LOS ANGELES
FILM CONDUCTING
INTENSIVE

In an effort to create the clearest representation of your musical intentions, LAFCI has compiled a listing of recommendations to address best practices, industry standards and professional expectations for score and part formatting in the recording studio environment. These recommendations are designed to help your sessions run as smoothly as possible by ensuring your parts are clear, easy to read and meet the standards expected in the professional world. Although there may be personal preferences or experiences that differ slightly or significantly from these recommendations, we encourage you to use this list as a set of foundational best practices and industry expectations as you prepare your music for recording.

If you choose not to format your music yourself, there are many great copy houses in the Los Angeles area that will produce a professional end product following these same recommendations, ensuring your parts are functional and designed to serve the needs and expectations of the musician to perform your music correctly the first time. There are nuances a professional copyist with years of experience can, and should, bring to your music as they focus exclusively on ensuring your parts meet the highest standards.

In an environment where the clock is always on and time is precious, the ability to offer parts that clearly indicate your musical intentions will not only be greatly appreciated by the performers as a sign of respect and professionalism, but will also save time, money and allow the focus to remain on the recording itself.

We hope you find these recommendations useful as you prepare your music for recording.

-LAFCI
November 2017

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••• LAFCI Recommendations for Professional Studio Part/Score Formatting •••

Studio Orchestra Style

Part

- Printed on 9”x12” 80 pound (32 pound bond) natural/cream/ivory colored paper
- Taped “accordion style” with bookbinding tape or equivalent to alleviate audible page turns as much as possible
- Every instrument has a part (1 per stand for strings) even if it reads “Tacet”, this clarifies to the performer there is no part for that instrument on that particular cue
- Page numbers are clearly indicated beginning with page 2 and located on the top right corner of each page
- Only 1 player per part – no multiple players on a page as a general rule
  Exceptions:
  - Horns 1&2 are listed on separate parts, not one part
  - Violins 1&2 are on the same part and empty staves should be optimized out – this allows all violins to see both parts and provides the composer the option to quickly rebalance parts if desired, i.e. Violin 1 has the melody and more performers are needed to make that part more dominant
  - Percussion is either written as a master part with all percussion parts listed by instrument (although timpani is written as its own part), or as thoughtfully choreographed parts in “stations”, i.e. Percussion 1 (snare drum, tambourine), Percussion 2 (bass drum, suspended cymbal, triangle), Percussion 3 (glockenspiel, xylophone) – either are ok but be consistent in which you utilize
- Percussion & strings are the ***only*** parts where staves can be optimized out
- Average number of staves per page is 8 on first page and 10 on subsequent pages
- Transposed but without key signatures; accidentals only
- Clearly indicate which instruments will be played on a part by listing under the instrument name label in the upper left corner of the part
- Bar numbers are indicated on every bar and located below the staff and out of the way of musical notation
- “Page Turns” can be helpful if the bottom of the part ends in at least 1 measure of rest, providing time to turn the page without the performer having to decide which notes not to play so as to not miss the notes on the following page – this is not always possible, especially in very busy string parts, but a reasonable attempt is expected
- Use ledger lines – ensure you are using appropriate clefs (i.e. Bass Clarinet in Bb is notated in treble clef) and avoid 8va, 8vb, etc.
- Dynamics are indicated below the staff
- Articulations are indicated outside the staff
- Keep accidentals consistent and within musical context
  Example:
  - Correct Bb Major scale: Bb-C-D-Eb-F-G-A-Bb versus incorrect Bb-C-D-D#-E#-G-A-Bb
- Courtesy accidentals are required
  Example:
  - A note has a C sharp in one bar followed by a C natural in the subsequent bar, a courtesy accidental is required to clearly reiterate the C natural in the next bar

Part – cont'd.

- Any change as to how the instrument is "normally" played, i.e. using mutes, must be clearly labeled before they occur and when they return to normal
- Avoid notation or text "crashing"
  Examples:
  - Bar numbers are not overlapping with other printed information
  - "sim." is not bumping into the staff or is too far from the relevant note(s)
- Single odd meter bars with rests, not within a consolidated rest, should show the way the bar will be conducted
  Examples:
  - in 5/4, clarify with rests if the rhythmic division is 2+3 or 3+2
  - in 7/8, clarify with rests if the rhythmic division is 2+2+3 or 3+2+2
- In studio music, "cues" are typically not used to indicate the entrance of another instrument, rather they are used to denote an option the composer may want to be played on that part – it is not played if not asked for
- Rehearsal letters are not utilized since bar numbers are already clearly marked
- Multiple measure rests should be used in small and digestible sizes (i.e. 4 measures, 8 measures, etc.) to keep counting easy and clear, as well to be an easily amendable document should it be necessary for the performer to write in changes

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Score

- Printed on 11”x17” 80 pound (32 pound bond) natural/cream/ivory colored paper
- Taped “accordion style” with bookbinding tape or equivalent to alleviate audible page turns as much as possible
- The first two pages of a cue open up as a book with page 1 on the left and page 2 on the right – this allows the conductor to not need to make page turns immediately upon starting
- Written in “Concert” pitch (a.k.a. ‘Score in C’); no key signatures used, only accidentals
- Oversized time signatures are preferred for quick and easy reference-typically located in three places: top, middle and bottom of the score page and reiterated just before a page turn if a new time signature is utilized immediately on the following page
- Measure numbers are indicated on each bar (centered and large font), either between the bottom two instrument families (i.e. between percussion and string families) or at the very bottom of the last instrument family (i.e. beneath the double bass line of the string instrument family)
- Rehearsal letters are not utilized since bar numbers are already clearly marked
- Do not use multiple measure rests – show each measure
- Any global information on the score must also be on the parts, such as tempi, double bar lines, repeats, rit., rall., accel.
- Avoid notation or text collisions
  Examples:
  - Bar numbers are not overlapping with other printed information
  - “sim.” is not bumping into the staff or is too far from the relevant note(s)
- Single odd meter bars with rests, not within a consolidated rest, should show the way the bar will be conducted
  Examples:
  - in 5/4, clarify with rests if the rhythmic division is 2+3 or 3+2
  - in 7/8, clarify with rests if the rhythmic division is 2+2+3 or 3+2+2
- Music should be “phrased, following the melodic phrasing – this is typically between 4 and 8 measures long and not be squeezed on the page
- Clearly label all instrument and accessory changes, i.e. “To Triangle”, “With Straight Mute”
- Instruments should be abbreviated in left margin of each page beginning on page 2
- Instrument listing order (commonly used instruments) in the score (a.k.a. Score Order):
  - Piccolo
  - Flute
  - Alto Flute in G
  - Oboe
  - English Horn
  - Clarinet in Bb
  - Clarinet in A
  - Bass Clarinet in Bb
  - Bassoon
  - Contrabassoon
  - Horn in F
  - Trumpet in C
  - Trumpet in Bb
  - Flugelhorn in Bb
  - Tenor Trombone
  - Bass Trombone
  - Wagner Tuba in Bb (a.k.a. Tuben)
  - Timpani
  - Mallet instruments in alphabetical order, i.e. Chimes, Crotales, Glockenspiel **OR** Percussion 1
  - Other percussion instruments in alphabetical order, i.e. Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals, Gong, Snare Drum, Tambourine **OR** Percussion 2
  - Celesta
  - Organ
  - Piano
  - Harp
  - Synthesizer
  - Harpsichord
  - Violin 1
  - Violin 2
  - Viola
  - Cello
  - Double Bass