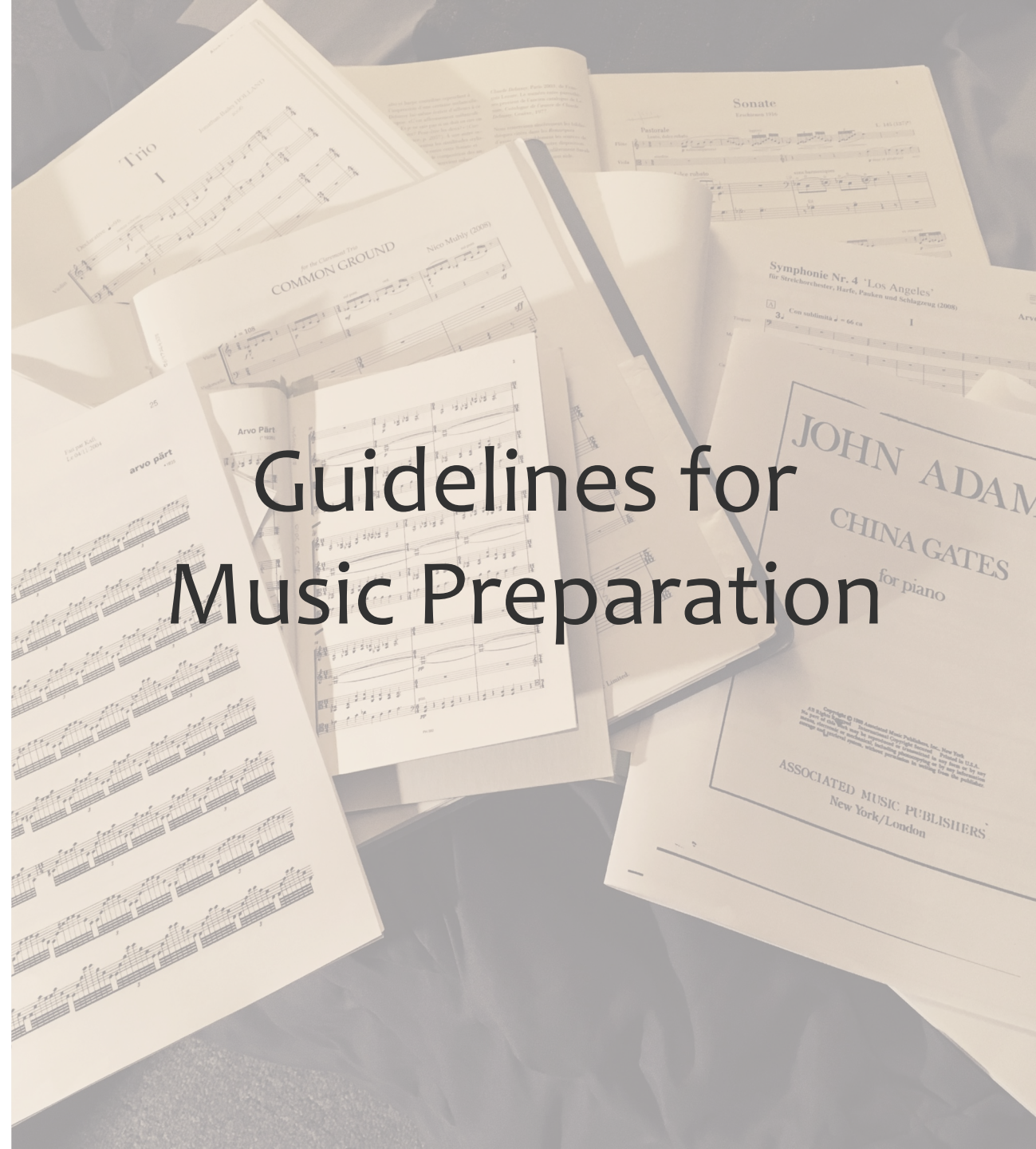


SINGAPORE
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA



Guidelines for Music Preparation



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 not by listening to it, but 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 provide you with some basic guidelines on how to layout your music such that the musicians can rehearse and perform it without much difficulty. We hope you would consider them before you submit the PDFs of your composition to the SSO Library.

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Score Front Matter

- **Cover Page:** Please provide a cover page for the full score, as well as a page or two for composer's bio, programme notes, instrumentation, and duration. Please also include any pertinent instructions to perform this work as you intended, which may include a specific stage layout.
- **Transposing Score:** Please use a transposed score, not a C-score, whenever possible. Please indicate this on the top left corner of the first page of music.
- **First Page:** The first page should also indicate the title, composer, copyright information, and all instruments (whether they play at the start or not).

Score Formatting

- **Paper Size:** For PDF submissions - The score should ideally be formatted in A4 (210x297mm) or B4 (250x353mm). Try to avoid A3 except for very large orchestral works as they are large and unwieldy.
- **Margins:** Please leave a margin of 15-25mm. Smaller margins might cause part of your score to be covered by binding materials, and larger margins reduce the amount of music you can put on the page.
- **Staff size:** We recommend between 4-5mm.
- **Systems:** As this music is intended for concert and not film/musical theatre, we prefer compact scores. There is no norm for having only 4 bars per page, please fit as many bars as the page can comfortably handle! Additionally, do not hide empty staves unless a section of music has a significant reduction in instrumentation. Keep the scores as full scores as much as possible.

Score Details

Bar numbers: For concert music, having bar numbers at the beginning of every system, (at the left edge of the topmost staff, above the Clef) is usually sufficient.

They should be large enough to be seen clearly (font size between 10-12 absolute usually works well), and not too close to the page numbers.

If you feel that they should appear on every bar, we recommend having them either below or above all staves, and ensuring they appear in a straight row, not colliding with dynamics and other markings.

Page numbers: Ensure that page numbers are larger than bar numbers. A font size between 11-15 absolute works well.

Rehearsal marks: It is recommended to add rehearsal marks to your piece. This can be in the form of rehearsal letters or numbers. Ideally, a conductor should not have to flip more than a couple of pages in either direction to find a rehearsal mark.

They should be clear and large (font size 12-16), and you may want to add them above multiple instrument families for larger orchestral works.

Combined Staves: Please do not create separate staves for each instrument, such as Flute I, Flute II etc., unless absolutely required by the music. Instead, please try and combine staves. Eg. Flutes I and II. This should only be for the full score.

Part formatting

- **Instruments:** Please only put one instrument per part.
- **Choir:** Please prepare a separate choir score with vocal parts extracted + a piano reduction for rehearsal.
- **Paper Size:**

For PDF submissions - The parts should ideally be formatted in A4 (210x297mm) or B4 (250x353mm).

For Physical submissions - You can print your parts in any size you prefer, however note that A4 is often too small, and anything larger than B4 gets unwieldy. The typical 9x12", 9.5x12.5", 10x13" or B4 are good paper sizes.
- **Staff size:** We recommended a *printed* staff size of 7.5-8mm. Anything smaller than 7.5mm, especially for strings, may be difficult to read.

Quick tip: If you're formatting your parts in A4, do note that we will likely print your parts on B4 paper. As such, do note that your staff will become about 115% larger in the final print.

Margins: Please leave a margin of 15-20mm on the sides, and 10-15mm on the top and bottom.
- **Rehearsal marks and cues:** Please indicate rehearsal marks as appropriate and include cues for musician entries. Musicians love cues!

Page Turns

- **General:** Please account for easy page turns on your right facing pages. Ideally a musicians should have at least 4 seconds to turn a page. Page turns should not coincide with mute/instrument changes, G.P., whenever possible. Additionally, feel free to add blank pages to help with page turns within the piece. Blank pages should be clearly marked as such, to avoid assumption that they are in error.
- **For two-page parts:** If the part is only two pages, **please add a cover page** to ensure the part can be laid out without requiring a page turn.
- **When page turns aren't possible:**

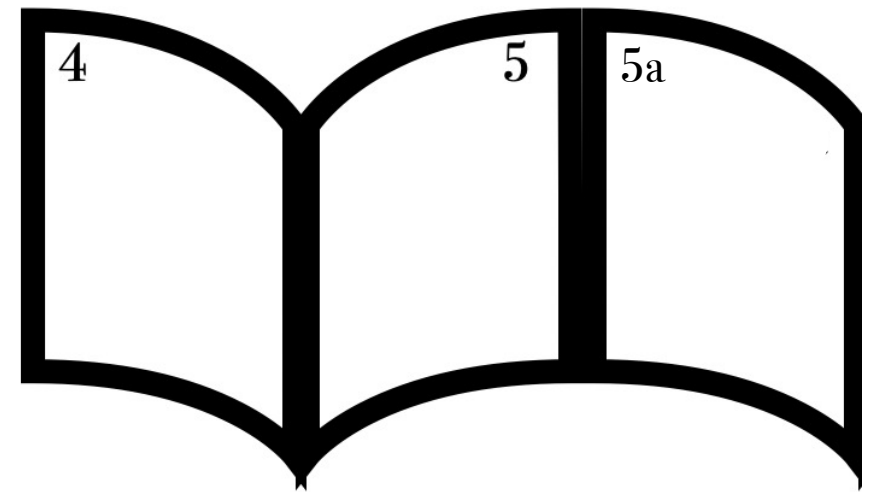
For String parts, if a standard page turn isn't possible, please ensure that the page turn doesn't happen on divisi lines. As much as possible, prepare the part as though there is only one player per stand for the best results.

Alternatively, if a page turn is not possible, please indicate to the librarian that a 3-page spread is required and mark the 3rd page with the appropriate number. For example, if a 3-page spread starts on page 4, the 3rd page would be page 5a. (See next page).

Page Turns

3 Page Spreads for Instrumental Parts

- Ideally, get the 3rd page's page number to be on the inner edge. This is because we will cut some of the outer edge of the page to make the overall spread less wide.



Choral Reductions

- **General**

Use a staff size of between 4.8-5.5mm for a choir score.

A choir score includes all choir parts + a piano reduction for rehearsal purposes.

Allocate a staff for each voice part, rather than a combined staff (you can use that in the full orchestral score if the space is less).

- **Reduction**

In the piano reduction, the staves of the reduction are smaller than the vocal staves.

Additionally, in a piece for choir and orchestra, distinguish the acapella sections by making them cue-sized, keeping the accompaniment sections normal sized.

See the reference to the right (from *Behind Bars*, 471).

Try to include all sung pitches in the reduction, even if you are also combining the orchestral arrangements with the choir lines.

- **Lyrics and Rhythms**

Ensure the text is legible and easy to read. Lyrics are not a place to experiment with cool fonts. Fonts should be of serif type, such as Times New Roman, Tinos, Century Schoolbook

Use all standard notation practices when using slurs, word extenders etc.

Additionally, please use conventional rhythmic notation and do not beam syllabically.

CHORAL REDUCTION

Wherever possible, vocal and choral music should be provided with a keyboard part to aid rehearsal. Where there is accompaniment, the keyboard part will be either a reduction of an orchestral or instrumental accompaniment (see *Orchestral reduction*, p. 548). In an entirely unaccompanied choral piece and in an unaccompanied section of an accompanied piece, the keyboard part will be a reduction of choral forces, as described below.

In an unaccompanied (*a cappella*) piece, the staves for the reduction are usually a smaller size than the vocal staves (about three-quarters of the full size). Staves for an orchestral reduction are the same size as the vocal staves.

Label the opening system *for rehearsal only*. Assign the keyboard part its own tempo markings, as the markings above the vocal staves are too far from the keyboard staves.

In an accompanied piece, distinguish *a cappella* sections from genuine accompaniment by using cue-sized notes for the keyboard reduction of any unaccompanied material:

Bruckner: Mass in D minor

The image shows a page of a musical score for Bruckner's Mass in D minor. It features four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a keyboard reduction for rehearsal. The tempo is marked [Moderato]. The lyrics are "qui ve-nit in no-mi-ne Do-mi-ni." The keyboard part includes dynamics like *ff* and markings for brass and timpani. The score is labeled "for rehearsal only" and "Bruckner: Mass in D minor".

Recommended Reference Guide

- We highly recommend [Elaine Gould's *Behind Bars*](#) for all things music notation, engraving and preparation.
- The Scoring Notes Podcast also discusses Lyrics and Vocal Music in two episodes - [Part I](#) | [Part II](#)
- One of our orchestra librarians prepared a [music preparation workshop](#), with some examples of Do's and Don'ts.