

SINGAPORE  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA



# Guidelines for Music Preparation (Score)

Updated September, 2025

# Welcome

- Thank you for allowing the Singapore Symphony Orchestra to premiere your new composition! It is our pleasure to be working with you, and we hope that it will be an enjoyable and rewarding experience for you. The musicians and staff of the Orchestra are all committed to ensuring that your music receives the best performance possible.
- The first audience of your new composition is not the people sitting down in the concert hall during the concert; ***it is the musicians up on stage during the rehearsal.*** They meet your piece by reading and playing it. The purpose of the score and set of parts is to communicate to them instantly what you mean. In order to facilitate that, it is important to have the score and parts **clearly notated** and **well presented**.
- Therefore, we would like to share some basic layout guidelines on score preparation. Clear, well-presented notation helps musicians rehearse efficiently and perform your music at its best.

# Contents

- **Score**
  - Paper size, Margins, Staff size, Transposition
  - Cover Page, Front matter
  - Page numbers, Bar numbers, Rehearsal marks
  - Systems, Combined Staves

# Score

- **PAPER SIZE**

The score will be printed on **B4 JIS (257mm x 364mm)** or on A3 (297mm x 420mm).

- **MARGINS (for B4)**

Top & bottom: 20 – 23mm

Left & Right: 17 – 20mm

- **STAFF SIZE**

Between 4 - 5mm

- **TRANSPOSITION**

Please submit a transposed score, rather than a C score.

# Score

- **COVER PAGE**

- Include title of the work, name of composer, name of arranger (if applicable)

- **FRONT MATTER**

*(Basically: everything that comes before the first bar of music)*

- **Instrumentation**

- including keys of all transposing instruments and a list of all percussion instruments.
- any special instructions to perform this work, which may include a specific stage layout or deviation from standard musical notation should be indicated after the instrumentation.

- **Movement titles & duration, total duration**

- Programme notes (if applicable)

# Score

- **PAGE NUMBERS**

- **Page 1** is the first page of music.
  - Include the title of the work, name of composer, name of arranger (if applicable), copyright information, and all instruments (even those not playing at the start).
  - Indicate “Transposed Score” in the top left corner.
- **Position:**
  - Right hand pages: odd-numbered in the upper right corner of the page.
  - Left hand pages: even-numbered in the upper left corner of the page.

- **Size:**

14 – 16 pt

*(Recommended font: Century Schoolbook or Garamond )*

# Score

- **BAR NUMBERS**
  - **Position**
    - At the beginning of each system except the first of each movement.
    - At the left edge of the topmost staff, above the clef.
  - **Size:**

10 – 13 pt, italics

*(Recommended font: Bravura or Arial )*

# Score

- **REHEARSAL MARKS (IF APPLICABLE)**
  - **Position**
    - Usually at the topmost staff of Woodwinds and Strings.
    - For larger orchestral works, consider placing more marks - above multiple instrument families.
  - **SSO preferred font and size:**

19 – 23 pt, bold, boxed

*(Recommended font: Bravura)*



# Score

- **SYSTEMS**
  - This music is intended for concert performance, not film /musical theatre, **compact scores** preferred.
    - There is no requirement to limit to 4 bars per page - please fit as many bars as the page can comfortably handle.
  - **Do not hide empty staves**, unless a section has a significant reduction in instrumentation.
  - Keep the scores as full scores whenever possible.
- **COMBINED STAVES**
  - Combine staves where possible (e.g., Flutes 1 & 2).
  - Avoid creating separate staves for each instrument (e.g., Flute 1, Flute 2) unless absolutely required.

# Recommended Reference Guide

- We highly recommend [Elaine Gould's \*Behind Bars\*](#) for all things music notation, engraving and preparation.
- One of our orchestra librarians prepared a [music preparation workshop](#), with some examples of Do's and Don'ts.