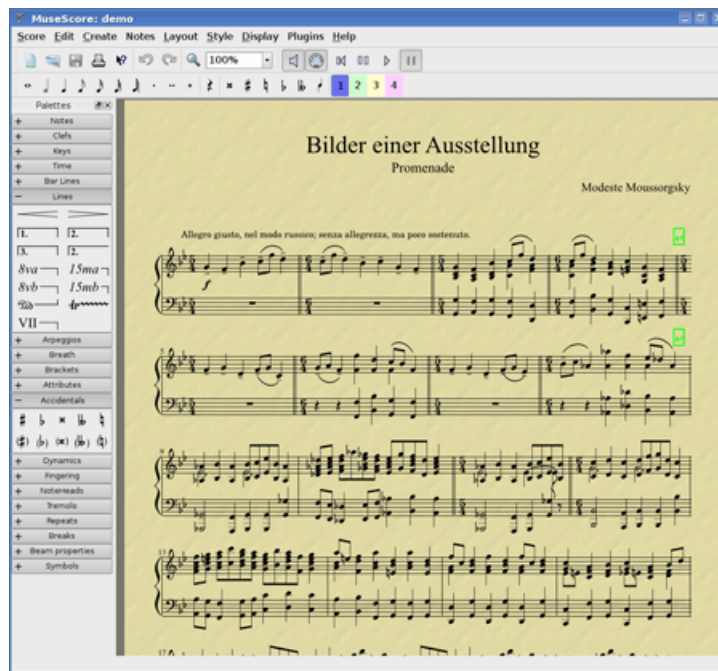
Give the setup wizard a few minutes to install the necessary files and configurations. When it is done click "Finish" to exit the installer. If you wish, you may now delete the installer file you downloaded.



Start MuseScore

To start MuseScore choose *Start → All Programs → MuseScore → MuseScore*.

After several seconds MuseScore will open up to the demo score. Feel free to experiment with the demo score and get the feel of the program. Next you may want to [create your own score](#).



Advanced users: Silent or unattended install

You can install MuseScore silently with the following command

```
MuseScore-X.Y.exe /S /D=C:\Program Files\MuseScore
```

You can uninstall with

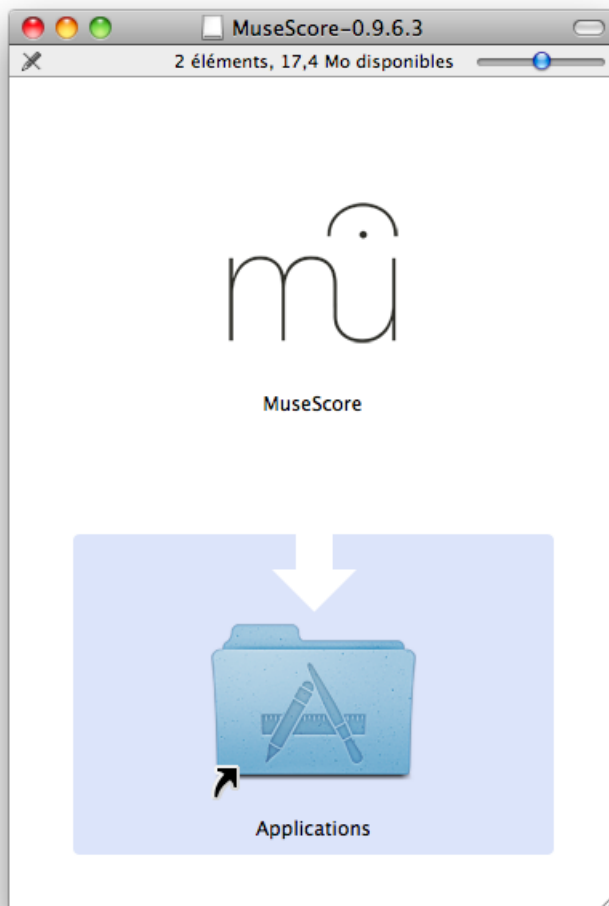
```
cd C:\Program Files\MuseScore
```

```
Uninstall.exe /S
```

Mac OS X

Install

You will find the Mac dmg file on the [Download](#) page of the MuseScore website. Click on the link to start the download. When download is finished, the dmg file is automatically mounted on your desktop as "MuseScore-X.Y" and the installer appears.



Drag the MuseScore icon and drop it to the Applications folder icon. If you are not logged in as an administrator, Mac OS X will ask for a password: click "Authenticate" and enter your password to let Mac OS X copy MuseScore into your Application folder. You can now launch MuseScore from Applications or SpotLight.

Uninstall

Just delete MuseScore from Applications folder.

Linux

Please see the [Download](#) page for instructions pertaining to MuseScore on Linux. Packages are provided for Debian, Ubuntu, Fedora and PCLinuxOS. Other distributions will require you to build the application from source. For instructions specific to Fedora see [below](#).

Fedora

Import the GPG key:

```
su
rpm --import http://prereleases.musescore.org/linux/Fedora/RPM-GPG-KEY-Seve
```

2. Go to the [download](#) page of the MuseScore website. Click on the link for the stable Fedora download and choose the correct rpm package for your architecture
3. Depending on your architecture, use one of the two sets of commands to install MuseScore

if for arch i386

```
su  
yum localinstall musescore-X.Y-1.fc10.i386.rpm
```

or if for arch x86_64

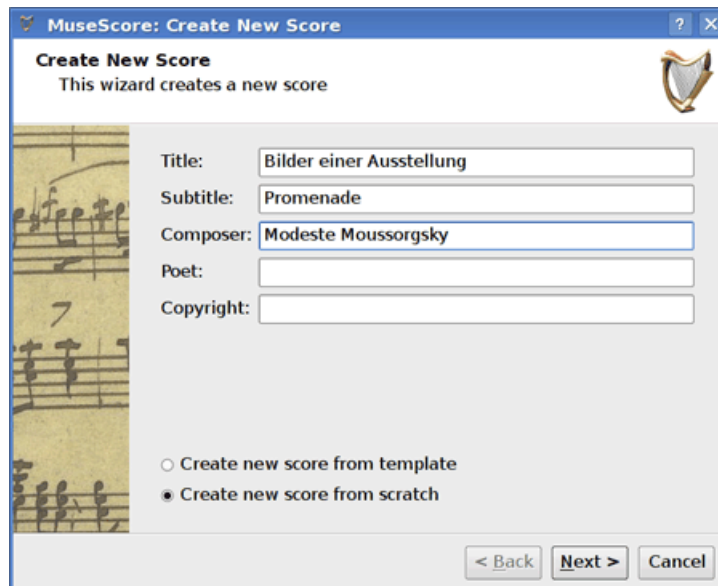
```
su  
yum localinstall musescore-X.Y-1.fc10.x86_64.rpm
```

If you have difficulty with sound, see [Fedora 11 and sound](#).

Create New Score

From the main menu choose *File* → *New...* This opens the new score wizard.

Title, composer and other information



Enter the title, composer, or any other information as shown above. Notice the two options at the bottom:

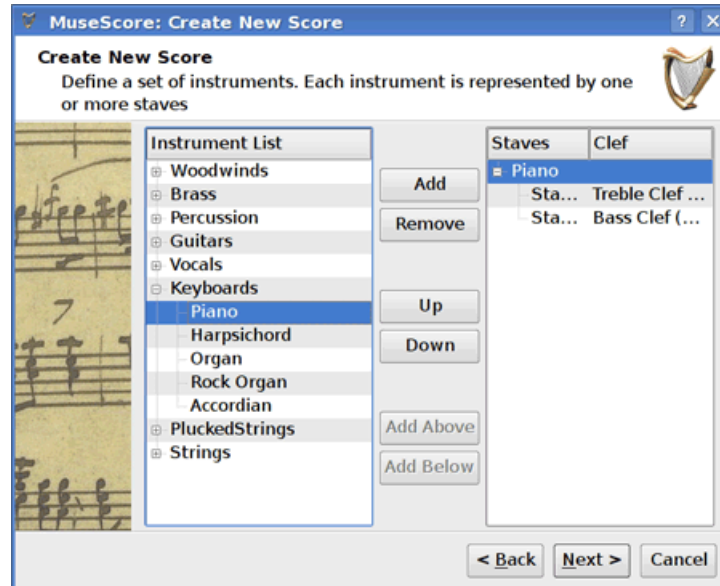
- Create new score from template
- Create new score from scratch

The first option offers a list of ready-made scores in the next screen. The second option gives you the full choice of instruments in the next screen.

Templates are discussed in more detail [below](#), but for now, choose "Create new score from scratch."

Click "Next" to continue.

Instruments and voice parts



The instrument window is divided into two columns. The first column lists instruments or voice parts to choose from. The second column is initially empty, but will soon contain a list of the instruments for your new score.

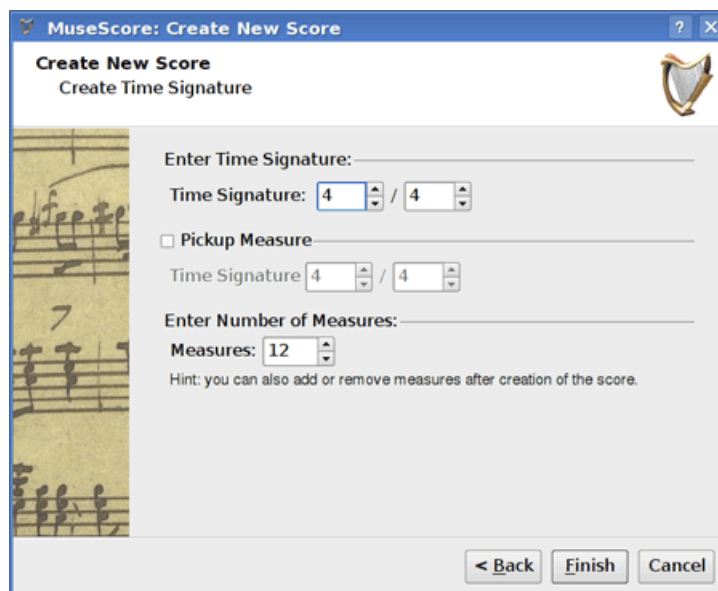
The instrument list in the first column is categorized into instrument families. Double click a category to show the full list of instruments in each family. Select an instrument and click "Add". The instrument you selected now appears in the second column. You can add more instruments or voice parts, if needed.

The order of the instruments in the second column determines the order they appear in the score. To change the order, click on an instrument name and use the "Up" or "Down" buttons to move it higher or lower. When you are done, click "Next".

Key signature

The wizard asks for a key signature. Select the key signature you need and click "Next" to continue.

Time signature, pickup, and number of measures



Set the time signature to the numbers you want. If your piece begins with a pickup, then mark the "Pickup measure" checkbox and adjust pickup time signature to indicate the actual duration of the first measure.

If you know approximately how many measures you need, you can specify that here. Otherwise, you can add, or delete measures later.

Click "Finish" to create your new score.

Adjustments to score after creation

You can change any settings specified during the new score wizard, even after you start working on the score.

- To add or delete measures or create a pickup see [Measure operations](#)
- To change any text see [Text editing](#). To add a missing Title (or other text item) use the menu *Create* → *Text* → *Title* (or other text item)
- To add, delete, or change the order of instruments use the menu *Create* → *Instruments...*

See also: [Key signature](#), [time signature](#), [clef](#).

Templates

The first screen of the new score wizard has an option to "Create new score from template" (see [Title and other text](#) above for details). To create a score using this method, select the template option and click "Next" to continue.

The next screen shows a list of templates. Select a template and click "Next". Continue and finish the new score wizard as usual.

The template files are normal MuseScore files stored in the template folder. You can create your own templates by saving MuseScore files to the template folder. On Windows, the template folder is usually located at C:\Program Files\MuseScore\templates. On Linux, look under

/usr/share/mscore-xxx if you installed from the package manager. If you compiled mscore on Linux, then look under /usr/local/share/mscore-xxx. On Mac, look under /Applications/MuseScore.app/Contents/Resources/templates

External links

- [Video tutorial: Score Setup](#)

Chapter 2

Basics

The "[Getting started](#)" chapter above guides you through the [Installation](#) and process for [creating a new score](#). The "Basics" chapter gives an overview of MuseScore and describes the general methods for interacting with the score.

Note entry

Adding notes and rests to a staff requires four basic steps:

1. Select your starting position for note entry
2. Select Note entry mode
3. Select the duration of the note (or rest) you want to enter
4. Enter the pitch (or rest) using keyboard shortcut, mouse or a MIDI keyboard

To add notes **that overlap in time, but start or end at different times**, see [Voices](#). For chords, continue reading here.

Step 1: Starting position

First, select a note, or rest on the score as your starting position for note entry. Note entry in MuseScore replaces the existing notes or rests in a measure with your new notes (i.e. overwrites rather than inserts). However, you can insert new measures at any point (see [measure operations](#), "Insert"), or use [copy and paste](#) to move a passage of notes.

Step 2: Note entry mode

The "N" button on the Note Entry toolbar indicates whether you are in note entry mode or not. Besides clicking the button, you can also use the following keyboard shortcuts:

- *n*: Enter Note entry mode

- *N* or *Escape*: Leave Note entry mode

Step 3: Duration of the note

After entering Note entry mode, select the duration of the note you need from the Note Entry toolbar, or use the corresponding keyboard shortcut.

The keyboard shortcuts for selecting the note duration are:

- 1: 64th note (hemidemisemiquaver)
- 2: 32nd note (demisemiquaver)
- 3: 16th note (semiquaver)
- 4: Eighth note (quaver)
- 5: Quarter note (crotchet)
- 6: Half note (minim)
- 7: Whole note (semibreve)
- 8: Double whole note (breve)
- 9: Longa
- .: A period (dot) changes the selected duration into a dotted note

Step 4: Enter pitch

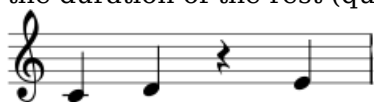
For all instruments (except unpitched percussion), you can add note pitches using the mouse by clicking directly on the staff. (For instructions specific to percussion see [Drum notation](#)). However, you may find it quicker to use a MIDI keyboard (see below), or your alphabetical keyboard. The following examples use a standard computer keyboard.

Enter pitches by typing the corresponding letter on your keyboard:

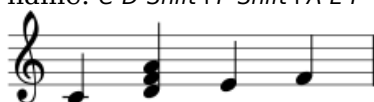
C D E F G A B C



o (Zero) creates a rest: for example *C D o E*. Notice that the duration you select for the notes (quarter/crotchet notes in this example) also determines the duration of the rest (quarter/crotchet rest).



During note entry, MuseScore automatically advances in the score. If you want to add a chord note to your previous entry, hold *Shift* and enter a note name: *C D Shift+F Shift+A E F*



To create chords with notes of different durations, see [voices](#).

If you want to create a dotted note, press `..`. For example `5 . C 4 D E F G A`



When you type a note on the keyboard, MuseScore chooses the octave closest to the previous note entered. To shift your note up or down by an octave, use the following keyboard shortcuts:

- `Ctrl+↑` (Mac: `⌘+↑`): Increase the pitch of a note by one octave.
- `Ctrl+↓` (Mac: `⌘+↓`): Decrease the pitch of a note by one octave.

Other useful editing keyboard shortcuts available in Note Entry Mode:

- `↑` (Up): Increase the pitch of a note by a semitone (uses sharps).
- `↓` (Down): Decrease the pitch of a note by a semitone (uses flats).
- `R`: Duplicate the last entered note
- `Q`: Halve the duration of the last entered note
- `W`: Double the duration of the last entered note
- `Backspace`: Undo last entered note
- `X`: Flip direction of note stem
- `Shift+X`: Move note head to opposite side of stem

MIDI keyboard

You can also insert pitches using a MIDI keyboard.

1. Connect your MIDI keyboard to the computer and switch your keyboard on
2. Start MuseScore
3. Create a new score
4. Click to select the rest in measure 1 to indicate where you want note entry to begin
5. Press `N` to begin note entry mode
6. Select a note duration such as `5` for quarter notes (crotchets), as described above
7. Press a note on your MIDI keyboard, and notice that the pitch is added to your score

Note: The MIDI keyboard enters one note or chord at a time. This mode of note entry (often called "step-time entry") is fast and reliable. Some notation software try to interpret "real-time entry", where the musician plays a passage and the software tries to create the notation. However, the results are frequently unreliable, even when played by a skilled musician using

expensive software. MuseScore's focus is on more reliable forms of note entry.

If you have multiple MIDI devices connected to your computer, you may need to tell MuseScore which one is the MIDI keyboard. Go to *Edit → Preferences...* (Mac: *MuseScore → Preferences...*). In the preferences dialog, click on the *I/O* tab and select your device under the section labeled "Choose PortMidi input device".

Coloring of notes out of an instrument's range

Notes within the playable range of an instrument or voice part appear black, whilst notes extending beyond the normal range of an instrument, are marked red. For some instruments, the range depends on the skills of the musician (such as string, wind, or voice). For these instruments, notes outside the range of an early amateur appear dark yellow, and notes outside the typical range of a professional appear red.

The colors are informational and appear on the computer screen but do not appear on printed copies of your scores. To disable note colors, choose *Edit → Preferences...* (Mac: *MuseScore → Preferences...*), click on the *Note Entry* tab, and unmark "Color notes outside of usable pitch range".

See also

- [Drum notation](#)

External links

- [Video tutorial: Note entry basics](#)

Copy and paste

Copy and paste is useful tool for repetitious music, or for shifting a section of music by a beat or two.

Copy

1. Click on the first note of your selection.
2. *Shift+click* on the last note of your selection. A blue rectangle highlights the region you selected.
3. From the menu choose *Edit → Copy*

Paste

1. Click on the note or measure that you want your pasted selection to begin.
2. From the menu, choose *Edit → Paste*

Edit mode

Many elements in the score can be edited in Edit Mode :

- *Double Click*: Starts Edit Mode
- *Escape*: Ends Edit Mode

Some elements show *handles* in edit mode, which can be moved by mouse dragging or keyboard commands.

[Slur](#) in Edit Mode:



Available keyboard commands:

- ←: Moves handle left one Space
- →: Moves handle right one Space
- ↑: Moves handle up one Space
- ↓: Moves handle down one Space
- *Ctrl*+← (Mac: ⌘+←): Moves handle left 0.1 Space
- *Ctrl*+→ (Mac: ⌘+→): Moves handle right 0.1 Space
- *Ctrl*+↑ (Mac: ⌘+↑): Moves handle up 0.1 Space
- *Ctrl*+↓ (Mac: ⌘+↓): Moves handle down 0.1 Space
- *Shift*+←: Moves handle's tick anchor left
- *Shift*+→: Moves handle's tick anchor right
- *Tab*: Goes to next handle

If you need to move score elements manually, double-click it and use the directional keys.

See also: [Text editing](#), [Slur](#), [Bracket](#), [Line](#)

Measure operations

Append

To add a measure to the end of the piece, press *Ctrl*+*B* (Mac: ⌘+*B*), or from the menu choose *Create* → *Measures* → *Append Measure*. To add multiple

measures, press *Ctrl+Shift+B* (Mac: *⌘+Shift+B*) or use the menu *Create → Measures → Append Measures...*

Insert

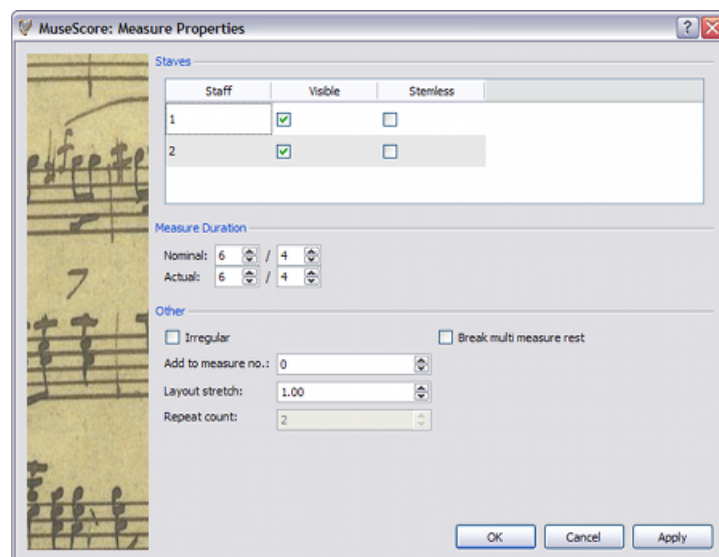
Select a measure, then press *Ins* or use the menu *Create → Measures → Insert Measure* to insert a new empty measure before the selected one. To insert multiple measures, press *Ctrl+Ins* (Mac: *⌘+Ins*) or use the menu *Create → Measures → Insert Measures...*

Delete

Select the measure, then press *Ctrl+Del* (Mac: *⌘+Fn+Backspace*).

Properties

To edit the properties of a measure, right-click on an empty part of the measure and select *Measure Properties...*



Staves

The *Visible* property allows you to show or hide the notes and staff lines for the current measure. The *Stemless* property allows you to show or hide all note stems for the current measure. Notes that normally have a stem such as half notes (minims) and quarter notes (crotchets) only show the note head when marked as stemless.

Duration

The *Nominal* duration is the time signature that is displayed on the score. You can change the *Actual* duration of a measure to anything regardless of the time signature displayed on the score. Normally, the nominal and actual duration of a measure is identical. However, a measure (e.g. pickup) can have an actual duration that is shorter.

In the figure below, the quarter note (crotchet) pickup has a nominal measure duration of 4/4, but an actual duration of 1/4. The measures in the

middle have both nominal and actual durations of 4/4. The complimentary measure with only a dotted half note (dotted minim) at the end has an actual duration of 3/4.



Irregular

An "irregular" measure is not counted in the measure numbering. Normally a pickup measure is marked as "irregular".

Add to measure number

You can also use the "add to measure no." option to influence the measure numbering. You can enter positive or negative numbers here. Please note that this affects subsequent measures. A value of "-1" has the same effect as marking a measure irregular.

Layout stretch

You can increase, or decrease horizontal space between notes with this option.

Repeat count

If the measure is the end of a [repeat](#), you can define how often it is played.

Break multi-measure rests

This property separates a [multi-measure rest](#) at the current measure. This option should be checked *before* you turn on the "Create multi-measure rests" option in *Style → Edit General Style*.

Multi-measures are automatically broken at important breaks, such as rehearsal marks, time changes, double bar lines, etc.

Numbering

MuseScore automatically numbers the first measure of each system, but more numbering options are possible. From the main menu, choose *Style → Edit Style*. In the left pane, choose "**Numbers**". In the bottom half of the right pane is the "**Measure Numbers**" ("Bar Numbers") section.

Mark the checkbox next to the "Measure Numbers" ("Bar Numbers") to turn on automatic measure numbers.

Mark "show first" if you want the first measure numbered.

Mark "all staves" if you want numbers on all staves. Otherwise, only the top staff of each system shows measure numbers.

Choose to show numbers on "every system" which numbers the first measure of each line, or show numbers by "interval" and specify the size of the interval. For example, an interval of 1 numbers every measure; an interval of 5 numbers every fifth measure.

Palette

You can show, or hide the palette using the menu *Display → Palette*.

You can drag-and-drop palette symbols onto score elements.

Double clicking a palette symbol is equivalent to drag-and-dropping it to each of the selected elements on the score.

For example, you can quickly add tenuto marks to a group of notes:

1. Select notes
2. In the Articulations/Ornaments palette, double-click on the tenuto symbol

Undo and redo

MuseScore has unlimited undo/redo functions.

The standard shortcuts are:

- Undo *Ctrl+Z* (Mac: *⌘+Z*)
- Redo *Ctrl+Shift+Z* or *Ctrl+Y* (Mac: *⌘+Shift+Z*)

Or use the toolbar buttons:



File format

MuseScore supports a wide variety of file formats, which allows you to share and publish scores in the format that best meets your needs. You can import files via *File → Open...* and export via *File → Save As...* In addition to the formats detailed below, you can save and share your scores on the web at [MuseScore.com](https://musescore.com) *File → Save Online...*

MuseScore native format

Compressed MuseScore format (*.mscz)

MSCZ is the standard *MuseScore* file format and recommended for most uses. A score saved in this format takes up very little disk space, but preserves all the necessary information. The format is a ZIP-compressed version of .mscx files and includes images.

MuseScore format (*.mscx)

MSCX is the uncompressed version of the *MuseScore* file format. A score saved in this format will not lose any information, except images. It is recommended if you need to manually edit the file format using a text editor. Previous versions of MuseScore used the MSC file extension. However, MSC conflicts with a file extension used by Microsoft Windows and is blocked by some email providers. The new MSCX file extension supersedes the old MSC file extension, due to the problems outlined above.

Note about fonts: MuseScore does not embed fonts in the file. If you want to share a MuseScore file with other parties, choose a font for your text that the other parties have installed. When a computer does not have the fonts specified in the file, MuseScore uses a fallback font instead. Of course, the fallback font will look different.

MuseScore backup files

MuseScore Backup File (*.mscz, or *.mscx,)

Backup files are created automatically and saved in the same folder as your normal MuseScore file. The backup file adds a period to the beginning of the file name (.) and a comma (,) to the end (for example, if your normal file is called "untitled.mscz", then the backup copy is called ".untitled.mscz, "). The backup copy contains the previously saved version of the MuseScore file and can be important if your normal copy becomes corrupted, or you need to look at an older version of your score. To open a MuseScore backup file, you need to rename the file by removing the period and comma. Since it is stored in the same folder as your normal MuseScore file, you also need to give it a unique name (for example, you might change the file name ".untitled.mscz," to "untitled-backup1.mscz").

If you are using Linux, then you will need to change your view settings to "show hidden files" in order to see the MuseScore backup files.

Print and read (Export only)

PDF (*.pdf)

Portable Document Format (PDF) is ideal for sharing your sheet music with others who do not need to edit the music. Most computer users already have a PDF viewer on their computer, so they will not need to install any extra software to see your score.

PostScript (*.ps)

PostScript (PS) is popular as a page description language used in professional printing.

PNG (*.png)

Portable Network Graphics (PNG) is a bitmap image format widely supported by software on Windows, Mac OS, and Linux. The image format is particularly popular on the web. Multi-page scores export a PNG file for every page. MuseScore creates images as they would appear on the printed page. If you want to create images that show screen-only items, such as frame boxes, invisible notes, and out-of-range note colors, then go to *Edit → Preferences...* (Mac: *MuseScore → Preferences...*) click on the Export tab and mark "Screen shot function" check box.

SVG (*.svg)

Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) can be opened by most web browsers (except Internet Explorer) and most vector graphics software. However, most SVG software does not support embedded fonts, so the appropriate MuseScore fonts must be installed to view these files correctly.

Listen (Export only)

WAV Audio (*.wav)

WAV (Waveform Audio Format) is an uncompressed sound format developed by Microsoft and IBM, but widely supported by software for Windows, Mac OS, and Linux. This is an ideal format for creating CDs, since no sound quality is lost in the process of saving the file. However, the large file sizes make it difficult to share via email, or the web.

FLAC Audio (*.flac)

Free Lossless Audio Codec (FLAC) is compressed audio format. FLAC files are approximately half the size of uncompressed audio and just as good quality. Windows and Mac OS do not have built-in support for FLAC, but software such as [VLC media player](#) can play FLAC files on any operating system.

Ogg Vorbis (*.ogg)

Ogg Vorbis is intended as a patent-free replacement for the popular MP3 audio format. Like MP3, Ogg Vorbis files are relatively small (often a tenth of uncompressed audio), but some sound quality is lost. Windows and Mac OS do not have built-in support for Ogg Vorbis. However, software such as [VLC media player](#) and Firefox can play Ogg files on any operating system.

Share with other music software

MusicXML (*.xml)

[MusicXML](#) is the universal standard for sheet music and can be used by most of the currently available scorewriters including Sibelius, Finale, and more than 100 others. It is the recommended format for sharing your sheet music between different scorewriters.

Compressed MusicXML (*.mxl)

Compressed MusicXML creates smaller files than regular MusicXML. Compressed MusicXML is a newer standard and not as widely supported by other scorewriters at this time.

MIDI (*.mid, *.midi, *.kar)

Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) is a format widely supported by sequencers and music notation software. However, MIDI files are designed for playback, and not score layout. Therefore, they do not contain information about formatting, pitch spelling, voicing, ornaments, articulations, repeats, or key signatures, among other things. To share files between different music notation software, use MusicXML. If you are only interested in playback, use MIDI.

LilyPond (*.ly) (Export only)

LY files can be opened by [Lilypond](#), a free scorewriter. However, LilyPond export is currently incomplete and experimental.

MuseData (*.md) (Import only)

MuseData is a format developed by Walter B. Hewlett beginning in 1983 as an early means of sharing music notation between software. It has since been eclipsed by MusicXML, but several thousand scores in this format are still available on the web.

Capella (*.cap) (Import only)

CAP files are created by the scorewriter, Capella. MuseScore imports these files fairly accurately.

Bagpipe Music Writer (*.bww) (Import only)

BWW files are created by the niche scorewriter, Bagpipe Music Writer.

BB (*.mgu, *.sgu) (Import only)

BB files are created by the music arranging software, Band-in-a-Box. MuseScore includes experimental support for BB import.

Overture (*.ove) (Import only)

OVE files are created by the scorewriter, Overture. This format is popular mainly in Chinese environment, such as Mainland China, Hong

Kong, Taiwan. This is experimental.

Share scores online

Go to <http://musescore.com/sheetmusic> to view other scores from MuseScore.

You can save and share your scores online at MuseScore.com. You can choose to save a score privately for personal access from any computer, or choose to share the score publicly for friends and band members to view, or download. MuseScore.com lets you view and playback scores in your web browser, and even lets you synchronize your score with a YouTube video. For use outside of a web browser, you can download the score in a variety of formats (including PDF, MIDI, MP3, MusicXML, and the original MuseScore file).

Create an account

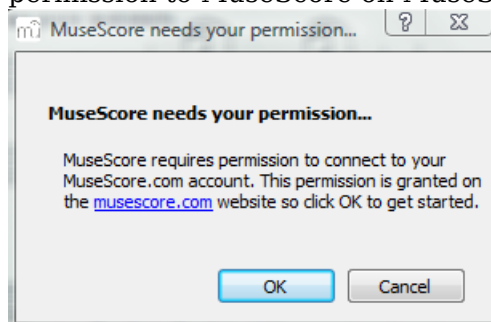
1. Visit [MuseScore.com](http://musescore.com) and click on [Create new account](#)
2. Pick a username and enter a valid email and press "Create New Account"
3. Wait a few minutes for an email from MuseScore.com support. If no email arrived, check your spam folder
4. Click the link in the email and visit your [user profile](#) to change your password

Share a score directly from MuseScore

You can directly save a score online from *File → Save Online....* If it's the first time you are using this feature, you'll have to authenticate.

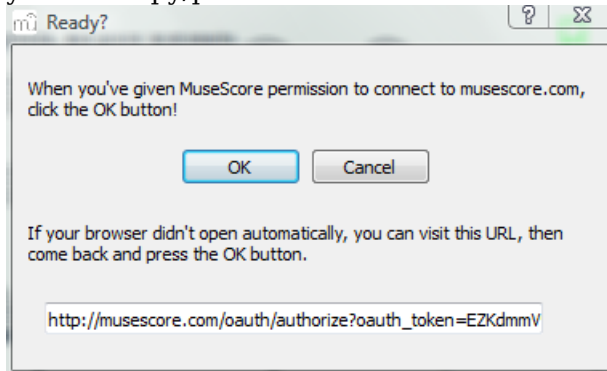
First time authentication

1. Go to *File → Save Online...*
2. MuseScore asks you to click OK to open your browser and gives permission to MuseScore on MuseScore.com.



3. Click OK and your browser opens on MuseScore.com. If you are not logged in, enter your username and password and
4. Click "Allow Access"

5. Go back to MuseScore, and press "OK". If your browser doesn't open, you can copy/paste the URL into the address bar of your browser.



6. MuseScore is now linked to your account on [MuseScore.com](https://musescore.com)

Save online

After your first authentication, or when you go to *File → Save Online...*, MuseScore asks you some information about your scores

1. The **title** is the title of the score. You can change it
2. The **description** will end up next to your scores.
3. You can choose to make your score **public** and everybody on MuseScore.com will see it or **private** and only you will be able to see the score.
4. Choose a **license**. By using a [Creative Commons licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), you allow people to use your scores under certain restrictions.
5. You can add **tags** to help finding your scores on MuseScore.com. Don't forget to use a comma to separate the tags.

Upload a score on MuseScore.com

You can also upload a score directly on MuseScore.com.

1. Click the [Upload link](#) on MuseScore.com
2. You have the same options as with the Save Online menu
3. You have also access to more information such as **Genre**

Note: In case you hit the 5 score upload limit, you can still upload [score directly from MuseScore](#). If you wish to continue uploading via the web, upgrade to a [Pro Account](#) first.

Edit a score on MuseScore.com

If you want to make changes to one of your scores on MuseScore.com, edit the MuseScore file on your own computer and follow the steps below.

1. Go to the score page on MuseScore.com
2. Click the edit link
3. In the form, you can change the score file, you can also change all the score info, such as title, description, etc...

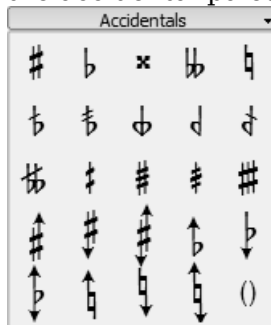
Chapter 3

Notation

In the previous "[Basics](#)" chapter you learn how to [enter notes](#) and interact with the [palette](#). The "Notation" chapter describes the different types of notation in more detail including more advanced music notation.

Accidental

Accidentals can be set, or changed by dragging an accidental symbol from the accidental palette to a note in the score.



If you only want to change the pitch of a note, you can also select the note and press:

- *Up*: Increase the pitch of a note by one semitone (favors sharps).
- *Down*: Decrease the pitch of a note by one semitone (favors flats).
- *Ctrl+Up*: Increase the pitch of a note by one octave.
- *Ctrl+Down*: Decrease the pitch of a note by one octave.

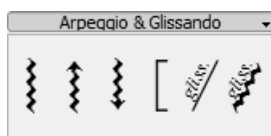
You can change an existing accidental into a cautionary accidental (enclosed in parentheses), drag the parentheses from the accidental palette onto to the existing accidental (not the note head). To remove parentheses, select the accidental and press *Delete*.

If you later change the pitch with cursor keys, manual settings to the accidental are removed.

The menu function *Notes → Pitch spell* tries to guess the right accidentals for the whole score.

Arpeggio & Glissando

Arpeggios are set by dragging an arpeggio symbol from the Arpeggio & Glissando palette to a note of a chord.



To change the length of the arpeggio, double-click the arpeggio and drag the handle up or down.



Glissandi are set by dragging a glissando symbol from the Arpeggio & Glissando palette to the first of two consecutive notes on the same staff.

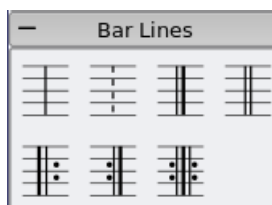


Edit or delete the text of a glissando by right-clicking it and select "Glissando Properties" in menu. If there isn't enough room between two notes, MuseScore will not display the text.

Bar line

Change bar line type

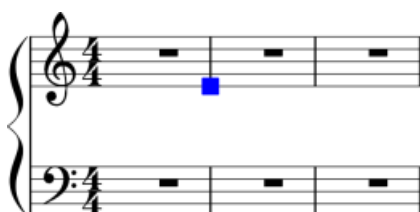
Bar lines are changed by dragging a bar line symbol from the bar line palette to a bar line in the score.



To hide a bar line entirely, right-click on the line and choose *Set Invisible*.

Create grand staff

To extend bar lines over multiple staves, double-click on a bar line to edit it (see [Edit mode](#)).



Click and drag the blue square down to the next staff.

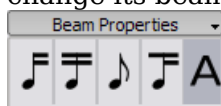
Staff bar lines updates appear when you leave edit mode.



See also: [Measure operations](#)

Beam

Beams are set automatically, but the automatic setting can be overridden manually. Drag a beam symbol from the beam palette to a note in order to change its beam behavior.



You can also first select a note, and then double-click the appropriate symbol in the beam palette.



Start a beam at this note.



Do not end a beam at this note.



Do not beam this note.



Start a second level beam at this note (not yet implemented in current versions of MuseScore).

See also

- [Cross staff beaming](#)

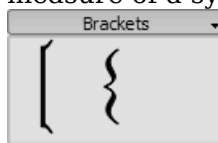
Bracket

Delete

Select the bracket and press *Del*

Add

Drag a bracket symbol from the bracket palette to an empty space in the first measure of a system.



Change

Drag a bracket symbol from the bracket palette to an bracket in the score.

Edit

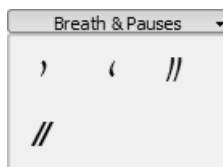
Double-click on a bracket to enter [edit mode](#). In edit mode, you can drag the height of a bracket to span arbitrary staves of a system.

Horizontal offset

If you need to move a bracket further left or right, then double-click the bracket to enter edit mode, and press *Shift+Left* or *Shift+Right*.

Breath and pause

To place a **breath** symbol, drag it from the breath palette to a note in the score. The breath symbol is placed after the note.



Breath symbol in score:



Caesura (informally called **tram lines** or **railroad tracks**) work the same way.

Clef

Clefs are created, or changed by dragging a clef symbol from the clef palette to a measure or another clef. Use *F9* (Mac: $\text{⌘}+\text{⌘}+\text{K}$) to show or hide the [palette](#) sidebar.



Add

Drag a clef from the palette onto an empty part of a measure. This creates a clef at the beginning of the measure. Drag a clef to a particular note to create a mid-measure clef. If the measure is not the first measure in the staff, it is drawn smaller.

Remove

Select a clef and press *Del*.

Note: Changing a clef does not change the pitch of any note. Instead, the notes move to preserve pitch.

Drum notation

Example drum notation:



Notation for drumsets often include simultaneous upstem and downstem notes. If you are unfamiliar with editing multiple voices in a single staff, see [voices](#) for an overview. See below for instructions specific to percussion notation.

MIDI keyboard

The easiest way to add drum notation to your score is via MIDI keyboard. Most MIDI keyboard have percussion markings above each key. If you press the key for high hat, then MuseScore will add the correct notation to the score. MuseScore automatically takes care of the stem direction and type of note head.

Computer keyboard

Only a few drum-instruments are mapped to shortcut by default. You can add more with right click on the staff → *Edit drumset...*

- c for Bass-Drum
- d for Ride

Mouse

Note entry for unpitched percussion works differently than for other instruments, so here are the special steps:

1. Select a note or rest in the percussion staff. Please note that the Drum palette will remain empty until you have completed this step
2. Press "N" to begin note entry
3. Select a note duration from the Note Input toolbar
4. Select a type of note (such as bass drum or snare) from the drum [palette](#)
5. Click on the percussion staff to add the note to the score

External links

- [Drum Parts](#) [video]

Grace note

Short grace notes (Acciaccatura) appear as small notes with a stroke through the stem. **Long grace notes** (Appoggiatura) have no stroke. Both are placed before the normal-sized main note.

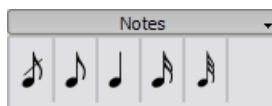
Instructions

Create a grace note by dragging a grace note symbol from the Grace Notes [palette](#) to a regular note on the score. It's also possible to create a grace note by selecting a notehead and double-clicking a grace note symbol from the Grace Notes [palette](#).

To add more than one grace note, drag successive grace notes on the notehead.

To add a chord of grace notes, enter the first one and select it, then use *Shift+* note names (C, D, E etc...)

If you want to change the duration of a previously created grace note, select it and choose a duration from the toolbar or enter with one of the keys 1 ... 9 (see [Note Entry](#)).



External links

- [Grace note](#), [Appoggiatura](#), and [Acciaccatura](#) at en.wikipedia.org

Hairpin

Hairpins are [line](#) objects. To create a hairpin, select a note to mark the start point.

- *H*: Creates a crescendo hairpin
- *Shift+H*: Creates a diminuendo hairpin (decrescendo)

You can also create hairpins by dragging a hairpin symbol from the line palette to a note head.

1. *H* creates a crescendo hairpin:



2. Double click switches to [edit mode](#):



3. Shift+Right moves end anchor:



4. Right moves end point:



Key signature

Key signatures are created, or changed by dragging a key symbol from the key palette to a measure, or existing key signature.



F9 (Mac: $\text{⌘}+\text{⌘}+K$) toggles the [palette](#) window.

Change

Drag a key from the palette onto a key in the score.

Add

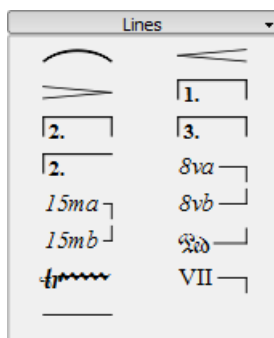
Drag a key from the palette onto an empty part of a measure. This creates a key at the beginning of the measure.

Remove

Select a key and press *Del*.

Line

The **lines palette** like other [palettes](#), works via "drag-and-drop". Use the mouse to drag the item from the palette and drop it onto the score.



Change length

If you change the length of a line using the mouse, the anchor positions (the notes or measures they apply to) do not change. Therefore, the following method is recommended for adjusting the start or end points of a line.

1. If you are in note entry mode then press *N* to leave note entry
2. Double click the line that you want to change
3. Move the handles using the following shortcuts
 - *Shift+Right* to move the anchor right by one note (or measure)
 - *Shift+Left* to move the anchor left by one note (or measure)
4. If you need to change the length visually without changing the notes, or measures that the line is anchored to, then use the following shortcuts:
 - *Right* to move the handle right by one unit
 - *Left* to move the anchor left by one unit

See also: [Hairpin](#), [Volta \(1st and 2nd endings\)](#)

Measure rests

Full-measure rest



When an entire measure is devoid of notes, a full-measure (full-bar) rest is used.

To create a one-bar rest, select a measure and press *Del*. All notes and rests on this measure are then replaced by a one-bar rest.

Multi-measure rest



Multi-measure (multi-bar) rests indicate a long duration of silence for an instrument and are frequently used in ensemble sheet music.

Instructions

1. From the menu, choose *Style* → *Edit General Style*
2. Click on the "Score" tab, if it is not already selected
3. Add a check mark next to "Create Multi Measure Rests"


Limitations

The style option automatically creates multi-measure rests throughout the score. Therefore, it is recommended that you enter all your notes first, and then turn on multi-measure rests afterwards.

Repeat

The start and end of simple repeats can be defined by setting appropriate [bar lines](#). For instructions on first and second ending measures, see [volta](#).






Playback

To hear repeats during playback, make sure the "Play Repeats"  button on the toolbar is selected. Likewise, you can turn off repeats during playback by deselecting the button.

In the last measure of a repeat, you can set the [property](#) "Repeat Count" to define the number of played repeats.

Repeat Symbols and Text

Text and symbols related to repeats are located in the Repeats [palette](#):

Repeats	
	
	
	Fine
D.C.	D.C. al Fine
D.C. al Coda	D.S. al Coda
D.S. al Fine	D.S.
To Coda	

To add an object from the Repeats palette, drag it *onto* (not *above*) the measure where you want it to occur. The object then appears *above* that measure in your score.

Slur

A **slur** is a curved line between two or more notes that indicates they are to be played without separation. If you mean to join two notes of the same pitch, see [Tie](#)

Instructions

1. Leave [note entry](#) mode and select the first note:



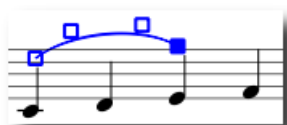
2. *s* creates a slur:



3. *Shift+Right* moves the slur end to the next note:



4. *x* flips the slur direction:



5. *Escape* ends Slur Edit mode:



Adjustments

The boxes or handles (displayed in the images for steps 2-4 above) can be adjusted with the mouse. The two outer handles adjust the start and end of the slur. The two inner handles adjust the contour of the slur.

A slur can span several systems and pages. The start and end of a slur is anchored to a note/chord or rest. If the notes are repositioned due to changes in the layout, stretch or style, the slur also moves and adjusts in size.

This example shows a slur that spans from the bass to the treble clef. Using the mouse, select the first note of the slur, hold down the *Ctrl* key and select the last note for the slur, and press *s* to add the slur.



Note: It is not possible to change the start and end anchor notes using the mouse. Use *Shift* + left or right arrow keys to adjust the start and end points of a slur.

Dotted line

Dotted slurs are sometimes used in songs where the presence of a slur varies between stanzas. Dotted slurs are also used to indicate an editor's suggestion (as opposed to the composers original markings). To change an existing slur into a dotted slur, right-click on it and choose *Slur Properties...*. From the Slur Properties dialog, you can choose whether you want a solid or a dotted slur.

See also: [Tie](#), [Edit mode](#).

Tie

A **tie** is a curved line between two notes of the same pitch. If you want a curved line that spans multiple pitches, see [Slur](#).

First method

Select first note:



+ creates a tie:



Second method

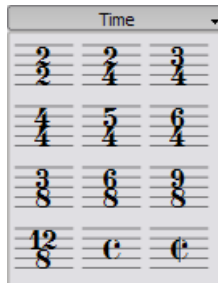
To create ties during [note entry](#), press + after the first note of the tie.

Tied chords

To add ties between two chords, select the stem of the first chord, or *Shift* + click on the first chord and press +. [Note entry](#) mode must not be enabled.

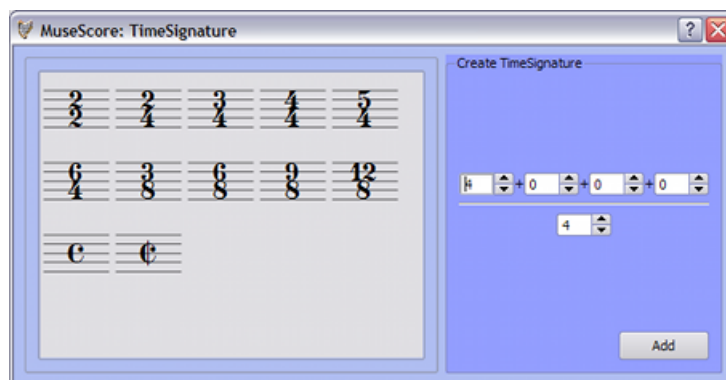
Time signature

Time signatures are available in the main palette sidebar. You can drag and drop the time signatures onto the score (see [palette](#) for general information on working with palettes in MuseScore).



If you need a time signature not found in the sidebar palette, go to *Create → Time...* to create your own. You can edit the upper and lower numbers in the Create Time Signature pane. Once added, just drag and drop the time signature to the score.

In most cases, you'll only need to edit the first of the upper numbers. The additional upper numbers are for [additive meters](#), which contain multiple upper numbers separated by a plus sign.



Pickup measures

There are occasions when the actual duration of a measure is different from the duration specified by the time signature. Pickup measures are a common example. To change the actual duration of a measure without displaying a different time signature, see the Properties section of [measure operations](#).

Tremolo

Tremolo is the rapid repetition of one note, or a rapid alternation between two or more notes. It is indicated by strokes through the stems of the notes. If the tremolo is between two or more notes, the bars are drawn between them. Tremolo symbols are also used to notate drum rolls.

The tremolo palette contains separate symbols for one note tremolos (shown with stems below) and for two note tremolos (shown with no stem below).



In a two note tremolo, every note has the value of the whole tremolo duration. To enter a tremolo with the duration of a half note (minim), first enter two normal quarter notes (crotchets). After dragging a tremolo symbol to the first note, the note values automatically double to half notes.

Tuplet

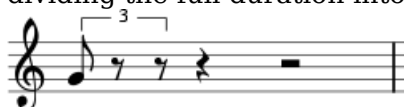
Tuplets are used to write rhythms beyond the beat divisions usually permitted by the time signature. For example, triplet eighth notes (quavers) in a 4-4 time signature divide the quarter note (crotchet) beat into three instead of two.

Instructions

To create a **triplet**, first select a note on the score that specifies the *full* duration of the triplet group. For example, a group of triplet eighth notes (quavers) has a "full duration" of one quarter note (crotchet).



From the main menu, choose *Notes* → *Tuplets* → *Triplet*. This creates a triplet by dividing the full duration into three equal parts.



They can be further edited.



Note entry mode

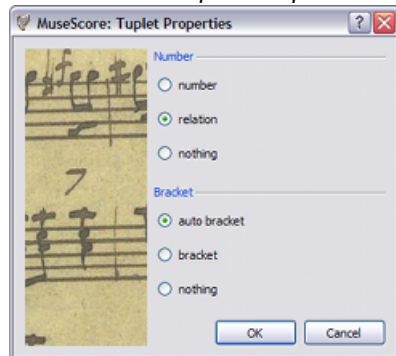
Tuplet entry works slightly differently in [note entry](#) mode, than the method outlined above. You must select the duration first, and enter the pitches afterwards. Below are step-by-step instructions for making triplet eighth notes.

1. Switch to note entry mode by pressing *N*
2. Make sure the note entry marker is in the place that you want to start the tuplet (use the right and left arrow keys if necessary)

3. Choose the duration for the whole tuplet group from the note entry toolbar. For this example, click on the quarter note (or press 5 on the keyboard)
4. From the main menu, choose *Notes → Triplets → Triplet*, or press *Ctrl+3* (Mac: *⌘+3*)
5. Notice that an eighth note duration is automatically selected. Click on the staff to add pitches

Properties

To change the display properties of a tuplet, right-click on the tuplet number and choose *Tuplet Properties....*



The number section of the properties dialog allows you to show one integer, a ratio of two integers, or no number at all.

In the bracket section, the "bracket" and "nothing" allow you to explicitly show, or hide the bracket. The "auto bracket" option hides the bracket for beamed notes and shows the bracket - if the tuplet includes unbeamed notes or rests.

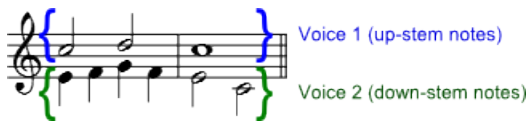


External links

- [Tuplet](#) at Wikipedia
- [How To Create Triplets in MuseScore](#) [video]

Voices


Voices allow you to have notes on a single staff which start at the same time, yet have different durations. Voices are sometimes called 'layers' in other notation software.



Instructions

1. Start by entering the top voice (all the up-stem notes). When you enter the notes, some may have down-stems. You do not need to worry about the stem direction at this point, because they will flip automatically when you add the second voice.



2. If you are using a computer or MIDI keyboard to enter notes (instead of the mouse), use the *Left* arrow key to move your cursor back to the beginning.
3. Click on "Voice 2" button 
4. Enter all the bottom voice notes (all the down-stem notes). When you are finished, it should look like this:



When to use voices

- If you need stems pointing in opposite directions within a chord on a single staff
- If you need notes of different durations within a single staff, played simultaneously

Hidden spacer rests

To hide a rest, right-click on the rest and select *Set Invisible*. If you have *Display* → *Show Invisible* marked, the rest still shows in gray on your screen. The hidden rest will not appear if you print.

Volta

Volta brackets, or **first and second ending** brackets are used to mark different endings for a repeat.



To place a volta bracket on the score, drag-and-drop the item from the [lines palette](#).

The brackets can span more than one measure. Double-click the volta to enter edit mode, and move the handles with:

- one measure right *Shift+Right*
- one measure left *Shift+Left*

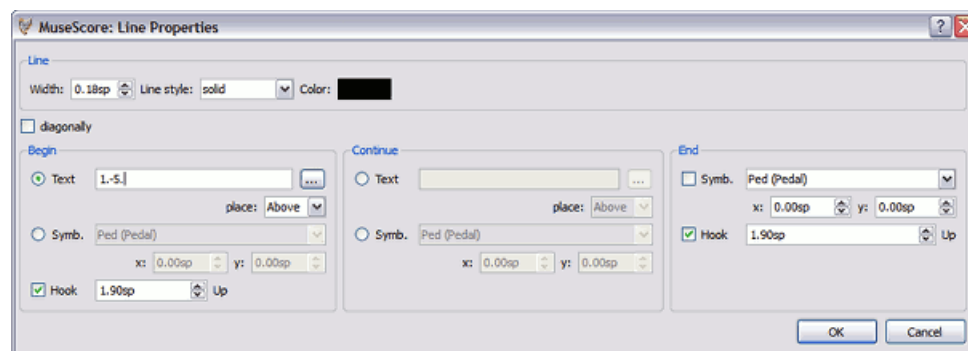
These commands move the "logical" start or end of the volta bracket, which determines playback in MuseScore and layout over multiple systems. Moving the handles using the left or right arrows keys only, or using the mouse allows finer adjustments, but does not change how the repeat is played.

If you move the handles, a dashed line from the logical position to the actual position is shown

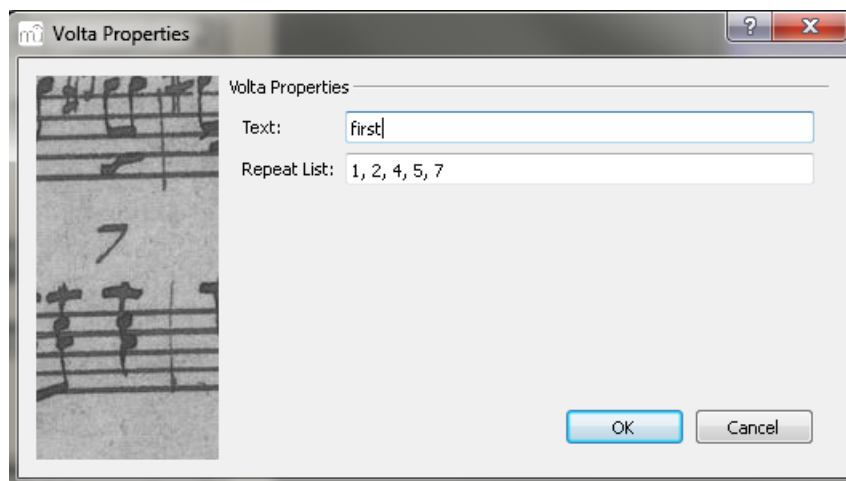


Text

You can change the text and many other properties of a volta bracket using the Line Properties dialog. Right-click on a volta bracket and choose *Line Properties....* The figure below shows the volta text as "1.-5."



You can also right-click on the Volta and bring up the Volta Properties dialog. From here, you can change both the displayed Volta text (the same from the Line Properties above) and the Repeat List. If you want one volta to be played only on certain repeats and another volta on other repeats, enter the repeat times in a comma separated list. In the example below, this volta will be played during repeat 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7. Another volta will have the other ending, like 3, 6 and possibly other higher numbers like 8, 9, etc.



Playback

Sometimes a repeat plays for more than two times. In the figure above, the volta text indicates that it should play five times before it continues. If you want to change the number of times MuseScore plays a repeat, go to the measure containing the repeat bar line and change its Repeat Count (see [Measure operations](#) for details).

External links

- [Screencast: Add alternative repeats with MuseScore](#)


Chapter 4

Sound and playback

MuseScore has "Sound and playback" capabilities built in. This chapter covers the playback controls and ways to extend the instrument sounds beyond the built-in piano sound.

Play mode

MuseScore has an integrated sequencer and synthesizer to play your score.

By pressing the Play  button, you enter Play mode. In Play mode, the following commands are available:

- Seek to previous chord *Left*
- Seek to next chord *Right*
- Seek to previous measure *Ctrl+Left* (Mac: *Left*)
- Seek to next measure *Ctrl+Right* (Mac: *Right*)
- Rewind to start of score *Home* (Mac: *⌘+Home*)
- Toggle show play panel *F11* (Mac: *⌘+⌥+P*)

Press the play button again to stop and exit Play mode.

MuseScore starts playback from the place it last left off. If you select a note, MuseScore plays from there instead. The toolbar also has a rewind button to quickly return to the beginning of the score for playback.

Play Panel

The Play Panel offers more controls over playback, including tempo, starting position, and general volume. From the main menu, choose *Display → Play Panel* to open the Play Panel.



SoundFont

MuseScore comes with a special type of file called a SoundFont that tells MuseScore how to play each instrument sound. Some SoundFonts are custom designed for classical music others for jazz or pop, others are large and take up a lot of memory, still others are very small and light-weight. MuseScore features a relatively light-weight, general-purpose SoundFont called, "TimGM6mb.sf2".

Overview

A SoundFont file can store any number of instrument sounds. Many SoundFonts are available on the web. Look for one that covers the 128 sounds of [General MIDI](#) (GM). If you use a SoundFont that does not conform to the General MIDI standard, then others may not hear the correct instruments when you share the score, or save as MIDI.

The file size and sound quality of SoundFonts available on the web varies. Larger SoundFonts often sound better, but may be too large to run on your computer. If you find MuseScore runs slowly after installing a large SoundFont, or your computer can't keep up during playback, then look for a smaller SoundFont. Below are three popular GM SoundFonts of different sizes.

- FluidR3_GM.sf2 (141 MB uncompressed)
Download [Fluid-soundfont.tar.gz](#)
- GeneralUser_GS_1.44-MuseScore.sf2 (29.8 MB uncompressed)
Download [GeneralUser_GS_1.44-MuseScore.zip](#) (Courtesy of [S. Christian Collins](#))
- TimGM6mb.sf2 (5.7 MB uncompressed)
Download [modified TimGM6mb.sf2](#) (Courtesy of [Tim Brechbill](#))

Compression

Since SoundFont files are large, they often are compressed into a variety of formats, including .zip, .sfArk, and .tar.gz. You need to decompress these files before they can be used.

- ZIP is standard compression format supported by most operating systems.
- sfArk is a compression format designed especially for compressing SoundFont files. Use the special [sfArk software](#) to decompress it.
- .tar.gz is a popular compression format for Linux. Windows users can use [7-zip](#) which supports a wide variety of compression formats. Note that you need apply decompression twice: once for GZip and once for TAR.

MuseScore settings

After finding and decompressing a SoundFont, do not double-click to open it, since this does not set up MuseScore. Instead, move the file to a folder of your choosing, start MuseScore, and follow the instructions below.

Go to *Display* → *Synthesizer*. The initial SoundFont setting depends on which operating system you are using.

- Windows: C:\Program Files\MuseScore\sound\TimGM6mb.sf2
(actually %ProgramFiles%\MuseScore\sound\TimGM6mb.sf2)
- Windows (64-bit): C:\Program Files
(x86)\MuseScore\sound\TimGM6mb.sf2
(actually %ProgramFiles(x86)%\MuseScore\sound\TimGM6mb.sf2)
- Mac OS X:
/Applications/MuseScore.app/Contents/Resources/sound/TimGM6mb.sf2
- Linux (Ubuntu): /usr/share/sounds/sf2/TimGM6mb.sf2

Click on the Open icon next to the SoundFont location and browse for your new SoundFont (.sf2) file. In the open dialog, browse and select your file; then press Open.

The initial SoundFont setting is `:/data/piano1.sf2`. Replace this with the location of your new SoundFont (.sf2) file. Click on the Open icon to browse for the file and open it .

Click OK to apply changes and exit the preferences panel. Quit and reopen MuseScore for the changes to take affect.

Troubleshooting

If the toolbar play panel is greyed out, or not visible, follow the instructions below to get your sound working again:

1. Make sure there is a check mark next to the *Display* → *Transport* menu item. You can add or remove the check mark by clicking on the corresponding menu item. If this step does not solve your problem, continue with the next step below

2. If the play panel disappears after changing the SoundFont, go to *Edit → Preferences...* → *I/O tab* and click OK without making any changes. After restarting MuseScore, the play panel should reappear.

If you are setting up a SoundFont for the first time, please use one of the recommended SoundFonts listed above.

If playback stutters, then your computer is not able to handle the SoundFont you are using. Two solutions:

1. Reduce the amount of RAM (memory) used by MuseScore by using a smaller SoundFont. See list above for suggestions
2. Increase the amount of RAM available for MuseScore by quitting all applications, except MuseScore. If you still have problems and a large SoundFont is important to you, consider more RAM for your computer

Tempo

Playback tempo can be changed via the play panel, or via tempo text in the score.

Play panel

- Display the play panel: *Display → Play Panel*
- Change the Beats per Minute (bpm) using the Tempo (Tmp) slider

Tempo text

- Select a note to indicate where the tempo text should be created
- From the main menu: *Create → Text... → Tempo...*
- Press *OK* to finish

Existing tempo text can be changed by double-clicking the text to enter edit mode. You can use [Text Symbols](#) to add a quarter note or another duration for a metronome mark in the tempo text.

Andante ♩ = 75

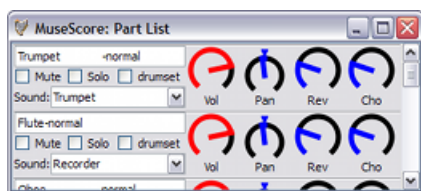
Beats per minute (BPM) on existing tempo text can be adjusted by right-clicking on the text and selecting *Tempo Properties...*

Note: Playback of tempo text may be faster or slower than the specified BPM if the tempo setting in the play panel is not set to 100 percent.

Change and adjust sounds

Mixer

The mixer allows you to change instrument sounds and adjust the volume, panning, reverberation, and chorus for each staff. From the main menu, choose *Display* → *Mixer* to show the mixer.



Mute and Solo

Use the *Mute* check box to quickly silence certain staves. Alternatively, use the *Solo* check box to silence all staves, except the staff you mark as "solo".

Dials

To turn a dial clockwise, click and drag upwards. To turn a dial counter-clockwise, click and drag downwards.

Sound

The sound drop-down menu lists every instrument supported by your current [SoundFont](#).

Change instrument

You can change a staff to be an different instrument. The following method updates instrument sound, staff name, and staff transposition all at once.

1. Right-click on an empty part of the measure and choose *Staff Properties...*
2. Click on Change Instrument
3. Choose your new instrument and click OK to return to the Staff Properties dialog
4. Click OK again to return to the score

Mid-staff change

Some instruments can change sounds midway in a score. For example, strings can switch to pizzicato or tremolo and trumpet can switch to muted trumpet. The following instructions use muted trumpet as an example, but the same principles apply to pizzicato or tremolo strings.

1. Select the first note of the muted section
2. From the main menu, choose *Create* → *Text* → *Staff Text*
3. Type *Mute* (or an equivalent indication such as *Con Sordino*). At this point, the staff text is a visual reference and not applied during playback
4. Right-click on the staff text and select *Staff Text Properties...*
5. In the Staff Text Properties dialog, mark the *Channel* checkbox
6. In the Staff Text Properties dialog, select *mute*

7. Click *OK* to return to the score

Every note after the staff text you added now sounds muted. To return to an unmuted sound later in the piece, follow the same guidelines as above except type *Open* in step 3 and select *normal* in step 6.

Dynamics

Playback volume can be changed for the entire piece by the play panel, or locally by Dynamics text in the score.

Play panel

- Display the play panel: *Display* → *Play Panel*
- Change the Volume using the slider

Dynamics text

From the Dynamics palette, click and drag a Dynamics text to a measure in the score.

Adjusting playback volume for a Dynamics text

- Right-click on the Dynamics text to open the menu.
- Select "MIDI Properties".
- Adjust the "Velocity" number, higher for louder, lower for softer.

Weblinks

- [Video tutorial: Lyrics, Copying & Dynamics](#)

Chapter 5

Text

The previous chapter covers [text that affects playback tempo](#), but there are many other types of text available in MuseScore: [lyrics](#), [chord names](#), dynamic markings, [fingering](#), headings, plus many more. These are all accessible from the main menu via *Create* → *Text*.

For short generic text use staff or system text. The difference between these two texts is whether you want it to apply to a single staff or apply to the whole system.

Text editing


Double-click on text to enter edit mode:



In text edit mode, the following commands are available:

- *Ctrl+B* (Mac: *⌘+B*) toggles **bold** face
- *Ctrl+I* (Mac: *⌘+I*) toggles *italic*
- *Ctrl+U* (Mac: *⌘+U*) toggles underline
- move cursor: *Home End Left Right*
- *Backspace* remove character to the left of the cursor
- *Delete* remove character to the right of the cursor
- *Return* start new line
- *F2* Insert text symbol (see below)

Symbols and special characters

You can use Text Symbols to insert quarter notes, fractions, and other special symbols or characters into your text. In the text toolbar, click on the keyboard icon  to open the Text Symbols palette



See also: [Chord name](#), [Lyrics](#), [Frame](#), [Edit mode](#)

Text style

Each text type has a basic style. For example, title text is centered and uses a large font size, Composer text is smaller and aligned to the right. To edit text styles, go to *Style → Edit Text Style...*

During [text editing](#), you can make changes that depart from basic style. For details, see "Formatting existing text" below.

Text properties:

- **Font:** name of the font such as "Times New Roman" or "Arial"
- **Size:** the size of the font in points
- **Italic, Bold, Underline:** font properties
- **Anchor:** page, time, notehead, system, staff
- **Alignment:** horizontal: left, right, center; vertical: top, bottom, center
- **Offset:** an offset to the normal anchor position
- **Offset Type:** mm, space, or percent of page size

Text types:

- **Title, Subtitle, Composer, Poet:** anchored to page
- [Fingerings](#): Fingerings are anchored to note heads.
- [Lyrics](#): Lyrics are anchored to a time position.
- [Chord name](#): Chord names are also anchored to a time position.
- **System:** Applies to all staves in a system.* Anchored to a time position.
- **Staff:** Applies to a single staff in a system.* Anchored to a time position.

* The distinction between System and Staff text matters for ensemble scores. System text will extract to all parts. Staff text will only extract to the part to which it is anchored.

Chord name

Chord names can be entered by first selecting a note and then pressing *Ctrl+K* (Mac: *⌘+K*). This creates a chord name text object for the selected chord.

- Type *Space* to move to the next beat.
- *Shift+Space* moves to the previous beat.
- Type *Tab* to move to the next measure.
- *Shift+Tab* moves to the previous measure.

Chord names can be [edited](#) as normal text. To add a sharp, type *#*. To add a flat, type *b*. These characters will automatically turn into proper sharp or flat signs when you move to the next chord.

MuseJazz font

If you prefer a more handwritten appearance to the chord names in your score, there is a font option called "MuseJazz".



To use this font:

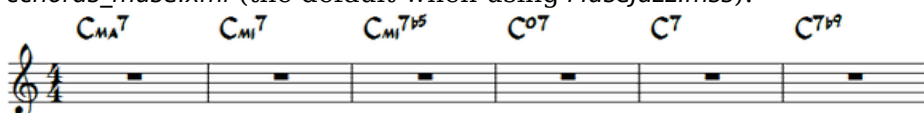
1. From the main menu, choose *Style → Load Style...*
2. Navigate to the *styles* folder if necessary
3. Select *MuseJazz.mss*

This will set up your score to use "MuseJazz" for most text, including chord names. If you prefer to use "MuseJazz" for chord names only, use the following procedure:

1. From the main menu, choose *Style → Edit General Style...*
2. From the left pane, select *Chordnames*
3. In the right pane, replace the text *stdchords.xml* with *jazzchords.xml* or one of the following files.

MuseScore provides several new alternatives for chord name style in addition to *jazzchords.xml* that can be selected using the above procedure. Here are the available styles:

- *cchords_muse.xml* (the default when using *MuseJazz.mss*):



- *cchords_nrb.xml*:



- *cchords_rb.xml*:

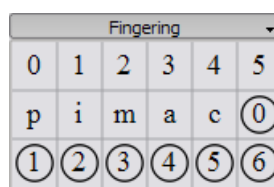


- *cchords_sym.xml*:



Fingering

Fingering can be added to notes by dragging a fingering character from the fingering palette to a note head in the score. When a note head is selected first, the fingering character can be added using a double-click. Fingerings are normal text, which can be [edited](#) like any other text.



Lyrics

1. First enter notes
2. Select first note
3. From the main menu choose *Create* → *Text* → *Lyrics* and type the syllable for the first note
4. Type *Space* at end of a word to go to the next note
5. Type an hyphen - at end of syllable to go to next note. The syllables are connected with a dash
6. *Shift+Space* moves to the previous syllable
7. *Enter* (Mac: *Return*) moves down to the next lyric line



Syllables can be extended by an underline:



Entered with: *soul, _ _ _ To Esc.*

Special characters

Lyrics can be [edited](#) as normal text with the exception of a few characters. If you want to add a space, hyphen, or underscore to a single syllable, use the following shortcuts:

- *Ctrl+Space* (Mac: *⌘+Space*) enters a space into the lyrics text
- *Ctrl+-* (Mac: *⌘+-*) enters a hyphen (-) into the lyrics text
- Mac only: *⌘+_* enters an underscore (_) into the lyrics text

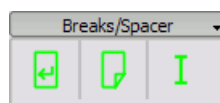
See also: [Text](#), [Chord name](#).

Chapter 6

Formatting

Break or spacer

Page breaks or **line breaks** (system breaks) are applied by dragging the corresponding symbol from the breaks palette to an empty space of a measure in the score. The break happens after the marked measure. The green break symbols are visible on the screen, but do not appear on printouts.



Mid-measure system breaks are sometimes needed (especially for strophic hymns or lieder). For example, if you want three beats on one system and a one beat pickup on the next system, then you need to create two measures with a shortened duration. For details, see [Measure operations](#), "Duration" and "Irregular" sections.

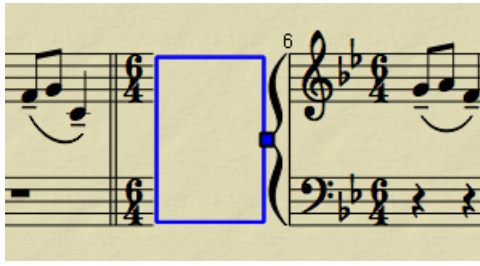
Spacers are used to increase the space between two adjacent staves. Drag and drop a spacer to a measure above the area that needs more vertical space. Double-click on the spacer and drag the handle using the mouse to adjust the height of the spacer.

If you want to adjust the space between staves score-wide, use the style settings. Spacers are designed for local adjustments.

Frame

Frames provide empty space outside of normal measures. They can also contain text or pictures. MuseScore has two kinds of frames:

Horizontal



Horizontal frames break a system. The width is adjustable and the height equals the system height. Horizontal frames can be used to separate a coda.

Vertical



Vertical frames provide empty space between or before systems. The height is adjustable and the width equals the system width. Vertical frames are used to place title, subtitle or composer. If you create a title, a vertical frame is placed before the first measure automatically, if it is not there already.

Create a frame

Select a measure. The command to insert a frame is found in the menu *Create* → *Measures* . The frame is inserted before the selected measure.

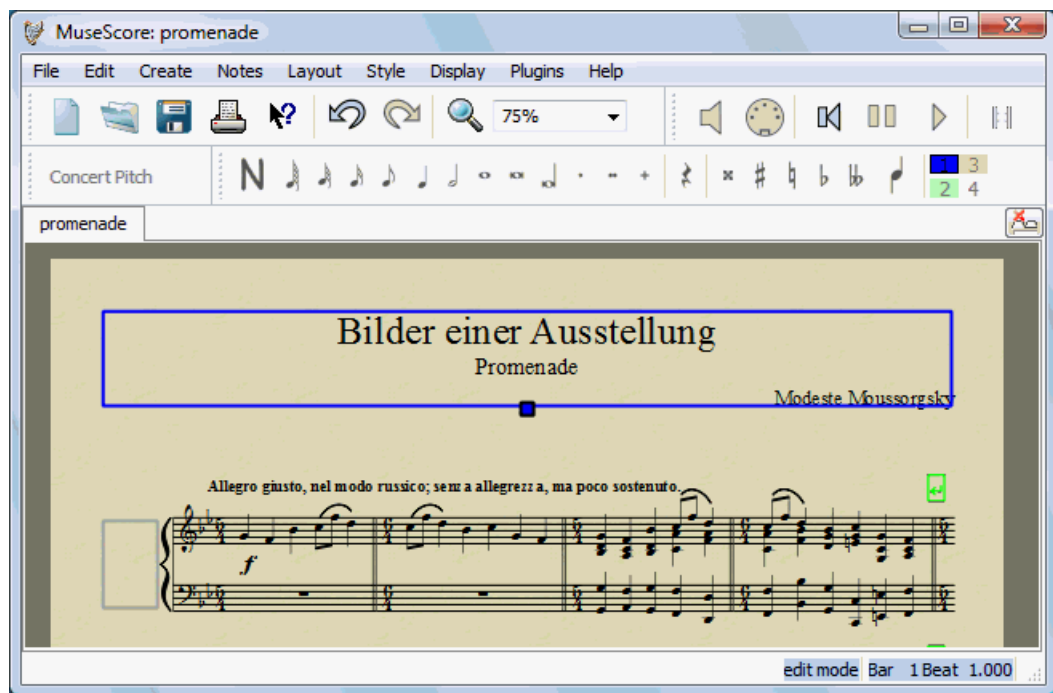
Delete a frame

Select the frame and press *Del*.

Edit frame

Double click the frame to enter [edit mode](#). A handle appears which can be used to drag the size of the frame.

Title frame in edit mode:



Image

You can use **images** to illustrate scores, or add symbols that are not included in the standard palettes.

To add an image, drag-and-drop an image file onto the score. MuseScore supports PNG and JPEG files and simple SVG files. MuseScore does not support SVG shading, blurring, clipping or masking.

Layout and formatting

You've finished your score and you want to print it out. However, you want improve how it looks. This handbook page describes many different ways, and how they work together.

Ways to affect layout

- *Layout → Page Settings*. Change global settings such as page size, how big a "space" is (under "Scaling"), and how big page margins are. **Space** is used in other settings (example: "5.0sp"), so changing "space" will change most other settings.
- *Layout → Add More Stretch, Add Less Stretch*. Stretch or squash measures you select specifically.
- *Style → Edit General Style → Page*. Change global settings that affect how close staves are, how close systems are, how much margin lyrics get, and so on.

- *Style → Edit General Style → System*. Fix the number of measures per system, or the measure width.
- *Style → Edit General Style → Score*. Affect score details like whether there are multimeasure rests or empty staves are hidden.
- *Style → Edit General Style → Measure*. Set measure spacing, key to controlling number of measures per line.
- **Palette / Breaks & Spacer**. Break a line at a particular measure, a page at a particular line, or add space between measures.
- *Style → Edit General Style → Sizes*. Set the proportional size of "small" and grace notes. Changing this would be unusual.

Layout / Page Settings

Page Size

Letter

Width: 215.90mm

Height: 279.40mm

☐ Landscape

☒ Two sided

Scaling

Space: 1.764mm

First page no. 1

☒ mm

☐ inch

Even page margins:

Left margin: 10.00mm

Right margin: 10.00mm

Top margin: 10.00mm

Bottom margin: 20.00mm

Odd page margins:

Left margin: 10.00mm

Right margin: 10.00mm

Top margin: 10.00mm

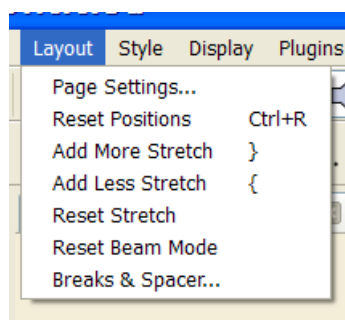
Bottom margin: 20.00mm

Scaling / Space - This is the size of the space between 2 lines of a staff. Since notes fit in that space, it also controls the size of note heads. Since music is proportional to notes, this also affects note stems, accidentals, clefs, all kinds of things. It also shows up as **sp** in *many* other settings (example: system distance "9.2sp"). So, as you change the "Space" parameter, many other settings change proportionally. For this reason, it is also sometimes called "scaling."

Changing the scaling may not change the number of systems per page because of the "page fill threshold" (see below). To see the effects of changes to scaling without interference, set the "page fill threshold" to 100%.

Note: there is also a scaling parameter in *Edit → Preferences → Score → Scaling*. That sets the global preference for new documents, but does not change the current score.

Layout: Add More Stretch, Add Less Stretch



You can select measures, then widen them so fewer are on a line ("Add More Stretch"), or squash them to fit more on a line ("Add Less Stretch").

Style / Edit General Style / Page

Music upper margin	7.0sp	Music lower margin	7.0sp
Staff distance	6.5sp	Accolade distance	6.5sp
System distance	9.2sp		
Lyrics upper margin	2.0sp	Lyrics lower margin	2.0sp
V-frame upper margin	7.0sp	V-frame lower margin	1.0sp
Page fill threshold:	70%	Last system fill threshold:	30%
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create clef for all systems			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create time signatures		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create courtesy time signatures	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create key sig. for all systems		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create courtesy key signatures	

- Music upper and lower margin - Space before and after the first and last staves on a page.
- Staff distance - Space between staves within a system.
- Accolade distance - Space between the staves of a multi-staff instrument like piano.
- System distance - Space between systems.
- Lyrics upper and lower margin - Space before and after the first and last lines of lyrics
- V-frame upper and lower margin - Margins for a vertical frame (for example, the box containing the title and composer info).
- Page fill threshold - If the page is fuller than this, system space is ignored, and everything is stretched to fill the page. So 100% prevents any stretching.
- Last system fill threshold - If the last system is larger than this percentage of the page width, the last system is stretched to fill the page width.

Percentages in a threshold are percentages of the full page height or width. So a page fill threshold of 70% means stretch of things to fill the page, if it is more than 70% full.

Style / Edit General Style / System

System

System bracket distance: 0.2sp

Fix Number of Measures/System: 0

☐ Fix Measure Width

TODO

Style / Edit General Style / Score

☐ Display in concert pitch

☐ Create multi measure rests

Minimum number of empty measures: 2

Minimum width of measure: 4.00sp

☐ Hide empty staves

Here, you can cause the creation of multi-measure rests and hide empty staves. This can affect score size greatly.

Style / Edit General Style / Measure

Measure

Spacing (1=tight) 1.30

Left margin 1.20sp

Right margin 1.00sp

Min. note distance 0.50sp

Clef left margin 0.50sp

Key sig. left margin 0.50sp

Time sig. left margin 0.50sp

Clef-key distance 1.75sp




Clef-barline distance 0.18sp

Begin repeat left margin 1.00sp

Set measure spacing as well as margins. The measure spacing is key to controlling number of measures per line. Changing the other settings would be unusual.

Palette / Breaks & Spacer

Breaks/Spacer

Using this palette, you can choose where you want page breaks or line breaks. Some people do this first, and some save it until the end, after modifying the global settings.

To put a page break, drag and drop the page break symbol to a measure. To put a line break, drag and drop the line break symbol to the last measure you want on a line. If you want the same number of measures for several

systems, select them and use *Plugins* → *Break every X measures*. If some measures end up alone on the line, reduce the scaling, or use *Layout* → *Add More Stretch, Add Less Stretch*.

See also [Break or spacer](#).

Style / Edit General Style / Sizes

Small staff size	<input type="text" value="70.0%"/>	 
Small note size	<input type="text" value="70.0%"/>	 
Grace note size	<input type="text" value="70.0%"/>	 
Small clef size	<input type="text" value="70.0%"/>	 

Set the proportional size of "small" and grace notes. Changing this would be unusual.

See also

- a video tutorial: <http://musescore.org/en/node/10394>
- A post by Marc Sabatella:
<http://musescore.org/en/node/13138#comment-44678>

Chapter 7

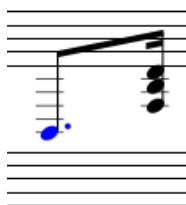
Advanced topics

Cross staff beaming

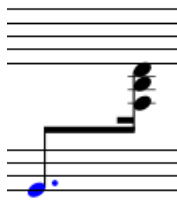
In piano scores, it is common to use both staves (bass and treble clef) to write a musical phrase.

This can be entered in MuseScore as follows:

Enter all notes in one staff:



Ctrl+Shift+Down moves the selected note or chord to the next staff (Mac: *⌘+Shift+Down*.)



See also: [Bar line](#) for cross-staff bar lines (i.e. grand staff).

Part extraction

If you have written a full ensemble score, MuseScore can create sheet music that shows only the individual part for each musician in the ensemble.

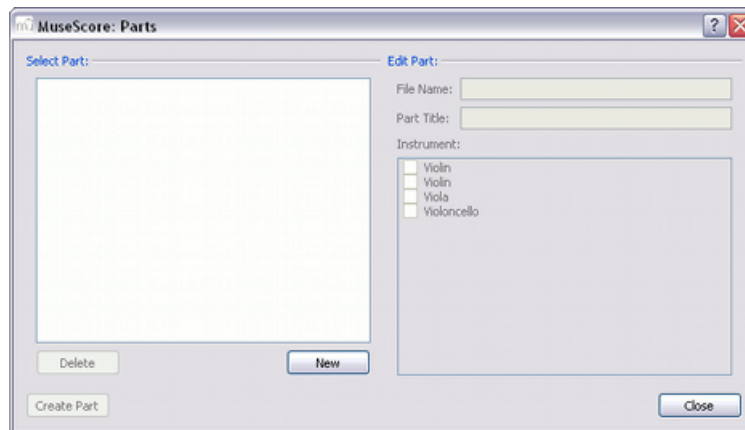
In the current version of MuseScore, the process of extracting parts from a full score involves two main steps:

1. Specifying which instruments are included in each part ("Defining the parts")
2. Actually creating the part

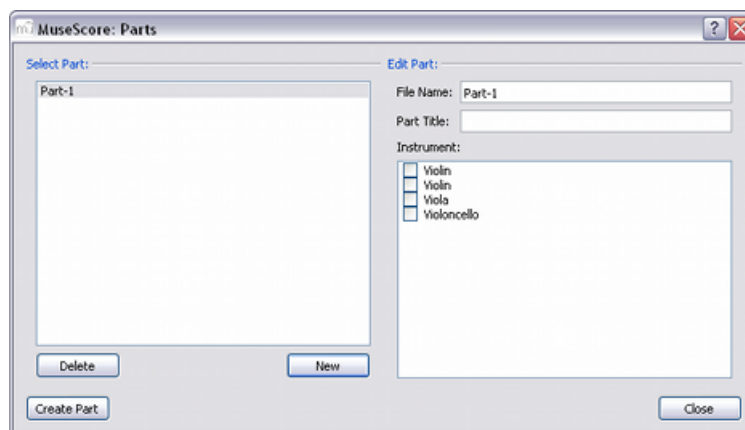
Defining the parts

You can define the parts at any point after creating a new score. You only need to define the parts once for each score, but you can make changes if needed. The following instructions use a string quartet as an example, but the same principles apply for any other ensemble.

From the main menu, choose *File* → *Parts...*



In the Parts window click *New* to create a "part definition"



In the right pane, type the words you want to use for the "File Name" and "Part Title"

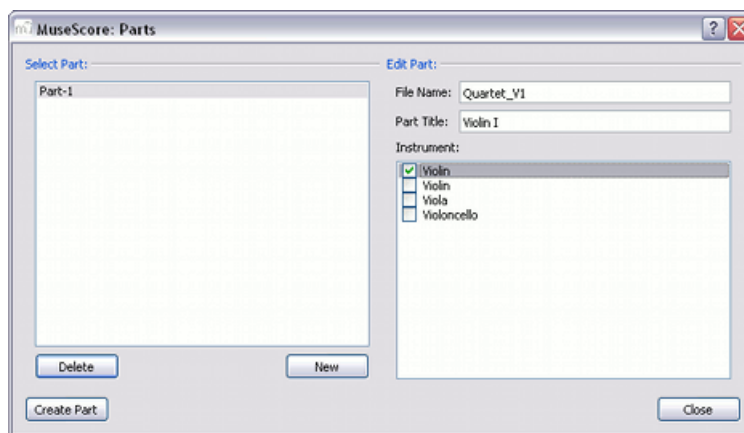
File Name

The initial name used when you save the part on your computer
(required)

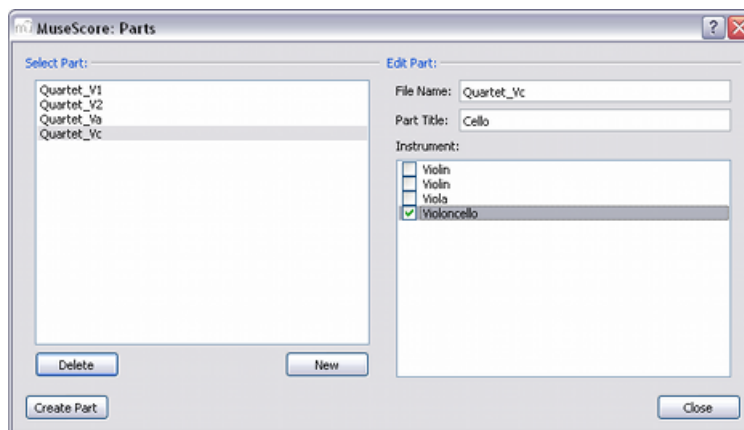
Part Title

The text printed on the first page of your part, top left corner
(optional)

4. Pick the instrument that you want to appear in your part by marking the relevant box in the right-hand pane. Usually, you only want one instrument per part, but sometimes you might need a part that includes more than one instrument (such as multiple percussion staves). MuseScore allows you to mark as many instruments per part as you need.



5. Repeat steps two through four (above) for each part as needed



6. Once you done, press *Close* to dismiss the Parts window

You have now finished defining the parts. You do not need to do this again, unless you add or remove an instrument from your full score. In the current version of MuseScore, it is not possible to split a single staff (that contains two or more voices) into separate parts. So, any instrument that you want to print out a separate part for also needs to have its own staff in the full score.

Creating the parts

You can create your parts at any time to see how they look, but it is only necessary to do it after you have finished the full score and want to print out the individual parts:

1. From the main menu, choose *File* → *Parts...* to return to the Parts window.
2. In the left pane, click to select a part that you want to create and view
3. Press *Create Part* and a new tab is added to the main MuseScore window containing your newly created part

Repeat steps two and three for each part that you want to view or print. If you make any changes to the full score, you can re-create a part at any time in order to show the new changes in the part.

Saving

In the current version of MuseScore, changes on a score are not linked to parts that have already been created, so any change you make on the score will also need to be made on the individual part either manually, or by recreating the part from the steps above. Also, parts are created as not-yet-saved files, so each part you just created needs to be saved as an individual file (via *File* → *Save...*) or it will be lost when closing the tab. You may wish to review it before saving to check for proper formatting.

Plugins

Plugins are small piece of code that add a particular feature to MuseScore. By adding a plugin, a new menu will be appended to the Plugins menu in MuseScore to accomplish a given action on the score or a part of it. Plugins are a way to let users with minimal programming skills add features to the software. To develop plugins, checkout the [documentation](#).

Some plugins are already delivered with MuseScore. You can find more plugins in the [plugin repository](#).

Installation

Note that some plugins may require the installation of other components (e.g. fonts...) to work. Read the plugin documentation for more information.

Most plugins are provides as zip files, so download the plugin .zip file and uncompress it to one of the directories mentioned below.

Some are provided as a .js file, download and place into one of these directories.

Some are provided as a .txt file, download, place in one of these directories and rename it, so it ends with .js

Windows

MuseScore looks for plugins in %ProgramFiles%\MuseScore\Plugins (resp. %ProgramFiles(x86)%\MuseScore\Plugins for the 64-bit versions) and in %LOCALAPPDATA%\MusE\MuseScore\plugins on Vista and Seven or C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\Local Settings\Application Data\MusE\MuseScore\plugins (adjusted to your language version) on XP.

MacOS X

On MacOS X, MuseScore looks for plugins in the MuseScore bundle in /Applications/MuseScore.app/Contents/Resources/plugins and in ~/Library/Application Support/MusE/MuseScore/plugins. To be able to move files in the app bundle, right click on MuseScore.app and choose "Show package contents" to reveal the Contents directory.

Linux

In Linux, MuseScore looks for plugins in /usr/local/share/mscore-1.0/plugins or in ~/.local/share/data/MusE/MuseScore/plugins.

In any of the above cases, restart MuseScore to allow the new plugin(s) to load.

Plugin installed by default

ABC import

This plugin used a webservice (<http://abc2xml.appspot.com/>) to open an [ABC file](#) in MuseScore. It supports ABC 1.6. The ABC file is sent to the webservice, and a MusicXML file is returned. The plugin then display the score as a new score.

Chord chart

This plugin creates a new score with all the chordnames supported by MuseScore in Jazz style.

Color notes

This plugin colors the notehead of all notes in all staves and voices, according to the BoomWhackers convention. Each pitch has a different color. C and C# have a different color. C# and Db have the same color. To color all the notes in black, right click on a notehead -> Select -> All similar elements. Right-click again on the notehead -> Color -> Pick black.

Create scores

This plugin creates a new piano score with 4 quarters C D E F. It's a good start to learn how to make a new score and add notes from a plugin.

Note names

This plugin displays the English name of each note of voice 1 close to the notehead.

Test

This plugin is just a test and display a dialog box "Hello MuseScore". It's a good base to start learning plugin development.

Chapter 8

Support

This chapter describes how to find help using MuseScore: the best places to look, the best way to ask a question on the forums, and tips for reporting a bug.

How to report bug or ask for support

Before posting your support request [in the forum](#):

- PLEASE, look for a solution in the [user handbook](#).
- Use the [search](#) function of the website to see if someone has already encountered the same problem on the [forums](#).
- If you are posting an error report, first try to reproduce the problem with [the latest prerelease](#). You may also view the [version history](#) to check whether it has been fixed already.

When posting your request for support or bug report, please include as much of the following information as you know:

- Version of MuseScore you are using (e.g. version 1.0) or the revision number if you are using a prerelease (e.g. revision 3996)
- Operating system you are running it on (e.g. Windows Vista, Windows 7, Mac OS 10.6 or Ubuntu 10.10)
- If you are reporting a bug, please describe the precise steps that lead to the problem (where do you click, what keys do you press, what do you see, etc.). If you are not able to reproduce the problem with the steps, it is probably not worth reporting it as the developers will not be able to reproduce it (and solve) either.
- Limit your reports in the issue tracker to one bug per report
- Remember that the goal of a bug report is not only to show the bug but to allow others to reproduce the bug easily

Known incompatibilities

Hardware incompatibilities

The following software is known to crash MuseScore on startup :

- Samson USB Microphone, driver name "Samson ASIO Driver", samsonasiodriver.dll. [More info](#)
- Digidesign MME Refresh Service. [More info](#)
- Windows XP SP3 + Realtek Azalia Audio Driver. [More info](#)

Software incompatibilities

- Maple virtual cable is [known to prevent MuseScore](#) from closing properly.
- KDE (Linux) window settings can cause the whole window to move when dragging a note. [Changing the window settings of the operating system](#) avoids the problem.

AVG Internet Security hangs MuseScore

MuseScore requires access to your internet connection with AVG. MuseScore doesn't need an internet connection to function, but if AVG blocks it, MuseScore hangs.

If AVG prompts you, **Allow** MuseScore and check "Save my answer as a permanent rule and do not ask me next time."

If it doesn't prompt you anymore,

1. Open the AVG user interface (right click on the AVG icon, close to your clock -> Open AVG User Interface)
2. Click on *Firewall*
3. Click *Advanced Settings*
4. Click *Applications*
5. Find MSCORE.EXE in the list and double click it
6. Change *Application Action* to **Allow for All**

Font problem on Mac OS X

MuseScore is known to display notes as square when some fonts are damaged on MacOS X.

To troubleshoot this issue :

1. On your Mac, go to Applications -> Font Book
2. Select a font and press ⌘+A to select them all
3. Go to File -> Validate Fonts
4. If any font is reported as damaged or with minor problems, select it and delete it
5. Restart MuseScore if necessary

In [this forum article](#), a user believes to have found the font "Adobe Jenson Pro (ajenson)" to be the culprit, regardless of not being reported as broken or problematic as per the above validation, and solved the problem by deleting that font, so this is worth checking too.

Font problem on Linux

If the default desktop environment application font is set to bold, MuseScore will not display the notes properly.

To troubleshoot this issue (gnome 2.*/MATE users):

1. Right-click on your desktop and select Change Desktop background
2. Click on Fonts tab
3. Set Regular style for Application font
4. Restart MuseScore if necessary

For GNOME 3/SHELL users

1. Open the shell and open "Advanced Settings"
2. Click on the Fonts option in the list
3. Set the default font to something non-bold
4. Restart MuseScore if necessary

Save As dialog empty on Linux

Some users reported that the Save As dialog is empty on Debian 6.0 and Ubuntu 10.10.

To troubleshoot this issue :

1. Type the following in a terminal
`which mscore`
2. The command will answer with the path of mscore. Edit it with your preferred text editor and add the following line at the beginning
`export QT_NO_GLIB=1`

Launch MuseScore and the problem should be solved.

Revert to factory settings

Recent versions of MuseScore have the option to revert back to the standard built-in presets or "factory-settings". This can be helpful if your settings are corrupted. This is not a normal occurrence, so it is best to consult the forums first, as there maybe a way to solve your problem without resetting everything.

Warning: reverting to "factory settings" removes any changes you have made to the preferences, palettes, or window settings.

Instructions for Windows

1. If you have MuseScore open, you need to close it first (*File* → *Quit*)
2. Type *Windows key*+*R* to open the Run dialog. (The [Windows key](#) is the one with the logo for Microsoft Windows.)
3. Click *Browse...*
4. Look for mscore.exe on your computer. The location may vary depending on your installation, but it is probably something similar to *My Computer* > *Local Disk* > *Program Files* > *MuseScore* > *bin* > *mscore.exe*
5. Click *Open* to leave the Browse dialog and return to the Run dialog. The following text (or something similar) should display in the Run dialog: "C:\Program Files\MuseScore\bin\mscore.exe". (For 64-bit Windows, the location is "C:\Program Files (x86)\MuseScore\bin\mscore.exe").
6. Click after the quote and add a space followed by a hyphen and a capital F: *-F*
7. Press *OK*

After a few seconds, MuseScore should start and all the settings reverted to "factory settings".

For advanced users, the main preference file is located at:

- Windows Vista or later:
C:\Users\<USERNAME>\AppData\Roaming\Muse\MuseScore.ini
- Windows XP or earlier: C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\Application Data\Muse\MuseScore.ini

The other preferences (palette, session...) are in:

- Windows Vista or later:
C:\Users\<USERNAME>\AppData\Local\Muse\MuseScore\
- Windows XP or earlier: C:\Documents and Settings\USERNAME\Local Settings\Application Data\Muse\

Instructions for Mac OS X

1. If you have MuseScore open, you need to quit the application first (*File* → *Quit*)
2. From the Open Applications/Utilities/Terminal and a Terminal session window should appear
3. Type, (or copy/paste) the following command into your terminal line (include the '/' at the front):

```
/Applications/MuseScore.app/Contents/MacOS/mscore -F
```

This resets all MuseScore preferences to factory settings and immediately launches the MuseScore application. You can now quit Terminal, and continue using MuseScore.

For advanced users, the main preference file is located in

`~/ .config/muse.org/MuseScore.ini.`

The other preferences (palette, session...) are in `~/Library/Application Support/MusE/MuseScore/`

Instructions for Linux (please adapt for flavors other than Ubuntu)

1. If you have MuseScore open, you need to quit the application first (*File* → *Quit*)
2. From the Ubuntu main menu, choose *Applications* → *Accessories* → *Terminal*. A Terminal session window should appear
3. Type, (or just copy/paste) the following command into your terminal line:

```
mscore -F
```

This resets all MuseScore preferences to factory settings and immediately launches the MuseScore application. You can now quit Terminal, and continue using MuseScore.

For advanced users, the main MuseScore preference file is located at

`~/ .config/MusE/MuseScore.ini`

The other preferences (palette, session...) are in

`~/ .local/share/data/MusE/MuseScore/`

Chapter 9

Appendix

Glossary

The glossary is a work in progress, please help if you can. You can discuss about this page on the [documentation forum](#)

The list below is a glossary of frequently used terms in MuseScore as well as their meaning. Translators of this page, should be adding the translation for each term.

Acciaccatura

A short grace note. See →[grace note](#)

[Accidental](#)

Accidentals appear in front of notes and shift their pitch.

Accidentals are used to alter the pitch of a note within a piece. The same symbols as in the →[key signature](#) are used, but they are placed before a particular note. Accidentals are for example sharps, flats and naturals.

Accidentals affect all notes on the same staff position for the remainder of the measure in which they occur, but they can be canceled by another accidental.

Anacrusis (Pickup Measure)

Incomplete first measure of a piece or a section of a piece of music.

See →[Create new score, Time Signature...](#)

Appoggiatura

A long grace note. See →[grace note](#)

[Bar Lines](#)

Vertical line through a staff or the system that separates measures .

Beam

Notes with a duration of an eighth or smaller either carry a flag or a beam. Beams are used for grouping notes.

BPM

See → [metronome mark](#)

Breve

A **double whole note** or **breve** is a note that has the duration of two whole notes.

Chord

The minimal definition of a chord is a minimum of two different notes played together. Chords are based on the choices made by a composer between harmonics of one, two or three (and more) fundamental sounds. Ex. In the chord of C, G is the second harmonic, E the fourth of the fundamental C. Now in C7, the B flat is the 6th harmonic of C and in C Maj7 B is the second harmonic of E and the fourth harmonic of G...

Clef

Sign at the beginning of the Staff, used to tell which are the musical notes **on** the lines and **between** the lines.

There are 2 F Clefs, 4 C Clefs and 2 G Clefs: F third, **F** fourth, C first, C second, C third, C fourth, G first, **G** second (known as *treble key* too). G first and F fourth are equivalent.

Clefs are very useful for *transposition*.

Crotchet

A **crotchet** is the British English term for what is called a **quarter note** in American English. It's a quarter of the duration of a whole note (semibreve).

Demisemiquaver

Thirty-second note

Duplet (engl.)

See → [tuplet](#)

Eighth note

A note whose duration is an eighth of a whole note (semibreve). Same as British **quaver**.

Flag

See →[beam](#).

[Flat](#)

Sign that indicates that the pitch of a note has to be lowered one semitone.

[Grace note](#)

Grace notes appear as small notes in front of a normal-sized main note. A short grace note (acciaccatura) has a stroke through the stem; a long grace note (appoggiatura) does not.

Half Note

A note whose duration is half of a whole note (semibreve). Same as British **minim**.

Hemidemisemiquaver

Sixty-fourth note

[Key Signature](#)

Set of sharps or flats at the beginning of the staves. It gives an idea about the tonality and avoids repeating those signs all along the staff. A key signature with B flat means F major or D minor tonality.

Koron

An Iranian [accidental](#) which means lower in pitch and it lowers a note by a quarter tone (In comparison to the [flat](#) which lowers a note by a semitone). It is possible to use this accidental in a [key signature](#). See also →[sori](#).

Longa

A **longa** is a **quadruple whole note**.

Metronome mark

Metronome marks are usually given by a note length equaling a certain playback speed in bpm. Beats per minute (BPM) is the unit for measuring tempo. In MuseScore, metronome marks are used in [tempo texts](#).

Minim

A **minim** is the British term for a **half note**. It has half the duration of a whole note (semibreve).

[Natural](#)

A natural is a sign that cancels a previous alteration on notes of the same pitch.

Part

Music to be played or sang by one or a group of musicians. In a string quartet, 1st part = Violin 1, 2nd part = Violin 2, 3rd part = Alto, 4th part = Cello.

Quaver

The British **quaver** is what is called in American **eighth note**. It has an eighth the duration of a whole note.

Quadruplet

See →[tuplet](#)

Quintuplet

See →[tuplet](#)

Rests

Interval of silence of a specified duration.

Semibreve

A **semibreve** is the British term for a **whole note**. It lasts a whole measure in 4/4 time.

Semiquaver

Sixteenth note

Semihemidemisemiquaver (Quasihemidemisemiquaver)

Hundred twenty-eighth note.

Sextuplet

See →[tuplet](#)

Sharp

Sign that indicates that the pitch of a note has to be raised one semitone.

[Slur](#)

Tie and Slur are two words used to describe a curved line between two or more notes. **Slur** means that the notes will be played without attack (*legato*). **Tie** is used between two or three (rare) of the same notes to

indicate its duration:

Quarter note + Tie + Quarter note = Half note,

Quarter note + Tie + Eighth note = Dotted Quarter note

Quarter note + Tie + Eighth note + Tie + 16th note = Double Dotted Quarter note

Sori

An Iranian [accidental](#) which means higher in pitch and it raises a note by a quarter tone (In comparison to the [sharp](#) which raises a note by a semitone). It is possible to use this accidental in a [key signature](#).

See →[koron](#).

Staff (Staves)

Group of one to five horizontal lines used to lay on musical signs. In ancient music notation (before 11th century) the staff may have any number of lines.

System

System: Set of staves to be read simultaneously in a score.

Operating System (OS): Set of programs written in the aim to set up a computer from a lot of electronic components. Popular OS are Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, **and** GNU/Linux.

[Tie](#)

See →[slur](#).

Triplet (engl.)

See →[tuplet](#).

Transposition

The tonality is quite meaningless: a tune can be played in any tonality. The slight difference will be a darker or a more brilliant sound. But there are many technical reasons to change the tonality of a score:

- The tune is too low or too high for a singer.
- The score is written for a C instrument and has to be played by a B Flat one.
- The score is written for an orchestra and you want to imagine what the horn, the flute and the clarinet are playing.

- In the first case all the orchestra will have to transpose: it's quite a impossible to do it without professional musicians **but** Muscore can do it very easily for you.
- In the second case the musician must play D when a C is written. If

the score is written with a G 2nd Clef, he'll have to think that the staff begins with a C 3rd Clef.

- In the third case the conductor has to transpose all the staves which are not written for C instruments...

- In all cases the key signature must be mentally changed...

Now, **you must know** that on some instruments (Horns and Tubas for instance) the musicians transpose using alternative fingerings.

Tuplet

A tuplet divides its next higher note value by a number of notes other than given by the time signature. For example a triplet divides the next higher note value into three parts, rather than two. Tuplets may be: triplets, duplets, quintuplet, and other.

Velocity

The velocity property of a note controls how loudly the note is played. This usage of the term comes from MIDI synthesizers. On a keyboard instrument, it is the speed with which a key is pressed that controls its volume. The usual scale for velocity is 0 (silent) to 127 (maximum).

Voice

Polyphonic instruments like Keyboards, Violins, or Drums need to write notes of different duration at the same time on the same Staff. To write such things each horizontal succession of notes has to be written on the staff independently.

Volta

In a repeated section of music, it is common for the last few measures of the section to differ. Markings called *voltas* are used to indicate how the section is to be ended each time. These markings are often referred to simply as **endings**.

Keyboard shortcuts

Keyboard shortcuts can be customized via *Edit → Preferences... → Shortcuts* tab (Mac: *MuseScore → Preferences... → Shortcuts* tab). Below is a list of the initial shortcut settings.

Navigation

Beginning of score: *Home*

Last page of score: *End*

Next page: *Pg Dn*

Previous page: *Pg Up*

Next measure: *Ctrl+Right* (Mac: *⌘+Right*)

Previous measure: *Ctrl+Left* (Mac: *⌘+Left*)

Next note: *Right*

Previous note: *Left*

Note below (within a chord or on lower staff): *Alt+Down*

Note above (within a chord or on higher staff): *Alt+Up*

Top note in chord: *Ctrl+Alt+Up* (Ubuntu uses this shortcut for Workspaces instead)

Bottom note in chord: *Ctrl+Alt+Down* (Ubuntu uses this shortcut for Workspaces instead)

Note entry

Begin note entry mode: *N*

Leave note entry mode: *N* or *Esc*

Duration

For a list of shortcuts for each duration (such as quarter note, eighth note, etc), see [note entry](#).

Half duration of previous note: *Q*

Double duration of previous note: *W*

Voices

[Voice](#) 1: *Ctrl+I Ctrl+1* (Mac: TBC)

Voice 2: *Ctrl+I Ctrl+2* (Mac: TBC)

Voice 3: *Ctrl+I Ctrl+3* (Mac: TBC)

Voice 4: *Ctrl+I Ctrl+4* (Mac: TBC)

Pitch

Pitches can be entered by letter name, or MIDI keyboard. See [note entry](#) for full details.

Repeat previous note: *R*

Raise pitch by octave: *Ctrl+Up* (Mac: *⌘+Up*)

Lower pitch by octave: *Ctrl+Down* (Mac: *⌘+Down*)

Raise pitch by semi-tone: *Up*

Lower pitch by semi-tone: *Down*

Add sharp to note: (undefined due to conflicts with zooming)

Add flat to note: *-*

Rest: *0* (zero)

Interval

Add interval above current note: *Alt+[Number]*

Add interval below current note: *Shift+[Number]*

Direction

Flip direction (stem, slur, tie, tuplet bracket, etc): *X*

Mirror note head: *Shift+X*

Articulations

[Tie](#): *+*

[Slur](#): *s*

Staccato: *Shift+.*

Crescendo: *H*

Decrescendo: *Shift+H*

Lyric entry

Previous lyric syllable: *Ctrl+Left*

Next lyric syllable: *Ctrl+Right*

Up to previous stanza: *Ctrl+Up* (Mac: *⌘+Up*)

Down to next stanza: *Ctrl+Down* (Mac: *⌘+Down*)

For more lyric shortcuts, see [lyrics](#)

Display

Navigator: *F12* (Mac: *⌘+⌘+N*)

Play Panel: *F11* (Mac: *⌘+⌘+P*)

Palette: *F9* (Mac: *⌘+⌘+K*)

Mixer: *F10* (Mac: *M*)

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