Music Braille

Introduction to Music Braille, Part 2

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In print, the tie and the slur appear identical. Both are curved lines connecting notes; it is the context that tells us which is to be employed.

In braille, we have separate symbols for the two.

- Slur 🔴
- Tie 🔴🔴

Generally, the slur and tie are brailed between the notes which they connect.
More about slurs

• The single slur \[\text{``}\text{``}\text{``}\text{``}\] is used to connect 4 or fewer notes.

• Where we have 5 or more notes connected under a slur, we have two options from which to choose:
  • Double slur \[\text{``}\text{``}\text{``}\text{``}\]
    • Place two single slurs after the first note of the slurred passage and a single slur before the final note of the group.
  • Bracket slur \[\text{``}\text{``}\text{``}\text{``}\]
    • Place the opening bracket slur before the first note of the slurred passage and the closing bracket slur after the final note of the group.
Double Slur

Bracket Slur
Word Expressions, Abbreviations, and Letters

• Music is comprised of not only notes but literary text as well.

• We insert a word sign ♩ to alert the musician that what follows is literary text and not music.

• We use this indicator in front of all text elements within the music.

• Note – the word sign is not used with lyrics in vocal music.

• The switch back to music is indicated by:
  • An octave indicator (required) before the note that follows the word expression.
  • A dot 3 after the word or abbreviation. This is required when the musical symbol following the word expression contains dots 1, 2, and/or 3.
\( p \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( pp \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( mp \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( f \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( ff \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( mf \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( fp \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( sfz \)  \( \quad \text{f} \)

\( < \quad \text{crescendo, cresc.} \quad < \)

\( \downarrow \uparrow \quad \text{decrescendo, decresc.} \quad \downarrow \uparrow \)
• All text within the music is bralled in uncontracted braille.
• A longer word expression, comprised of two or more words or abbreviations, is enclosed between word signs, preceded and followed by blank spaces.
• A period within a word expression is represented by a dot 3.
• A dynamic mark within a longer word expression is treated as an abbreviation – a dot 3 follows the letter, even though none appears in print.

\[
p \text{ dolcissimo}  \\
molto cresc.  \\
meno mosso  \\
\text{rit. poco a poco}  \\
\]
If a long word expression appears in the middle of a measure, insert a dot 5 music hyphen at the point where the measure will be divided. A blank space is still required on either side of the word expression.
Symbols of expression and execution are usually printed above or below a note. Some of these symbols are brailled before the note:

- Dot above or below a note (staccato)
- Pear-shaped dot above or below a note (staccatissimo)
- Dot and short line above or below note (mezzo-staccato)
- Short line above or below a note (agogic accent or tenuto)
- Thin converging horizontal wedge (accent)
- Thick inverted or normal V (martellato)
Notice – an octave indicator is not required after a symbol of expression or execution.
Symbols of Expression and Execution

- Some symbols, printed above, below, or after a note, are brailled after the note:

  Fermata (hold or pause):
  over or under a note

  Breath or break mark (a)
  (b)
Maestoso

\[ \text{New symbol:} \quad \text{Doubled Staccato} \]
2. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

I hold you in my heart.
I rock and sing you to
• In print, we see three main elements in a vocal piece:
  • Vocal music
  • Lyrics
  • Accompaniment

• When transcribing music for a singer, we only need to be concerned with the vocalist’s music and her lyrics.

• We use a “Line-by-Line” format.
  • Two-line “parallel” with the lyrics on one line, in uncontracted braille.
    • In some instances we can use contracted braille for the lyrics. If we are transcribing hymns or music for lower grades, we generally will use contractions.
  • The music that corresponds to those lyrics is on the line below, indented to cell 3.
  • Most print music puts the lyrics below the music to which it applies. In braille, lyrics always are placed above the music.

• Run-overs occur frequently. Indent all run-overs to cell 5.
  • It is advisable to only have a run-over in the lyrics or the music; not in both in the same parallel.
• Music that has one note per syllable is the most straight-forward.
• Notice that in braille, unlike in print, the music is not aligned with the lyrics. At first, we may be taken aback by this difference.
• The singer knows, however, in this format, that each syllable is to be sung on a new note.
• Syllabic hyphens shown in print are not used in braille.

You are everywhere in everyone, the holy baby in all of us, that plays there.
• When syllables are carried over more than one note, we use slurs in the music to show the placement of each syllable.
• We don’t need to do anything different with the lyrics themselves.
• If a syllable is carried over 5 or more notes, we use the double slur.
  • Two single slurs are brailled after the first note of the group.
  • A single slur is then brailled before the last note of the group.
Phrase Markings

• If curved lines appear that are not syllabic slurs, use bracket slurs to indicate these phrase markings.
  • Even if the phrase is only 2, 3, or 4 notes long!
Repeat sign for words or phrases

• Since we usually use uncontracted braille for the lyrics, the text lines can get lengthy.

• We can sometimes shorten them by using the word repeat sign •• placed unspaced before and after a word or phrase that is repeated.

• All of the text and music must be contained in the same parallel.

• Capitalization follows the first iteration; punctuation follows the final iteration. All other differences in capitalization and punctuation are ignored.
sempernam requiem, sempernam requiem.
Ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich in Zeit und Ewigkeit.
Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah!
With a zin, zin, zin, zin, zin, zin, zin, zin, zin, zin, zan zounds.
Thank you for attending!

• Any questions?
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