Getting started with Dorico 3.5

By Darren Jones

Sample downloaded from www.musictechtuition.com

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Introduction

This book is intended to give you a solid grounding in the use of Dorico 3 for creating scores and sequenced music. It will take a complete beginner on a tour of the features of the software that are most likely to be used by the everyday student or user of it, and then go through the preparation of scores of two pieces of music, and use these as a tool to learn other useful features that Dorico provides.

While it is aimed squarely at those who have never used the software before (and those who find the comprehensive but somewhat daunting 1100+ page manual overwhelming), it should also provide an all-round foundation for anyone who has got started with the program but wants to learn the skills needed to produce scores for percussion and fretted instruments.

Due to the depth of functionality that Dorico provides - allowing an unprecedented amount of control of almost every aspect of a score - this book is not intended to be a replacement for the manual, and there will be many times the reader will need to refer to it in the future. Its intent is to build familiarity and confidence in the core features of Dorico, and provide a foundation for the reader's further experimentation and study.

Conventions used in this book

In an attempt to make the text of the book clearer, some formatting has been used throughout. Whenever there is a button or text on screen which you need to read, alter or click, it has been `presented in this font`.

Whenever there is a keyboard shortcut given, it has been **presented in this font**. All the keyboard shortcuts given are the defaults; while there are many which could be edited to make working within Dorico easier, referring to custom keyboard shortcuts would make matters less clear. Keyboard shortcuts have been presented for both Windows and macOS versions, and where they differ, the Windows version is first. E.g for **CTRL**/⌘ **+ SHIFT + L** - the Windows shortcut is **CTRL + SHIFT + L** while the macOS shortcut is ⌘ **+ SHIFT + L**. Remember that keyboard shortcuts will make working in Dorico much quicker and easier, so some of the most useful ones have been included on page 183.

This edition of the book features graphics taken from the Mac version of Dorico to improve the printed appearance of screenshots as the Mac version has higher resolution text. The function of the program is the same in both versions, and any menus have been edited to remove reference to keyboard shortcuts. Some screenshots have been edited for clarity or to minimise empty space to fit better on the printed page.

This book was created using Dorico 3.5.0.1020. Due to the ongoing nature of software development, there may be variations in appearance and function from this text and the version you are running on your system.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my partner Tammie for being so supportive of the creation and completion of this book and for her proofreading skills. It would not have been possible without her.

I would also like to thank Richard and John from Steinberg for their help during the creation of the book.

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Overview

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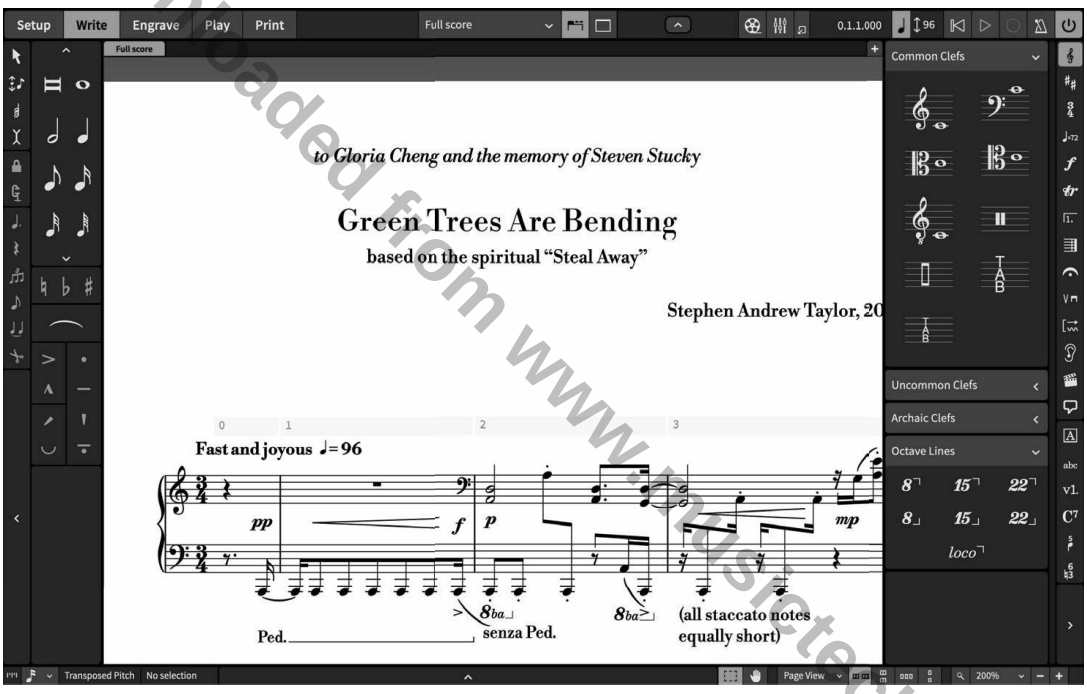

Dorico 3

Dorico 3 is the third version of Dorico, and it introduces many new features, including the ability to notate using tablature for fretted instruments. While its main function is to produce printed scores and parts, it is also a capable sequencing platform, allowing the realisation of convincing audio representation of your music without the need for a separate sequencing program such as Cubase or Logic. Dorico's workflow falls into five main categories:

Setup (page 9) - creating Players, Flows and Layouts - the basis of projects in Dorico. Being comfortable with the options available here and the idea that players are the 'top tier' of the system is important. You will often need to return here to make changes after you have started a project.

Write (page 19) - creating the musical information that is contained in the flows and adding the majority of the information that will create the music and its representation on the page. This chapter contains many techniques that are important to grasp, and making them second-nature may take some time, particularly if you are coming from another scoring platform.

Engrave (page 63) - fine-tuning the layout on the printed page. Dorico has functions which are common in publishing programs, and using the power available here is important to the appearance of the end result. Only available in Dorico Pro.

Play (page 89) - altering the audio interpretation of the music, with the ability to use different instruments and add effects and other production to the audio. If you need to produce an audio version of your composition (whether for yourself, a client or for musicians to rehearse to), then understanding what's available here is important.

Print (page 115) - Outputting the final score to a printer, or a range of file formats. While this may appear straightforward, being aware of what's on offer here can be a time saver and allow selection of the right output method for the consumption of your music.

To speed your introduction to Dorico, the first part of this book follows the structure of Dorico, with a chapter for each of the five categories listed above. The second part of the book consists of chapters focussing on specifics of notation for guitar and percussion instruments, and finally a project-based chapter, looking at the production of two projects from scratch, taking in some other elements which are not covered elsewhere.

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The suggested approach is to follow through the book in order, and to create projects in Dorico to practice the skills and techniques that are covered, even though the first part of the book is not creating a particular piece. In doing this, you will start to get comfortable in navigating through Dorico, and learn the techniques that will be the cornerstone of your daily use of the program.

Making use of keyboard shortcuts is important, so the ones you'll find most useful (in the author's opinion!) appear in their own chapter at the end of the book. It's an important part of the philosophy of Dorico that you make use of them and the popovers that are available to speed the creation of many elements of a score, and while the panels often provide more depth and options, you will find that many of your usual needs will be taken care of with the popovers.

Software of the depth and breadth of Dorico will always be somewhat intimidating at first, and it is impossible to cover every available option in a book aimed at being an introduction, but care has been taken to present you with a manageable number of useful options to experiment with to allow you to gain familiarity with Dorico, and act as a foundation for your own experimentation and learning. Once you have finished it, you should be capable of producing scores for many situations, and the use of any more specialised functions and settings (or locating them in the considerable documentation) should no longer be overwhelming.

It should also be noted that for many of the areas covered in this book, only a subset of the features and functions are represented due to considerations of brevity and clarity. The full manual for Dorico runs to over 1100 pages, and covers each option present for every feature, so once you have a good handle on the techniques outlined in the book, you are strongly encouraged to read the manual on any areas that you wish to study in more depth.

There are multiple versions of Dorico available - Pro, Elements and SE - and some of the features described in this book are only available in Dorico Pro. Where possible this is indicated in the text or with a heading with the pro logo in, such as seen below:

Pro Feature PRO

The other differences between the versions mainly relate to the number of players in a project (2 in SE, 12 in Elements, unlimited in Pro), as well as the soundware included with the application. A detailed comparison of features is available on the Steinberg website.

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A Tour of Dorico's Interface

Before looking at the features of Dorico in the following chapters, this next section will take you on a quick tour of the interface, so you are aware of the areas that are referred to in the text. The easiest way to follow this section is to open up one of the included projects which comes with Dorico (by double-clicking the project in the Steinberg Hub window that appears after you launch Dorico). You can then follow along on your computer, and get used to any actions or keyboard shortcuts needed.

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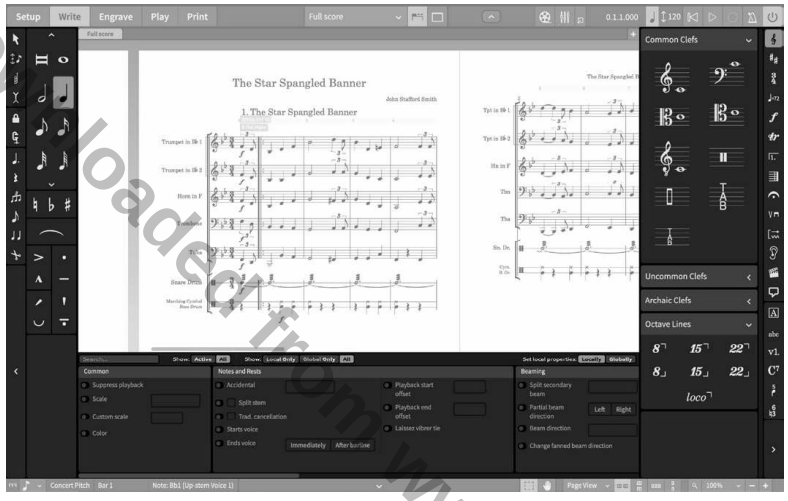
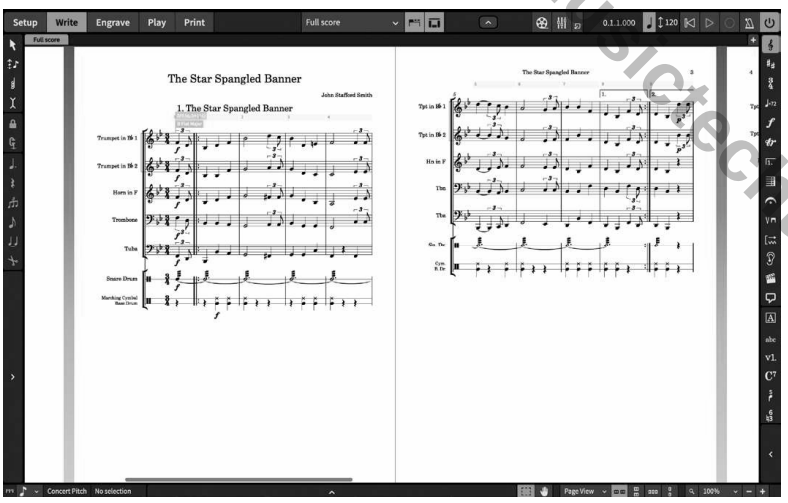
The Panels

Here, the three panels are visible - on the left, right and bottom of the screen.



When all panels are visible, the area for working on the score is reduced (depending on your screen size, this may or may not be an issue), and there is a shortcut to toggle showing and hiding all the panels (**CTRL/⌘ + 0**):



Individual panels can be hidden/shown using the button at the bottom of each area with a >, ^ or < on them. Generally speaking, the left-hand panel has options for note input and creation, the right-hand panel has options for additional notation (such as dynamics, key signatures, etc.) and the bottom panel has more detailed information and options for any selected item.

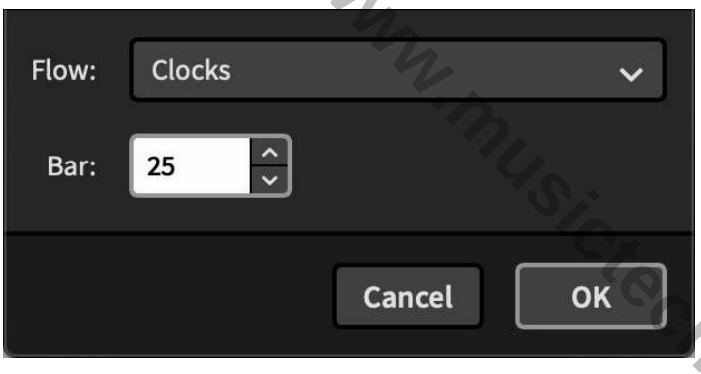
Popovers

Many of the options available in the panels are also available in popovers, which are summoned using keyboard shortcuts. Some people prefer working solely visually, selecting options from a menu or icons on screen - and indeed when you aren't sure of the available selections for a given item, this can be extremely useful - but working with popovers and keyboard entry can mean a much quicker workflow. Popovers are generally summoned with **SHIFT** and a symbolic key (such as **K** for key signatures), and they look like this:

It is strongly suggested that you try to work with popovers, particularly for any element you use often, as you will be able to work faster and more accurately when doing so.

Moving Around the Score

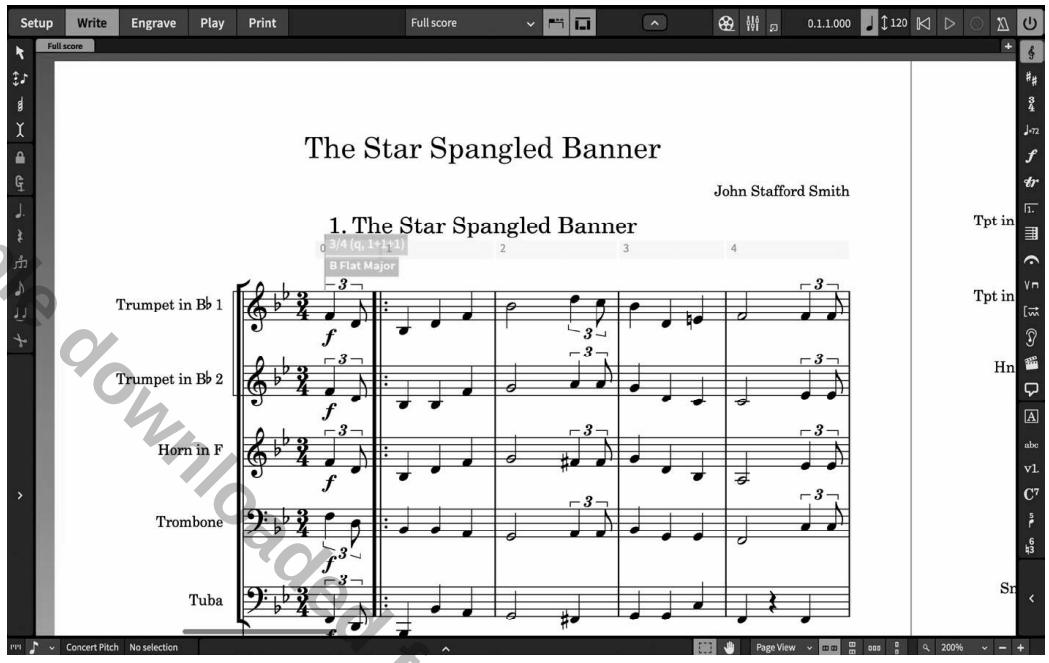
Moving around the score can be achieved by two-finger tapping and dragging (on many laptops), or by clicking the mouse wheel (the cursor will turn into a hand) and dragging on the score. Moving to a specific bar can be quickly achieved with **CTRL**/⌘ **+ G** and entry of the bar number:



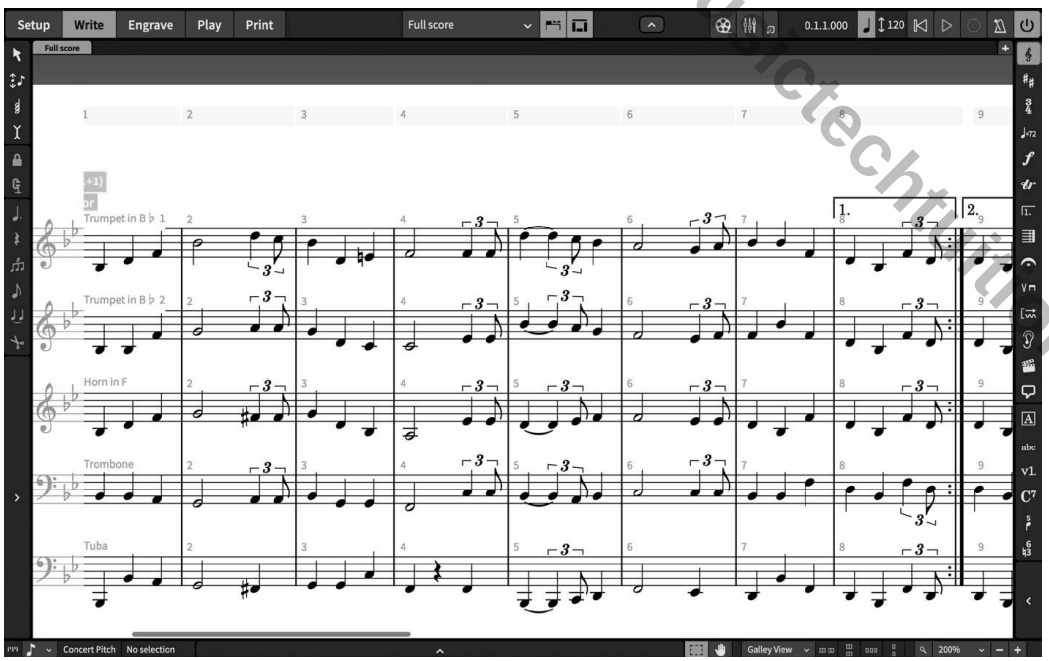
Sample downloaded from www.musicfortuition.com

Page and Galley View

There are two main views of music in Dorico's write mode (where you will be spending the majority of your time) - Page and Galley. In Page view (**CTRL/⌘ + ALT + 1**), Dorico presents the music as it will be on the printed page:



In Galley view (**CTRL/⌘ + ALT + 2**), the music is presented as a scrolling ribbon, with a 'page' that lasts as long as the music does. This can often be quicker and more intuitive when entering music (as navigating to a new position in the music is simple - a later bar is always to the right, and an earlier one to the left). It also has the advantage that once the beginning of the piece is no longer visible, the names of the players are always present on the left-hand side of the screen, as seen below:



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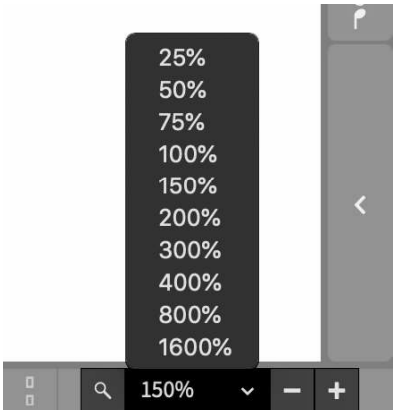
Zoom

You will often need to change the zoom level that you are viewing your project at, and Dorico makes zooming in and out quick and easy. You can use the keyboard shortcuts: **Z** to zoom in, **X** to zoom out, or use the zoom menu or the **-** and **+** buttons at the bottom right of the screen if you prefer:



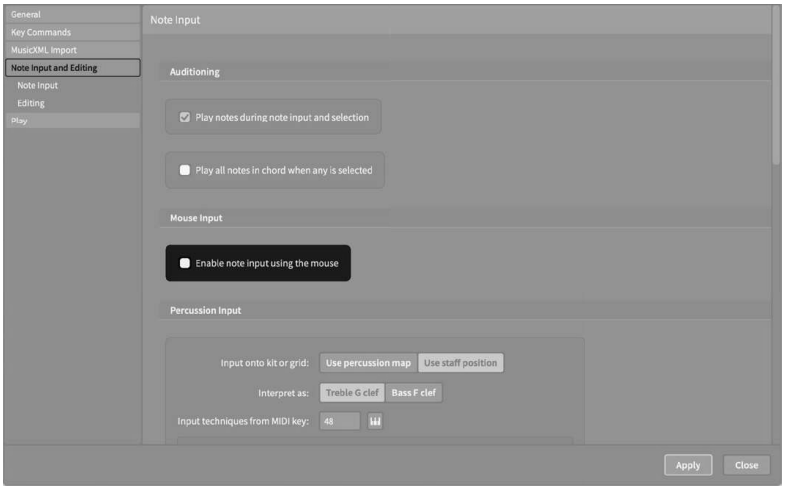
It is also possible to use the zoom dialogue (allowing entry of a specific zoom percentage value) with **ALT + Z**.

Input methods

There are a number of methods of inputting music available in Dorico - by mouse, by QWERTY keyboard, or by MIDI input. While this flexibility is welcomed, it is the author's opinion that mouse input (particularly in the early stages of learning Dorico) is not a good option; There are times it can be useful, it can often lead to notes being inputted accidentally, and such graphic input is never as accurate or rapid as learning to input using the keyboard.

Turning off Mouse Input

To follow this recommendation, turning off mouse input is suggested, and to do so, go to **Dorico > Preferences** (on macOS) or **Edit > Preferences** (on Windows), and go to **Note Input and Editing > Mouse Input** and untick **Enable note input using the mouse**, followed by **Apply** and **Close**.



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Setup

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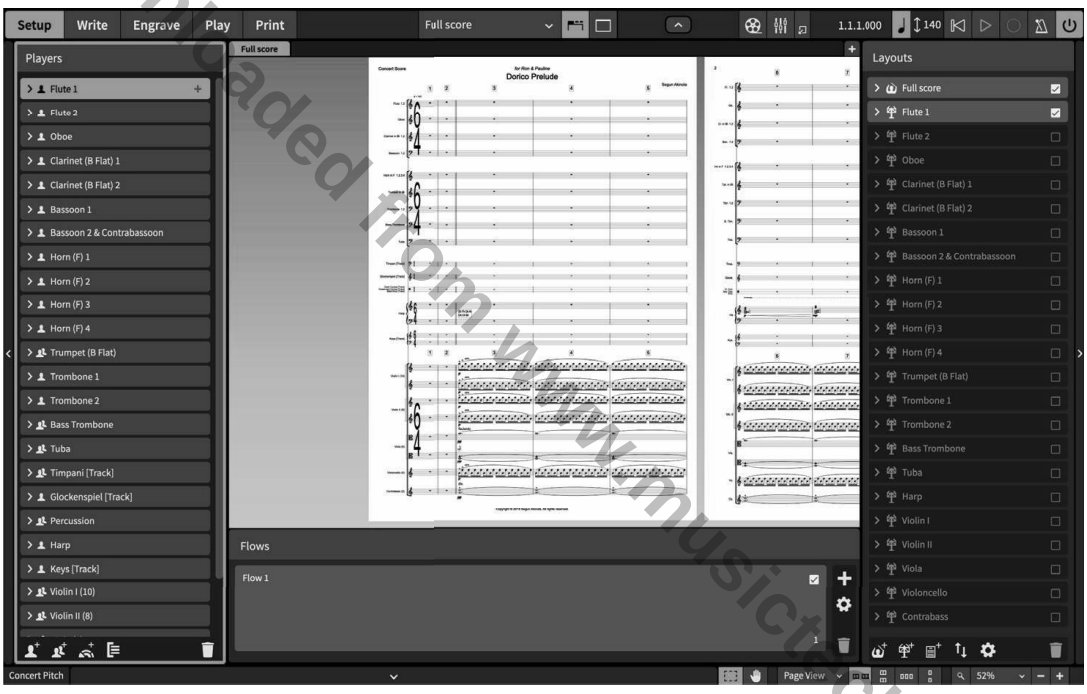
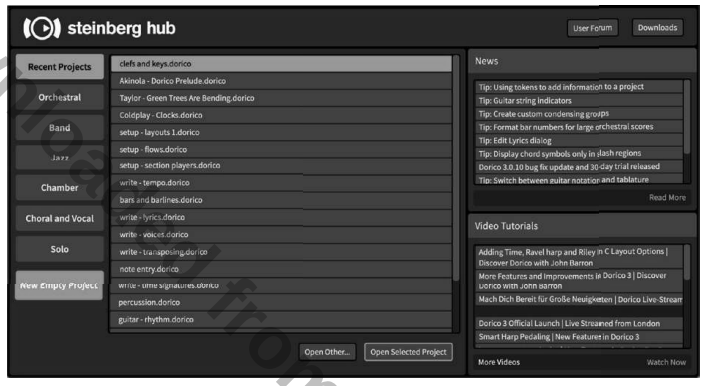


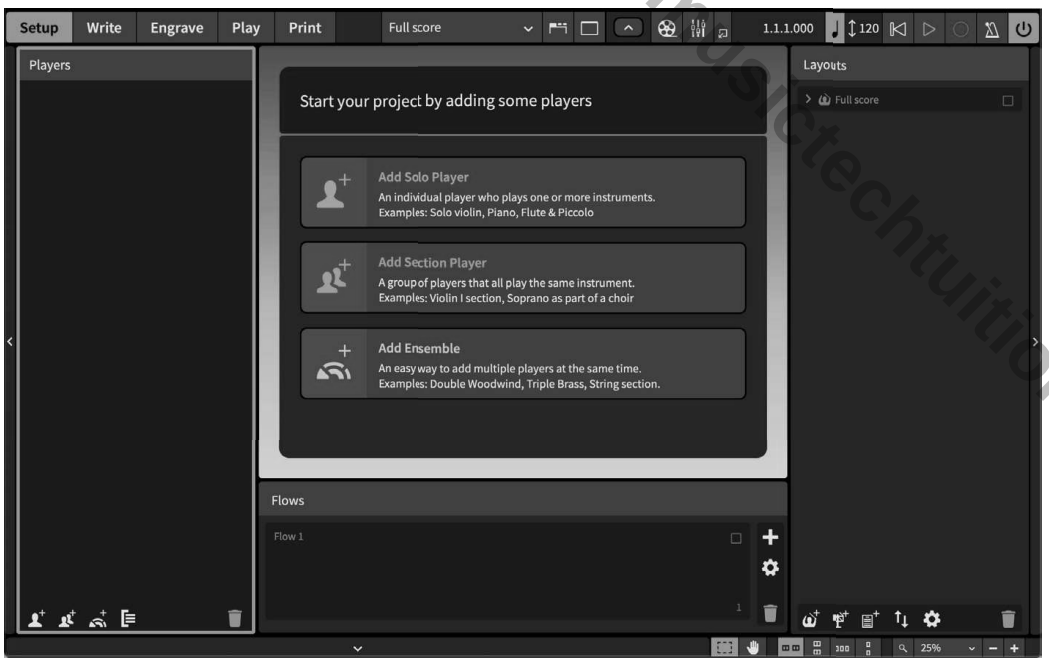
Starting Dorico

When you first start Dorico you will see a splash screen such as the one below:

Once it has finished loading, you will see the Steinberg Hub, with project categories on the left, a list of recent projects in the centre, and News and Video Tutorials on the right.



While it may be tempting to open one of the included scores, creating a **`New Empty Project`** is the route that we will take, and clicking the button will lead to a new Untitled Project window, with a prompt in the middle to add some players:



Sample download from www.musictechtuition.com

Players

This is the first place where Dorico is different to many other score-writing programs (which usually start off with page setup) - the players are the first element to be added to the project as Dorico sees them as the highest-level entities in the hierarchy of the project. This approach gives real power and control to the composer, allowing players to change instruments, and also for flexible creation of musical ensembles.

Adding a Solo Player

Much of your initial work (particularly when following the examples in the Write chapter) will be using Solo players, so getting in the habit of accessing the Setup screen and adding solo players is a good idea. To add one, click **`Add Solo Player`** (or hit **SHIFT + P**)and a new window appears ...

... selecting **`Strings`** ...

... then **`Violin`** ...

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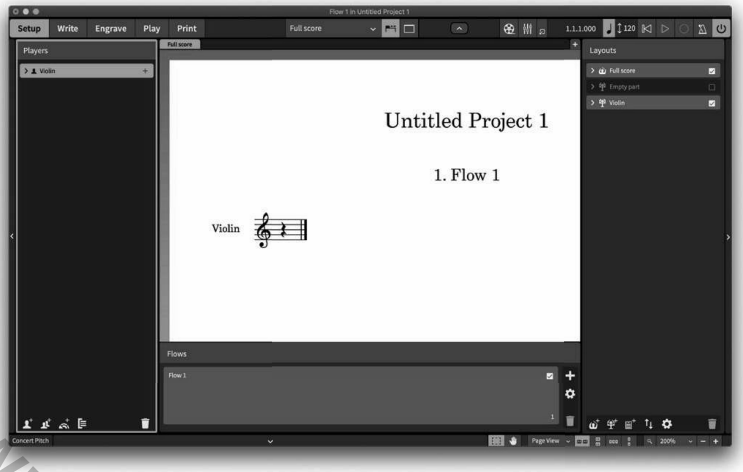
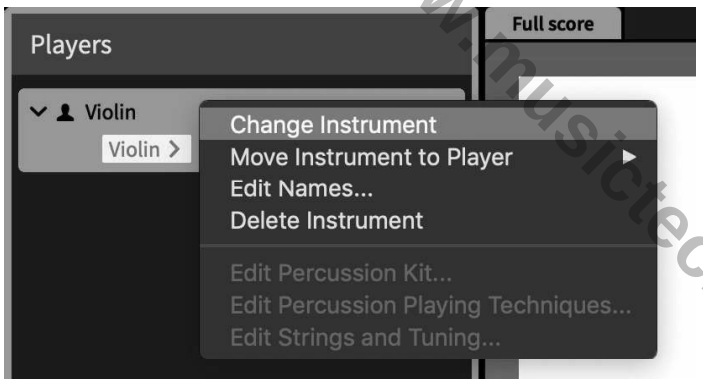
... then **Add** will add a Violin player to the project, and the Setup window will now look different, with the Violin player on the left, and a view of the untitled score in the middle:



If you are creating music for an ensemble where you know the players, it can be useful to rename the players to match the ensemble. Renaming a player is done by double-clicking the name in the players list (by default the player is named after the first instrument they are allocated).

It is possible to change the instrument that a player is using - doing this means that the music in the player's flows is preserved. By expanding the player in the list, and then clicking the triangle at the right of the current instrument, a menu will appear ...



... and clicking **Change Instrument** will open the previously-seen instrument selection window, allowing selection of a new instrument for that player.

Dorico allows the addition of section players as well as ensembles of players - covered next in this chapter - but for now a single player will suffice to allow a tour of entering and editing music. If you're keen to started creating, editing and printing music, you should read the section on Flows on page 13 before moving onto the Write chapter on page 19. You can return for more details on Setup when you're ready.

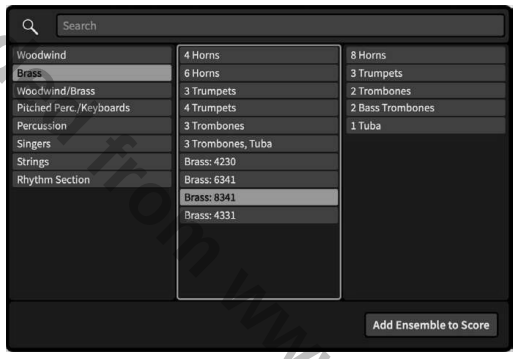
Sample downloaded from www.musictechtuition.com

Adding a Section Player

Section players represent a section of players - such as the violins in an orchestra - and have some functions available that solo players do not (such as the ability to create divisi sections where the section splits to play different parts). Section players will generally have an 'ensemble' sound chosen for playback, so this will often be a reason to choose them. Section players are added in the same way as solo players, choosing **`Add Section Player`** in the first window, before choosing the instrument to be held by the section player.

Adding an Ensemble

Ensembles allow the quick creation of common ensembles, creating multiple players with a single action. Ensembles are created from the window first seen at the start of this chapter, or by pressing the button shown next to the title of this section. The ensemble can be picked from the window, such as this one where a brass ensemble has been chosen:



Once created, the ensemble players work in largely the same way as players created by other methods.

Flows

Dorico uses 'Flows' to represent musical ideas, parts, movements or songs. A project will contain at least one flow, and by default the flow will be included in all layouts (see page 14 for more on layouts).

Creating

Dorico creates a flow with a new project, so you may not need to create a flow until you start working on more complex projects, but creating a new flow is easy. Click the + in the flows section, and a new flow will be created. By default all players present in the project will be included in the new flow, so if not all of them are required, you can follow the instructions on page 14 to exclude them as needed.

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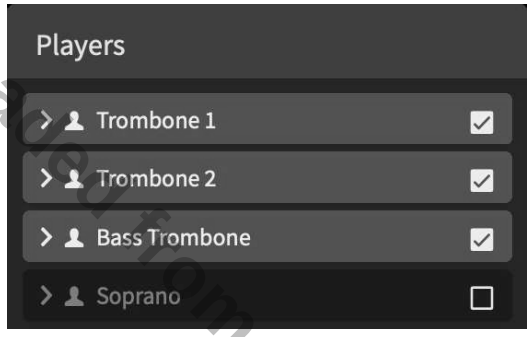
Renaming

Renaming a flow is done by double-clicking the name of the flow in the **Flows** area at the bottom of the setup screen. Note that by default the name of the flow will be included in the text under the title of the piece, so updating the flow name will update this. There is more on how this works on page 72.

Excluding a Player from a Flow

Sometimes you will have players present in a project who do not play in a given flow. To select the players for a flow, select the flow in the **Flows** section ...

... and then untick any player who isn't required in that flow:



The player will no longer appear in the score for that flow, and their part will be correctly marked as tacet if it is printed out.

Layouts

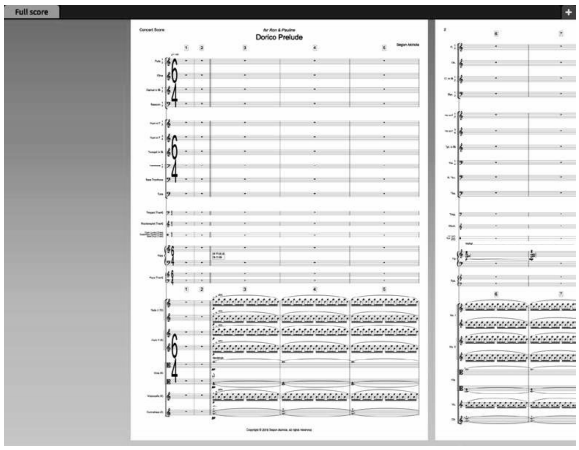
Layouts combine flows and rules for representing the flows on the page. They are shown on the right-hand side of the setup window:

By default, Dorico creates a new layout for each player in a project, plus a score which contains all of the players. It is possible to create new layouts - such as a score with a small layout or for a specific set of players - here.

Sample downloaded from www.musicnotation.com

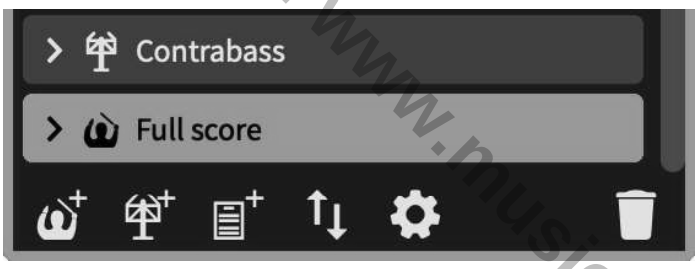
Creating a new layout

A brief example will show creation of an extra full score layout for a project, but change the page orientation to allow the creation of a landscape score with more bars of music on each page. The example starts with the included project 'Dorico Prelude', with a full score that looks like this in setup mode:

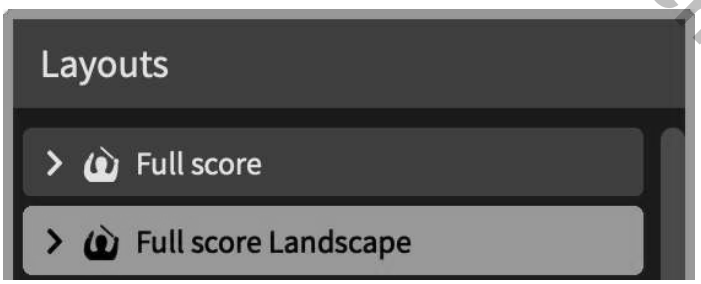


Rather than alter the existing full score, a new one can be created using the **Add Full Score Layout** button at the bottom of the layouts section on the right:

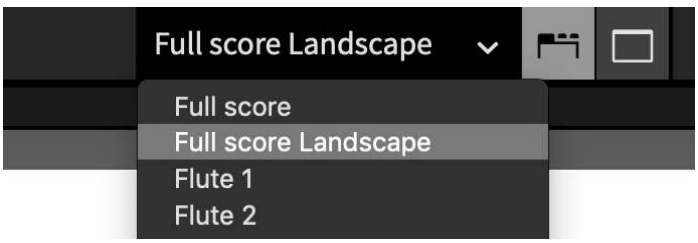
A new full score layout is created at the bottom of the list:



It can be clicked and dragged to the top of the list to reside under the original full score, and renamed by double-clicking the name:



However, selecting the new score layout with the menu at the top ...



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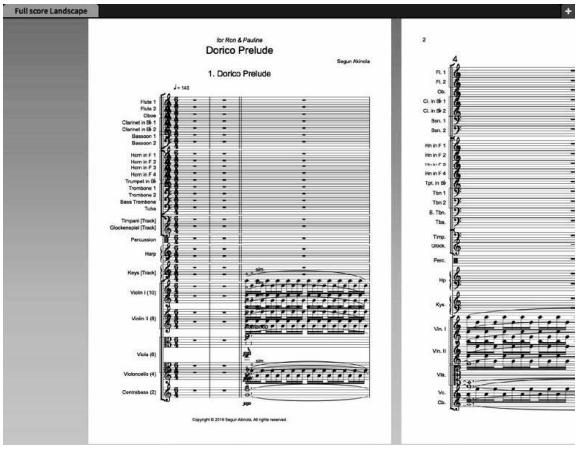
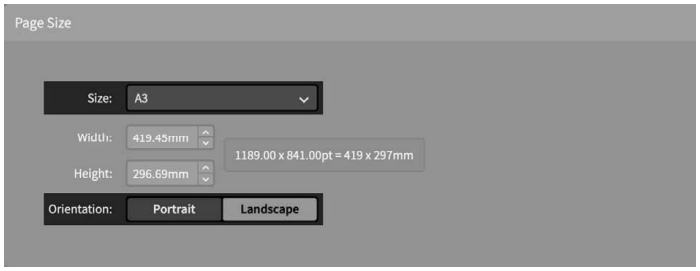
... leads to a messy layout - the flows are too big for the page:



The reason for this is seen when comparing the two layouts:

The new layout is using an A4 size page, and has a larger space size, so the music is larger - two reasons for the lack of space. This is fixed by going to the layout options window - **CTRL/⌘ + SHIFT + L** - and clicking the new **`Full Score Landscape`** layout in the list on the right:

In the **`Page Size`** section, the **`Size`** is altered to **`A3`**, and **`Orientation`** to **`Landscape`** ...



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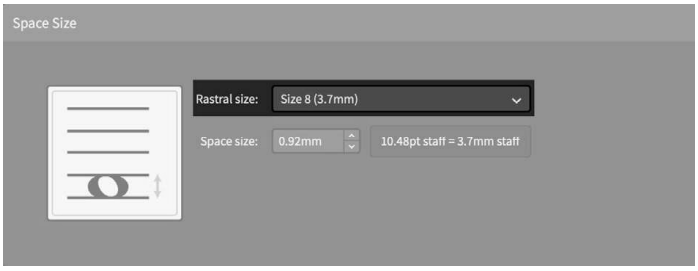
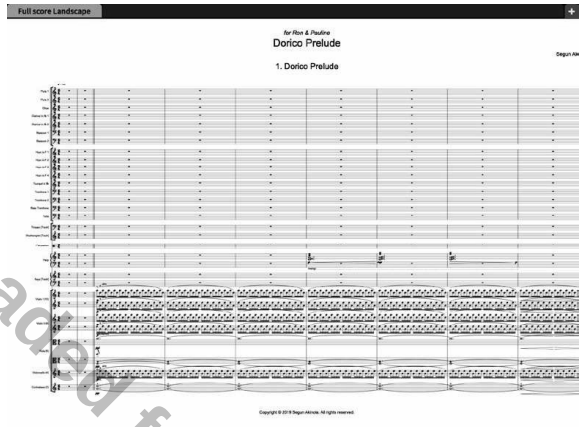
... while in the **`Space Size`** section the **`Rastral Size`** was set to **`Size 8`** ...

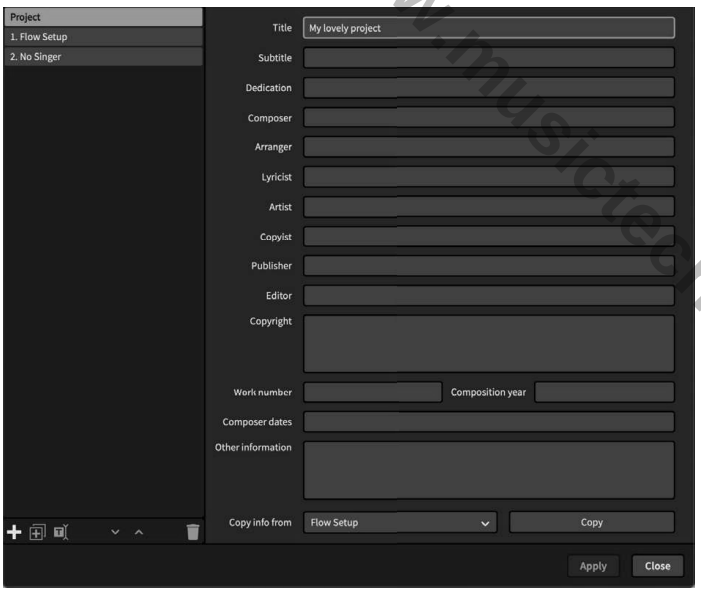


Clicking **`Apply`** and then **`Close`** leads to a layout which still needs some work, but is a vast improvement on the starting point:



Project Information

The project information window is actually available globally in Dorico, but it makes sense to look at it at the beginning of a project during the setup phase. It is accessed using **CTRL/⌘ + I**, and is shown below.



Here it is possible to set the project name (which by default appears at the top of a layout) as well as a wide range of other information which can be placed on the page using text tokens - see page 72 for how to use this information. It is also possible to name flows here by clicking them on the left and altering the title in the same location as the project title was initially.

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Write

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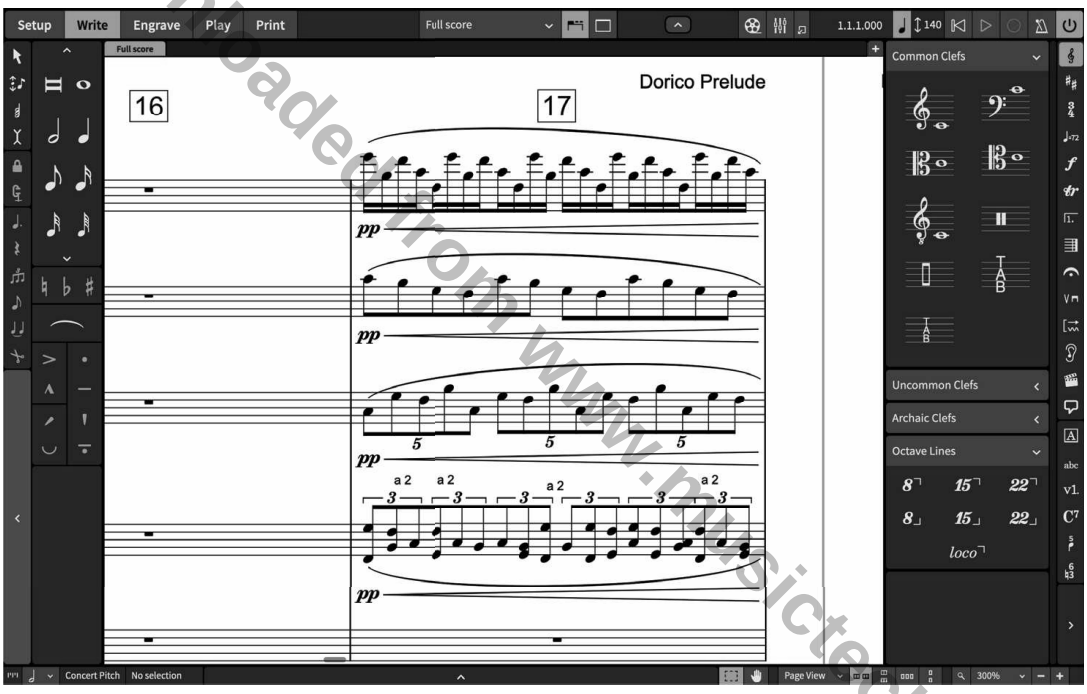
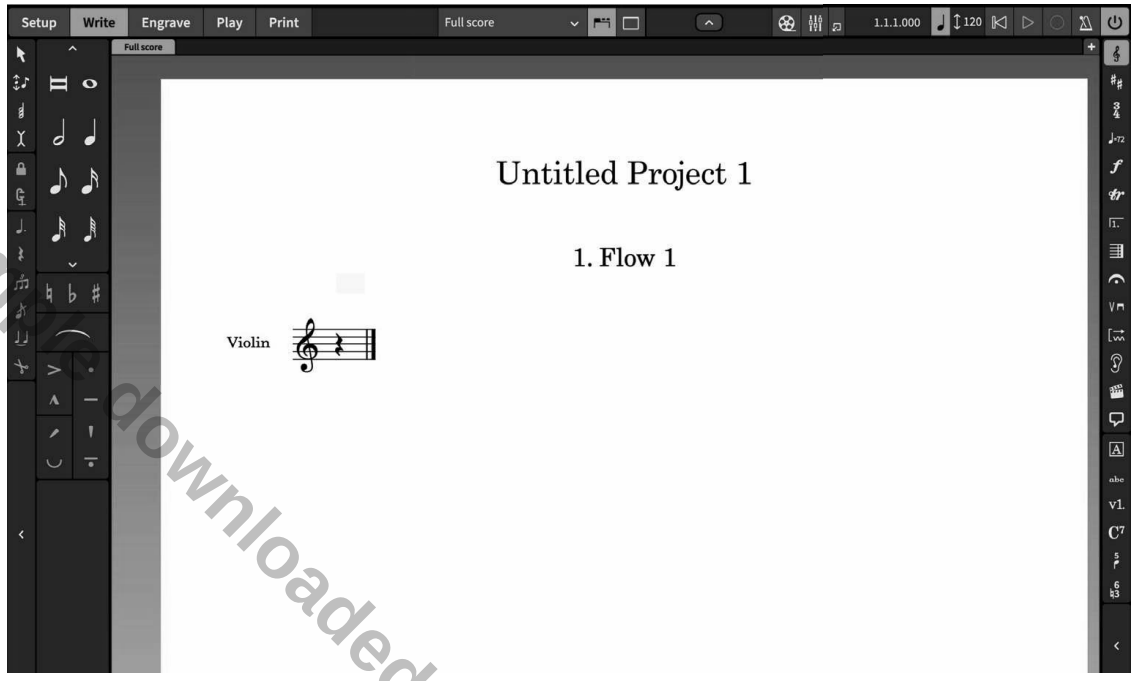


The majority of your work will occur in Write mode, which is selected by clicking the **Write** button at the top left, or using **CTRL**/⌘ **+ 2**. The window appearance will alter to be similar to this:



Here it is possible to enter notes and chords, and add a myriad of other musical features. We will start with basic entry using the QWERTY keyboard, and look at other methods later.

Note Entry

To enter some music, first select the bar that you want to start entry - in the case of the project that has just been created, there is only one bar, and clicking in it will select the rest that is present:

Hitting **SHIFT + N** will toggle note entry mode on, and the caret will appear at the point where the note is about to be entered:

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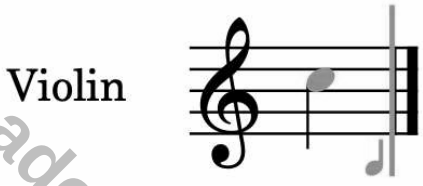
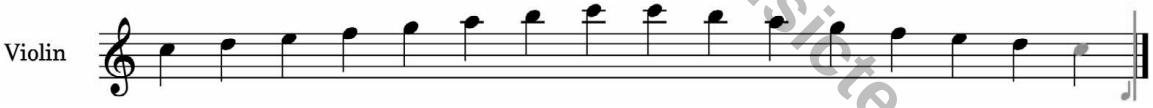
On the left-hand side of the screen, you should see that Quarter Note / Crotchet is selected (if it's not visible, press **CTRL**/⌘ **+ 7**) ...

... which will mean the note that will be input will be a Quarter Note. Hitting **C** on the computer keyboard will enter the note into the flow ...

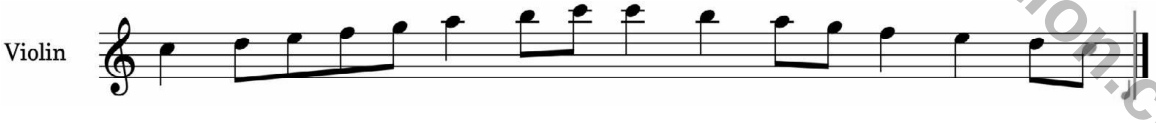


... and move the caret on to the next note insertion area. Hitting another valid note pitch on the keyboard will enter that note (here a **D** was chosen):

This can continue indefinitely - here a run up and down the C major scale was entered.



Changing note durations when entering can be done either by clicking the relevant icon in the panel on the left, or by using the number keys on the main QWERTY keyboard - with **1** representing a 1/128 note, and **9** a double whole note.



Adding in accidentals is done by selecting them before entering the note pitch. They are selected on the panel, or by hitting **0** for natural, **-** for flat and **=** for sharp (thinking of this as + makes this logical).

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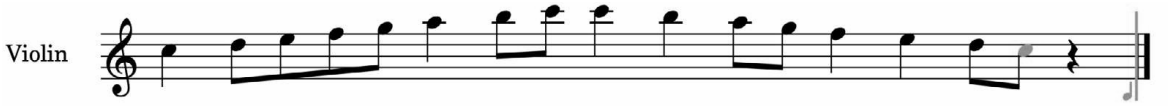
Entering a rest at the current caret location is achieved by hitting **SPACE**:

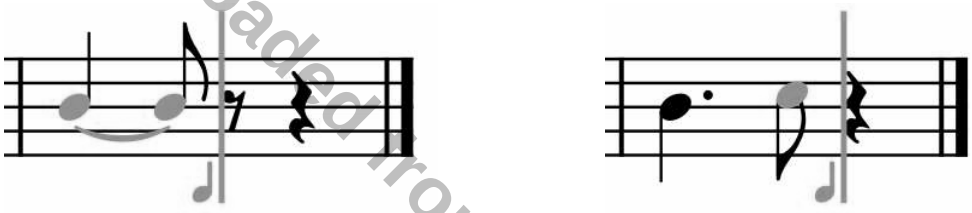


If the note that is entered is in the wrong octave, it can be moved up or down an octave using **CTRL**/⌘ **+ ALT +** ↑ and **CTRL**/⌘ **+ ALT +** ↓.

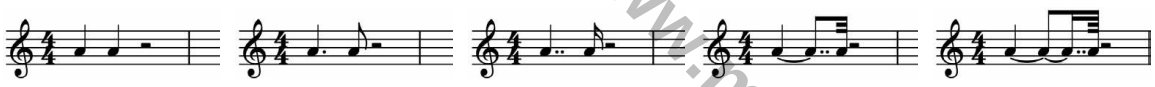
Dotted Notes

To enter a dotted note, press **.** to activate dotted note input:

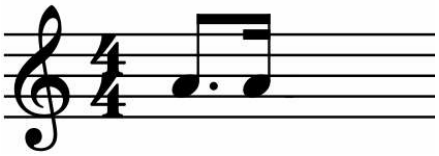
Any note input will now be notated appropriately (although initially it will often be notated with a tie, and become dotted once other notes are entered).



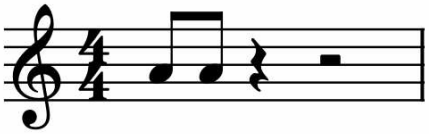
It is possible to cycle through the number of dots added to a note by pressing **ALT + .**, running through the cycle below:



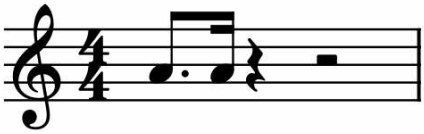
A common rhythm to enter is a dotted note followed by another note which has the value of the dot, such as shown below:



There is a quick way to enter this in Dorico. Enter the rhythm as two identical notes (eighths in this case) ...



... highlight the notes (the first one or both), and press **.**:



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