

# Music Braille

75<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY

## Introduction to Music Braille, Part 2

Kathleen Cantrell, Music Committee Chairperson, 2020



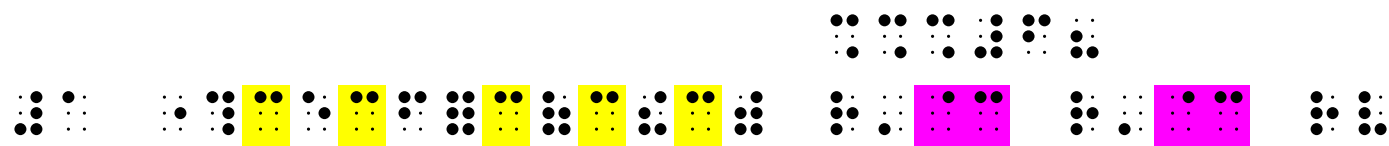
**NATIONAL BRAILLE ASSOCIATION**

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# Ties and Slurs

- 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 brailled between the notes which they connect.

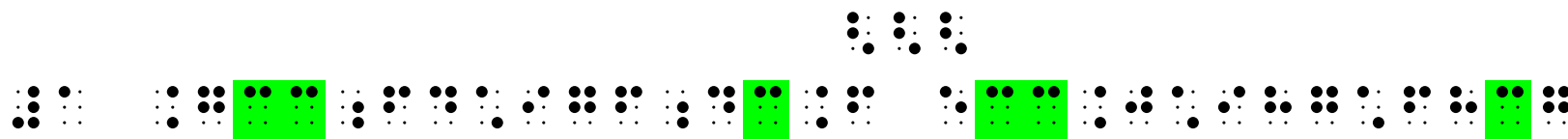


# More about slurs

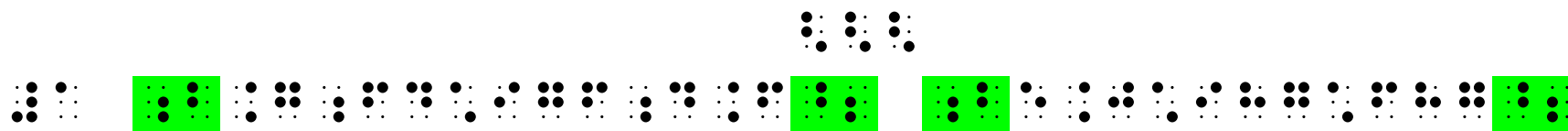
- The single slur  is used to connect **4 or fewer** notes.
- Where we have **5 or more** notes connected under a slur, we have two options from which to choose:
  - Double slur  
    - Place two single slurs after the first note of the slurred passage and a single slur before the final note of the group.
  - Bracket slur  
    - 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

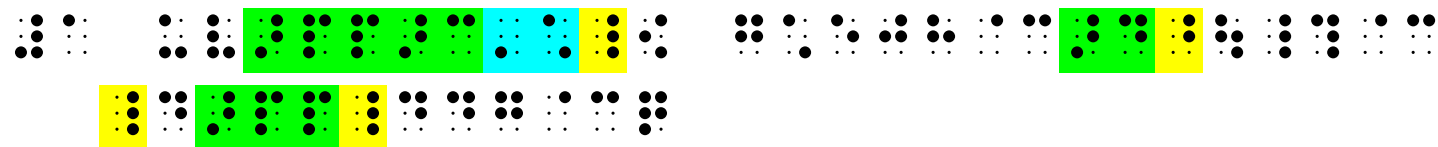
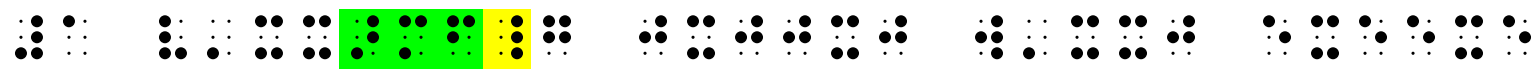


# Word Expressions, Abbreviations, and Letters

- 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*     ⠠⠏  
*pp*    ⠠⠏⠏  
*mp*    ⠠⠍⠏  
*f*      ⠠⠋  
*ff*     ⠠⠋⠋  
*mf*    ⠠⠍⠋  
*fp*    ⠠⠋⠏  
*sfz*   ⠠⠎⠋⠞





⠠⠨     *crescendo, cresc.*   ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠  
 ⠠⠩     *decrescendo, decresc.*   ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠





# Word Expressions

- All text within the music is brailled 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.

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>p dolcissimo</i>     |    |
| <i>molto cresc.</i>     |   |
| <i>meno mosso</i>       |  |
| <i>rit. poco a poco</i> |  |

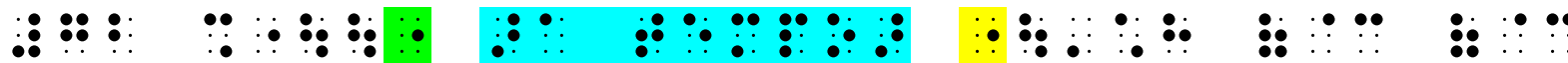
72

a tempo



72

a tempo



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

- 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)

⠠⠠





# 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

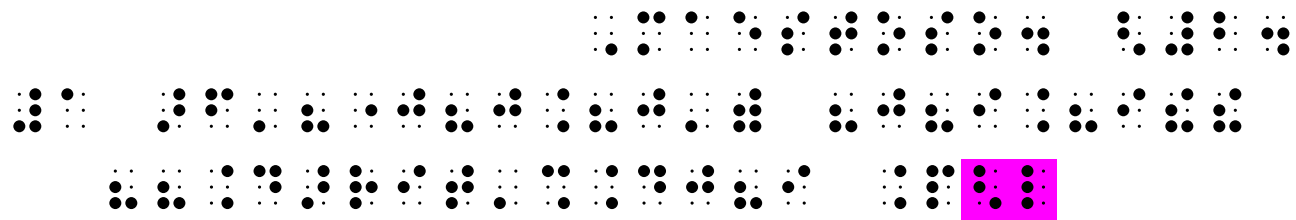


Breath or break mark (a)



(b)





**New symbol:**

*Doubled Staccato* ⠠⠠

# Vocal Music

## 2. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

$\text{♩} = 80$

*mp*

I hold you in my heart. I rock and sing you to

*mp*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. The voice part is on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a tempo of 80 beats per minute. The lyrics are: "I hold you in my heart. I rock and sing you to". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the upper staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#), and the lower staff is in bass clef. The piano part features a steady accompaniment of eighth notes in the right hand and quarter notes in the left hand, with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic marking.

From "Sufi Songs" by Jay C. Batzner, © 2014

- 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.

♩=80

*mp*

I hold you in my heart. I rock and sing you to sleep.

I hold you in my heart. I rock and sing you to sleep.

- Syllabic hyphens shown in print are not used in braille.

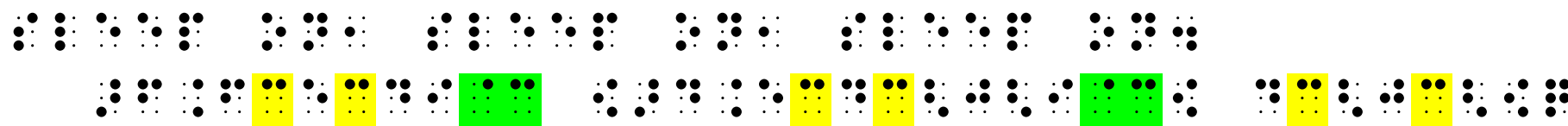
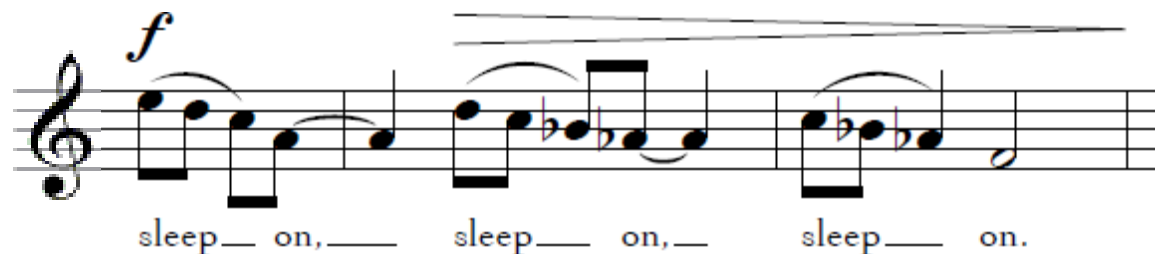
You are eve - ry - where in eve - ry - one, the ho - ly

16

ba - by in all of us, that plays there.

You are eve - ry - where in eve - ry - one, the ho - ly  
 ba - by 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.



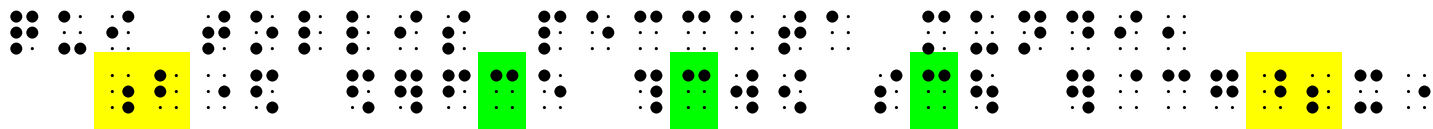
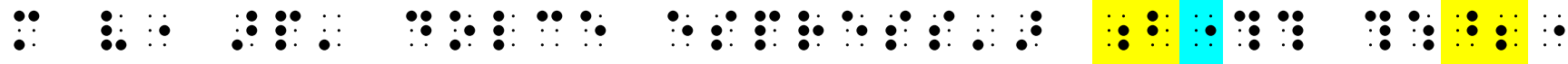
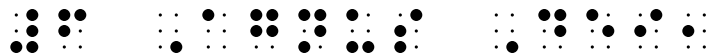


# Phrase Markings

- 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!

6 TÉNORS *p dolce espress.*

Ag - nus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, —



# Repeat sign for words or phrases

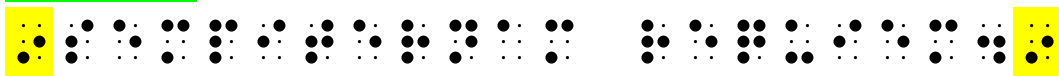
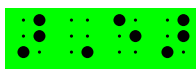
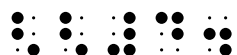
- Since we usually use uncontracted braille for the lyrics, the text lines can get lengthy.
- We can sometimes shorten them by using the word repeat sign ⠠⠠ placed unspaced before and after a word or phrase that is repeated.
- All of the text and music must be contained in the same parallel.
- Capitalization follows the first iteration; punctuation follows the final iteration. All other differences in capitalization and punctuation are ignored.

35 **E**

poco rit.

sem - pi - ter - nam re - qui - em,

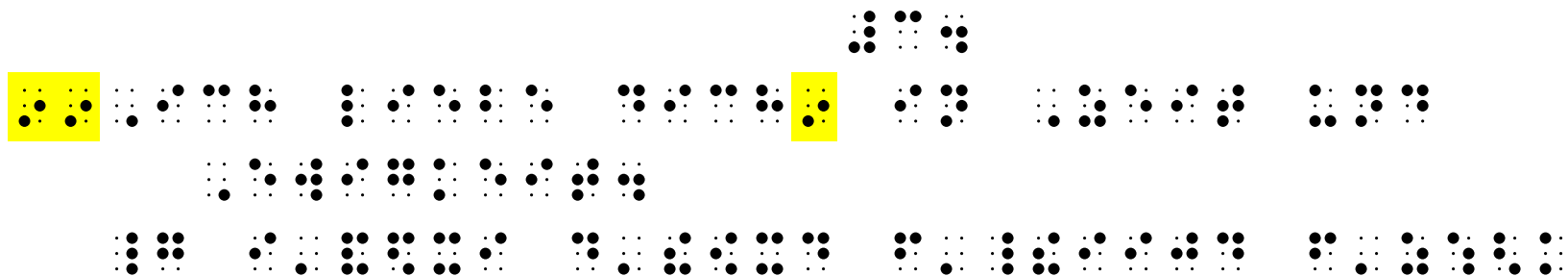
sem - pi - ter - nam re - qui - em.



# Text repeated twice



Ich lie - be dich, ich lie - be dich, ich lie - be dich in Zeit und E - wig - keit.

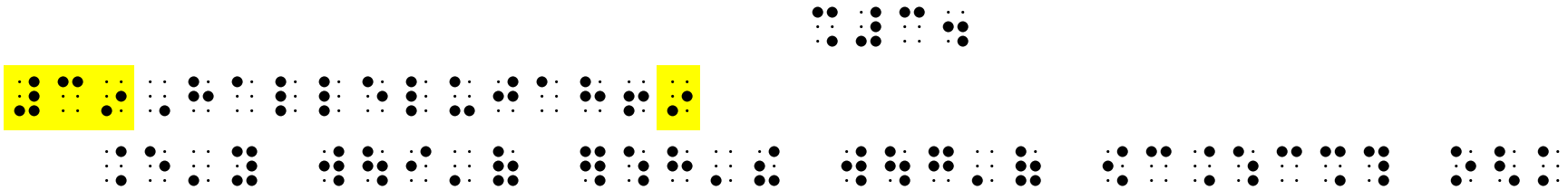




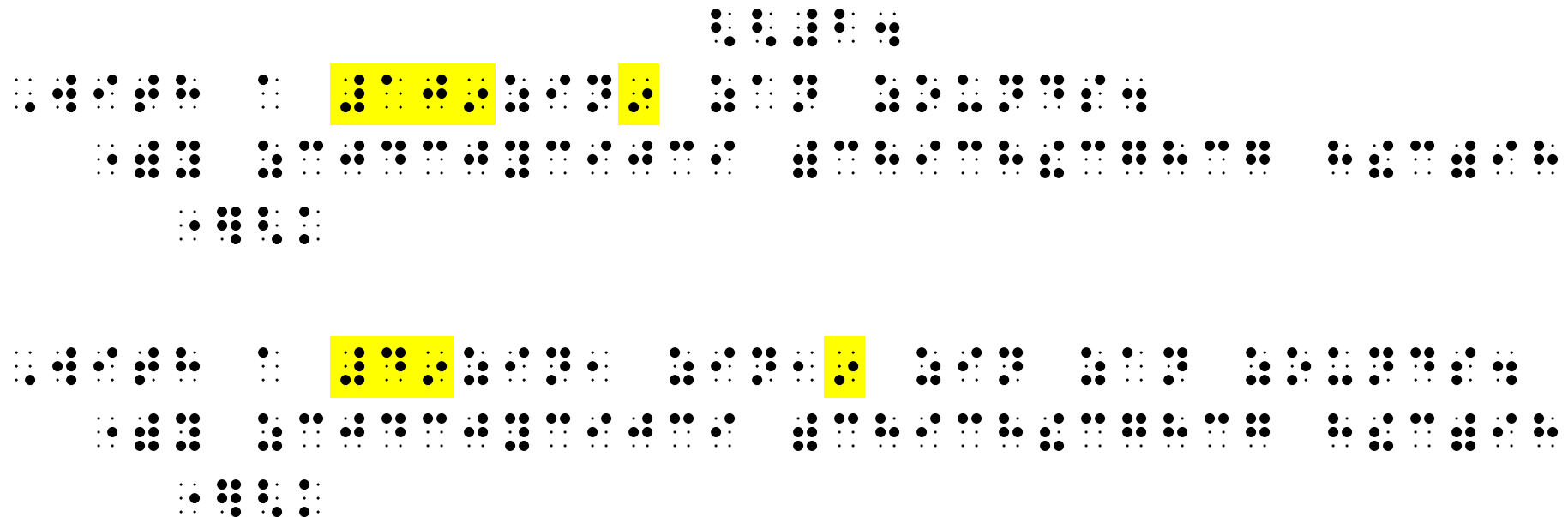
Text repeated three or more times




Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!



# Text repeated 10 times



The background of the slide is a grayscale image. On the right side, there are several staves of musical notation, including treble and bass clefs, with various notes and rests. On the left side, there is a large white circle containing the text 'Thank you for attending!'. Behind this circle, the Braille dots of the text are visible on a dark background.

# Thank you for attending!

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- Any questions?
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