# Braille Music—Australian Addendum

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# Compiled by

# The Australian Braille Authority Music Subcommittee

Braille queries or suggestions for addition to this addendum should be referred to Jordie Howell, jordie.howell@visionaustralia.org or to aba@printdisability.org.

Music braille queries may also be placed on the Ozbrl Listserve. Using this forum is encouraged as it allows questions and answers to be shared. Transcribers and musicians often have the same queries.

This document should be considered a "work in progress". As queries and suggestions are made, the document will be updated.

# Introduction

Braille Music is the only universal braille code that spans countries and languages. There are, however, formatting differences between countries in how braille music is transcribed. Such differences are permissible as there is flexibility in how a music score may be represented in order to be user-friendly, depending on the circumstances. The braille music code itself, however, has been internationally agreed upon and is therefore consistent across nations.

The international code is set out in *The New International Manual of Braille Music Notation* (1997) complied by Bettye Krolick.

In most circumstances, Australia follows the formatting conventions of the U.K. as found in *The Braille Music Layout Manual* compiled and edited by Jane Ware.

This document outlines current formatting practices in Australia, where they deviate from the *Braille Music Layout Manual.* Where possible reference is given to the relevant statements or examples in the Music Layout Manual.

# Aim

We recognize that individuals transcribing music may ponder over the different ways of representing a music concept. This addendum strives to minimize ambiguities in relation to music transcription practices throughout Australia as well as presenting transcribers with a helpful reference to accompany the *New International Manual of Braille Music* and the *Braille Music Layout Manual.*

# References

* *The New International Manual of Braille Music Notation* The Braille Music Subcommittee World Blind Union, compiled by Bettye Krolick (1997) ISBN: 9090092692. Referred to as International Manual in this document.
* *Braille Music Layout Manual* compiled and edited by Jane Ware (2002). ISBN 1858785561. Referred to as Music Layout Manual in this document.

Two other documents which, whilst not official documents for Australia, can offer useful reference and examples are:

* *Braille Music Code 1997,* Developed by Braille Authority of North America. Referred to as BANA in this document.
* *Introduction to Braille Music Transcription,* Second Edition, by Mary Turner De Garmo. Referred to as De Garmo in this document.

# General Layout

## Navigation Line:

Australian braille formatting rules reserves the first line of each braille page as the Navigation Line. The print page number is shown on the left and the braille page number on the right. The space between these numbers is reserved for a Running Header.

This convention should be used for braille music in Australia.

## Print Page Indicators:

**Literary context:** In literary braille print page indicators are shown as a row of hyphens across a page leading to the new print page number on the right. This method should be used where page turnovers occur outside of actual music notation.

**Music context:** The print page indicator is dot 5, dot 25 as defined in the International Manual (Table 14).

**Piano music:** Page turnovers are centred on the line.

**Single line instrument:**

Where the British method of showing line and bar numbers is used, a page turnover is centred on the line above the stated line and bar numbers.

Where line numbers are not included and bar numbers are positioned on the left of each line, page turnovers are positioned to line up with the bar where the page turnover occurs.

**Vocal music:** A page turnover is positioned on a line between the lyrics and music, to line up with the bar where the page turnover occurs.

# General Principles

## Metronome Markings

The United Kingdom uses stem signs for metronome markings. Australia follows the International Manual (1997), paragraph 14-17.

This method uses an unspaced sequence of the note C, followed by dots 2356 as the equals sign, then the number of beats per minute.

Brackets around metronome marks in print are usually ignored.

A variety of examples can be found in Example 8-8, De Garmo.

## Octave signs

A new line of braille ALWAYS requires an octave sign whether a new bar or the continuation of a bar from the previous line.

## Music Code Switch

The prefix for music (Table 14, International Manual) and the corresponding prefix for literary material have been endorsed as part of UEB. Refer to section 14.5 the Rules of Unified English Braille.

This sign may be omitted when it is evident from formatting whether music or literary code is used.

The most common use is where music braille and literary braille alternate in the same line of text.

## Accidentals in Literary Context

Unified English Braille has assigned braille symbols for the sharp, flat and natural sign when used in literary context. Refer to section 3.18 of the Rules of Unified English Braille.

# Single Line Layout

The format described in the Music Layout Manual should in general be used for single line layout. The reference to both line and bar numbers is useful for both students and teachers.

If line numbers are not required, usually for experienced musicians, then the music may be brailled with bar numbers (no numeric indicator required) on the left in a similar fashion to bar numbers shown in the left hand of piano music.

The following notes are referenced to specific notes and examples in the Music Layout Manual.

### Print page indicators

### p1, note 1.

See above note under General Layout regarding positioning of print page indicators.

### Clef signs

### p1, note 3

Australia does not show clef signs. Octave signs are sufficient to give the relevant information.

Note, however, it is appropriate for students to learn and understand the various clef signs and their range as part of their theory.

### Octave signs

### p1, notes 4 and 5

Australia places a new octave sign at the beginning of EVERY line of braille music, not just new print lines.

Always restate the octave at the beginning of the braille line if a bar is split across lines.

### Reference letters or numbers

### p1, note 7

Reference letters or numbers should be placed in music brackets (dots 2356) and positioned above the bar to which they refer.

# Bar-Over-Bar Layout

# (Piano Music)

Australia adheres to UK formatting with the following exceptions:

* Mark the beginning of EVERY bar with an octave mark.
* Octave signs are inserted at the beginning of every line when music runs over.
* Ends of hairpin dynamics are always transcribed unless there is an obvious change of dynamic.
* Left hand and right hand bars are aligned to the octave sign at the beginning of the bar.
* Use tracker dots (dot 3) where there are five or more blank spaces in a musical line. This allows for at least three tracker dots preceded and followed by a space.

### Expressions on free line

### p18, note 10 (e)

Australia uses music brackets (dots 2356) to indicate expression and rehearsal/bar numbers when written above the line of music. This deviates from the UK convention of using dots 345 at the beginning and end of expression and rehearsal markings above the music line. Note that expressions written within the line of music require the dot 345 word indicator.

### Order of dynamics and expressions

### p21, note (f), pp21

Australia places the word first and dynamic second, e.g. "legato p." No space is left between the expressions. eg. .=>legato>p'

### p22, (b) Example.

This example should be brailled as "dolce p." These are considered two separate expressions and so should be brailled as shown in the above example.

Note that in the example the octave mark in the right hand lines up with the rest at the beginning of the bar in the left hand. In Australia the left hand would be brailled one cell to the left to line up the octave marks.

### Half pedal marking

### p31, note 14

Half pedal marking: Australia uses dots 5, 126, 14 as per the International Manual Table 15A whereas UK uses dots 16, 126, 14.

### Tracker dots continued

### p23: note 11 (a) and (b)

When tracker dots continue over a bar line in the alternate hand, no gap is necessary to indicate the bar line.

### Leaving room for signs of expression

### p24

When one hand begins with a phrase or dynamic mark, blank cells are left following the hand sign in the alternate hand to ensure the octave signs align.

### Alternating hands

### p25, Note 12

When hands alternate, Australia uses hand signs (right hand: dots 46, 345; left hand: dots 456, 345) rather than “r.h.” and “l.h.”

### Leaving room for pedal markings.

### p26

Blank cells are left in the right hand so that the pedal mark in the left hand appears first, followed by octave signs that align in both hands. Note that signs of expression or dynamics in the right hand may be aligned with the pedal mark in the left.

### Segno Sign (dots 346)

### p29

The UK places this mark in both hands. Australia places it in the right hand and uses either blank cells or tracker dots in the left hand dependent on the number of cells required.

# Words and Voice Layout for one or two languages.

## Lyrics

Note that the Braille Music Layout Manual was not written using UEB. In general use UEB for English lyrics. However, lyrics when part of musical notation are considered to be musical notation so the following adaptations may be made.

* Braille music brackets (dots 2356) should be used where required. This saves valuable space.
* Do not use the "in" contraction at the beginning of a word where it could be confused with the vocal repeat indicator. For example do not use the "in" contraction for "incomparable" where it may be confused with repeating the word "comparable". Similarly do not use the "in" contraction following the vocal repeat indicator as this could be confused with a double repeat indicator.

### Translation

### p81, note 1

Australia brailles the main language with the melody, and places the translation at the end of the piece rather than below the music line.

### Accents

When transcribing in a foreign language, the braille is uncontracted using accents of the language being transcribed, rather than the accents of Unified English Braille. A page is inserted to define these accents to the reader. These accents as part of pages 193-206 of the International Manual.

## General points

* Page turnovers and bar numbers are placed in a line between the lyrics and music. They are positioned to line up with the bar they refer to. Bar numbers are placed in music brackets (dots 2356).
* When no bar numbers exist in the print, it is often advisable to add bar numbers. A bar number every 10 bars, or at a turn of print page is most helpful.
* Ensure to add slurs to indicate a syllable has more than one note, even if they do not occur in the print.

### Phrasing

### p81, note 2, p82, note 8

As stated, phrasing is used to determine the length of a line of braille music, rather than completed bars. As stated in note 8, the placement of rests at the end of the musical line, is an invaluable tool for a vocalist who is sight reading. Other than at the beginning of a piece, avoid rests at the beginning of a line of music, they are better placed at the end of the line above.

# Accompaniment with outline.

p39.

Australia follows UK conventions with the following exceptions:

* A tie is not restated in the following bar or braille line.
* Octave signs should always be included in the outline part.
* Tempo changes should be included in the piano part.

### When the outline part is silent

When the outline part is silent for more than 4 bars: either omit the part and revert back to a 2-line parallel or, if there is more than one solo part, another part can be substituted while the top line rests.

### Placement of dynamics

Dynamics are allowed for with blank cells in the alternate part, except when there is a runover in an adjacent part.

# Chord Symbols

p158

* The list of print symbols on page 159 should be used with chord notation with the exception that the dots 56 can be omitted from the plus and minus signs. The International Manual allows for the use of the literary code of each country with respect to the plus, minus, parentheses and oblique stroke when used in chord notation as per paragraph 12-3. However each of these symbols are two-cell symbols in UEB. When in musical notation it is considered appropriate to use the music brackets for parentheses, and just the second half of the UEB sign for each of plus, minus and oblique stroke.
* The Music Layout Manual uses the capital indicator to begin each chord. Some transcribers in Australia use the grade 1 indicator (dots 56) instead of a capital sign before each chord. Either method may be used.
* No space is required between chord symbols within a bar, the capital or grade 1 indicator marks the beginning of a new chord.
* Unless otherwise indicated multiple chords within a bar are assumed to align to the beat. Where this is not the case, the bar division sing (dots 46, dots 13) are added to the melody line to show where the chord change occurs.

# Short Score.

p177.

Australia does not usually use this format. We present each part separately, or, if parts contain the same words, the piece is transcribed as a score rather than using intervals.

# Theory and Theory Exams

This information has been compiled by Vision Australia music transcribers and does not appear in other braille music manuals.

Australia has used the following formatting conventions for the transcription of theory exams so that:

A. Material is easy to find in a short amount of time regardless of braille fluency; and

B. The exam is legible to all students regardless of braille music proficiency.

## Exams

Transcribe only necessary information at the beginning of the exam. This should include:

* Candidate number
* Name of the exam
* Time, date, time allowed
* Available marks.

### Formatting

General formatting should follow the ABA formatting guidelines. As a general rule: Questions start in cell 1

2. A. B. etc. begin in cell 3

3. The instructions and roman numerals (i), (ii) begin in Cell 5.

Include transcribers notes to indicate the amount of space for a response, e.g. the number of blank lines for a given answer.

Number of marks if given are shown in parentheses immediately after the question number they refer to.

### Intervals

When a question asks to name intervals, do not use interval signs. Each note is transcribed unspaced from each other. Include octave signs for each note regardless of octave rules.

For harmonic analysis all intervals are to be read upwards. A transcriber's note should be included to inform the candidate of this.

### Rhythmic examples

In rhythmic examples where notes are joined at the stems, use a slur to show such beaming. This includes questions where the candidate is asked to add bar lines.

The music asterisk (dots 345, 26, 35) is used to indicate blank spaces to be filled in by notes or rests.

### Four-part harmony

Four-part harmony in print is usually written with soprano and alto on the treble stave, tenor and bass on the bass stave.

In braille, four-part harmony is written as an open score: ie a bass note with three intervals above it, always read upwards. In-accords and part in-accords are used if the parts aren't moving in block chords.