

Music Copying & Finale, Part 2

Excerpt from the “Lizard’s Guide to Music Copying”

by Lee Monroe

As I have said in earlier articles, using Finale for music preparation has revolutionized the music copying field. This article deals with how our copyists setup and prepare our files for use. We are a copy house that has to crank out material very quickly and in large volume. We are always looking for the fastest and most proficient way of producing music. Here are a few of the things we do to improve reproduction and speed.

You have your computer and it’s all set up. You have your desk laid out in a practical and comfortable way and you are ready to get cranking.

Template Settings: The very first thing that we noticed with Finale was that the default settings are, for the most part, too thin. We have to reproduce generations of copies and with the original settings we had a lot of degradation. Here are a few of our basic settings with the appropriate PC paths to follow.

Bar line Settings:

<options><document settings> <barlines>

The only line thickness that we adjust here is the bar line thickness. I personally like to set it to .02, this looks much more like my normal calligraphy pen stroke. In this same window, you should decide whether you will be using the clefs all the way down the page. If you are using clefs all the way down, then uncheck display left barlines.

Line Settings:

<options><document settings><lines>

We have made several changes here, I’ll just list them:

Enclosures .02

Ledger Lines .02

Staff Lines .015

Stem Lines .015

Tuplet Bracket .02 to .03 (.03 helps it jump out of the stave)

The rest remains the same as default.

Other Line Settings: There are a couple of other places that you will need to adjust line thickness.

<options><document settings><repeat bars>

Thin line thickness should be .015

<smart shape tool><smartshape><smart shape options>

Slur thickness .02

Line thickness .02

<Lyric Tool><Lyrics>Lyric Options> (Finale 2000)

Word Extension Line thickness .015 to .02

To get to this setting for earlier Finale users

<options><document settings><Notation Options>

Lyrics-Line thickness .015 to .02

These are a few of the basic settings that will improve reproductive quality in your work. The notes should jump off the page much better.

Page Margins: I have seen a lot of different applications of the Finale page margin. I can’t say for sure how they were originally designed to be used, but we have found a useful application for them. We basically use the page margins solely for containing the music material. The title information will always be outside of the boundaries of the margins. This makes it easier to make global adjustments without having to worry so much about interfering with the page title information.

We usually set up the first page (title page) at about 1^{1/2} inches down (within the page tool check adjust this page only). Then on the subsequent pages, we set it in the range of 1/2 inch down (within the page tool check adjust page range of 2 through 99 or so). This gives you a base to work from. Once you have set your margins make sure that you have “Avoid Margin Collision” checked. All adjustments that you make to staves or systems will now stay within the margins and your title information should remain clean.

For adjusting the title information for pages 2 and later, there are a couple of good shortcuts to remember. Once you have entered the text information you will see a little box handle when you click on the text tool. You can highlight the handle and use these easy macros.

<ctrl><shift><T> will bring up the “Frame Attributes” screen. Lots of useful adjustments and positioning opportunities here. The main thing is the drop down menu under the “Attach To” section. Choose page range to have the text information appear on all pages within this range.

<ctrl><shift><[> shifts the text information to the left margin

<ctrl><shift><]> shifts the text information to the right margin

<ctrl><shift><'> shifts the text information to the center

Within the text field you can do this: <ctrl><shift><T>

This will create an automatic page reference for every page that this text information is attached to (see above).

Nothing fancy happening here, just a few shortcuts to help speed up the process. The most important step is to think out your layout and score as you start, this will save you a great deal of time in the end. Take care!

Mr. Monroe is the co-founder of Express Music Services, a music production company. His company was one of the industry leaders in transforming hand fonts into computer fonts and utilizing these fonts professionally. In 1997 he became the sole owner of EMS. EMP publishes a free weekly newsletter entitled Staff Notes that offers down-to-earth, real-world advice and information for teachers and students of all ages. Staff Notes covers topics in performance, arranging for bands, percussion how-to, vocal techniques, interviews with industry professionals and other great stuff. Visit Express Music Publishing on the web at: <http://www.expressmusic.com>.