

Writing about Music

A Style Sheet

THIRD EDITION

D. Kern Holoman



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I Music Terminology

Titles of Works

- 1.1 *Classical Titles.* The formal title of a work from the classical repertoire includes the key, index identifier, and sometimes its familiar or traditional name.

Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in Eb Major, op. 55 (“Eroica”)

or

Beethoven, Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, op. 55 (“Eroica”)

Either solution is correct. (The use of lowercase *b* and the number symbol in place of the flat and sharp symbols, respectively, is not.) For most applications the spelled-out version ends up posing fewer challenges to design and layout.

- 1.2 *Other Titles.* Examples of titles from the countless other repertoires of music, and the many sources that preserve them (manuscripts, prints, albums, digital media), appear in the appropriate locations throughout this book; see especially “Songs,” 1.8. Here are some samples for consideration.

the Song of Moses

Metallica (the *Black Album*) / *The Black Album* (Prince)

Ch'unhyangga (Song of Ch'unhyang, 춘향가)
 "Witchi-Tai-To" (Comanche peyote chant)
 "Jesus Shall Reign" (DUKE STREET 8.8.8.8.)
 "Oklahoma!" the title song from *Oklahoma!*

- 1.3 *Generic Titles.* Generic titles are those, in English, that use such describers as symphony, concerto, fantasia, and the like, often with an identifying opus number or index number appended. These titles are given in roman type. Consider the forms below.

Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565
 Haydn, Baryton Trio No. 71 in A Major, Hob. XI:71
 Beethoven, String Quartet No. 1 in F Major, op. 18, no. 1
 Beethoven, Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 61
 Beethoven's Fifth Symphony
 Schubert, Mass No. 6 in Eb Major, D. 950
 Schumann, Variations for Piano, op. 9
 the Schumann Variations, op. 9
 Beach, Piano Concerto, op. 45
 Rakowski, Etude No. 37, "Taking the Fifths"

(See, for more samples, 1.16, and, for catalogs, 1.30.)

Capitalization styles vary but should be consistent throughout a work. CMS (8.190), for instance, prefers Symphony no. 3. The style strongly preferred in the profession, from performing artists to record producers, uses the uppercase No. for the title—and lowercase no. for a constituent of the opus number, as in the case of the Beethoven string quartet above.

- 1.4 *Composers' Titles.* Titles assigned by the composer (usually in their original language) are given in italics. (For capitalization of foreign titles, see 1.20, 2.42–49.)

Bach, *Das wohltemperierte Clavier* (or *The Well-Tempered Clavier*)
 Mozart, *Vesperae solennes de confessore*
 Beethoven, *Missa solemnis*
 Rossini, *La gazza ladra*

Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*
 Debussy, *La Mer*
 Stravinsky, *Le Sacre du printemps* (or *The Rite of Spring*)
 Boulez, *Le Marteau sans maître*
 Takemitsu, *Rain Tree Sketch II: In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen*
 Radiohead, *In Rainbows*

- 1.5 *Common Names.* Many works are referred to by widely recognized popular names. These are generally put in quotation marks.

Mozart, Symphony No. 41 in C Major ("Jupiter")
 Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, op. 57 ("Appassionata")
 Beethoven, Piano Trio in Bb Major, op. 97 ("Archduke")
 Schubert, Symphony No. 8 in B Minor ("Unfinished")
 the "Archduke" Trio
 the "Emperor" Concerto

To refer to Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony may in a subtle way suggest that it really isn't unfinished at all, that the quotes are a sort of conspiratorial wink of the eye. There are, however, any number of unfinished symphonies of Schubert, but only one called the "Unfinished."

- 1.6 The rule of thumb, then, is to italicize titles given to works by composers themselves and put common titles within quotation marks. These principles collide with vexing frequency; nicknames and true subtitles are often difficult to keep separate, and the matter of foreign languages complicates things still further. Neither Beethoven nor Tchaikovsky, it turns out, approved of the subtitle "Pathétique." When in doubt, use quotation marks for common names.

"From the New World"
 the "New World" Symphony
 the "Pathétique"
 the Pastoral Symphony
 the "Italian" Symphony

- 1.7 *Operas, Musicals.* Use roman type within quotation marks for arias drawn from operas (and, likewise, songs—and even titled sections of ballets and suites—drawn from other theatricals).

“Where’er You Walk,” from Handel’s *Semele*

“Porgi amor”

“Addio, fiorito asil,” from *Madama Butterfly*

“Somewhere,” from *West Side Story*

“Chorus of Exiled Palestinians,” from *The Death of Klinghoffer*

- 1.8 *Songs.* Song is the common denominator of music, reaching us from every time and place. Since the iPod and its promise of putting “1,000 songs in your pocket” (2001), the word has come to describe, too loosely, single movements in general. (And see 3.30.) Here we mean a short, self-contained work with lyrics and accompaniment.

In almost every case, render a song title in quotation marks, and its container—the series, publication, or album from which it comes—in italic.

“Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho”

“Greensleeves”

“Der Leiermann,” from *Winterreise*

“La Flûte de Pan,” from *Chansons de Bilitis*

“East St. Louis Toodle-Oo” (but see 1.12)

Grateful Dead’s “Candyman” (*American Beauty*, 1970)

“Takeda Lullaby” (Takeda no komoriuta)

Hey Jude was essentially another of Capitol’s cobblings together for the U.S. market of U.K. singles. The salient track was, of course, “Hey Jude.”

- 1.9 *Song Title Translations.* Provide translations and transliterations as appropriate to your argument. See 2.50.

Bartók, “Síppal, dobbal” (With Drums and Pipes, lit. “with a whistle, with a drum”), from *Szabadban* (Out of Doors)

Neil Hannon, "Les Jours tristes" (Sad Days; also known as "Perfect Lovesong"), from *Amélie*

- 1.10** *Named Movements.* These levels—quotation marks and italics—work for named movements in general.

"Arlequin," from *Carnaval*

"Ondine," from *Gaspard de la nuit*

"The Open Prairie," from *Billy the Kid*

- 1.11** *Albums.* Various ways of citing albums and tracks are suggested in 3.28–31. Album titles, however, can be highly nuanced. Consider:

A Love Supreme, John Coltrane's masterpiece

Part 1, "Acknowledgment," from *A Love Supreme* (contains the "Love Supreme" mantra)

"Love Supreme" Suite, live performance 26 July 1965, Antibes Jazz Festival

"Acknowledgment," alternate takes 1 and 2 (takes 90246-1 and 90246-2), 10 December 1964

Max Steiner, music for *Gone with the Wind* (*Gone with the Wind: Original MGM Soundtrack*, 1939; re-engineered CBS/Sony, 1990). Note additionally Steiner's 30-minute suite (RCA, 1954), Muir Matheson's version (Warner Brothers, 1961), and Charles Gerhardt's re-edition and re-recording for Classic Film Scores (1974).

- 1.12** *Italics for Song Titles.* It may sometimes be preferable to use italic font for song titles and other short works.

Her rendition of *An die Musik*, like that of *Gretchen am Spinnrade* earlier in the program, drew a chorus of approving murmurs and not a few tears.

His favorite Debussy preludes were *Le Vent dans la plaine* (The Wind in the Plain) and *La Cathédrale engloutie* (The Submerged Cathedral).

The first important Ellington-Miley collaboration, *East St. Louis Toodle-Oh*, is impressive, but Miley's anguished *wa-wa* horn dominates it, as it does the second important joint work, *Black and Tan Fantasy*.

- 1.13 *Latin Liturgical Works.* Capitalize such titles as Mass, Requiem, and Te Deum, as well as their constituent movements; leave them in roman type.

Kyrie	Sanctus
Gloria	Agnus Dei
Credo	Benedictus

In view of the symbolic and structural function of these high sonorities in the Credo and Benedictus of the Mass, it is not surprising that Beethoven resorted to this framework again, in those parts of the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony with an explicitly religious text.

Kyrie *Cunctipotens genitor*
 Alleluia *Angelus domini*
 the motet *In seculum / In nova fert / Garrit gallus*

- 1.14 *Movement Titles.* Tempo indications as movement titles are capitalized and, in most cases, given in roman type.

We expect a string quartet to commence with a sonata-allegro movement, but to this point the Allegro has all the earmarks of an interjection within an Adagio movement.

- 1.15 Listings in concert programs and related publications require full formal titles. (See chapter 6.)

Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, op. 58

or

Beethoven, Concerto No. 4 for Piano and Orchestra in G Major, op. 58

or even (in high Boston Symphony Orchestra style)

Beethoven, Concerto No. 4 for Piano and Orchestra, in G Major, opus 58

but not

Beethoven, Fourth Piano Concerto

- 1.16 *Numbering of Symphonies by Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Dvořák.* These are especially difficult because more than one numbering system is or has been in wide use. Use the following, which reflect contemporary knowledge and practice and are in each case the systems adopted by *The New Grove*.

SCHUBERT

- Symphony No. 6 in C Major, D. 589 ("Little C-Major")
 Symphony No. 7 in E Minor, D. 729 (a sketch, also called E Major and E Major/Minor)
 Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, D. 759 ("Unfinished")
 Symphony No. 9 in C Major, D. 944 ("Great C-Major")

MENDELSSOHN

- Symphony No. 3 in A Minor, op. 56 ("Scotch" or "Scottish")
 Symphony No. 4 in A Major, op. 90 ("Italian")
 Symphony No. 5 in D Major, op. 107 ("Reformation")

DVOŘÁK

- Symphony No. 7 in D Minor, op. 70
 Symphony No. 8 in G Major, op. 88
 Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, op. 95 ("From the New World")

- 1.17 *Opus Number as Identifier.* When an opus or catalog number is used as sole identification of the work, it does not have to be preceded by a comma.

Adagio K. 411

In the Trio op. 97, Beethoven achieves . . .

Major and Minor

- 1.18 The words *major* and *minor* are identical in grammatical structure, both of them adjectives. The convention of uppercase Major and lowercase minor is correct only for some styles of chord notation, notably in analysis and figured bass, where such abbreviations as GM (G major) and Gm (G minor), or even G and g, can be useful.

Sonata in A Major

Sonata in A Minor

The words *major* and *minor* are capitalized only in titles, however.

The first theme is in C minor; the second, in E-flat major.

- 1.19 When a key *precedes* a genre it becomes an adjectival construction and requires a hyphen.

A-Major Sonata

A-Minor Sonata

Capitalization Schemes

- 1.20 See also 2.42–49. In English capitalize the nouns and other major words as described in CMS 8.157; in German capitalize the nouns; in French capitalize through the first substantive; in Italian, capitalize just the first letter. The following are typical examples:

Ein deutsches Requiem

Le Roi Lear

Il re Lear

Les Vêpres siciliennes

I vespri siciliani

Der Freischütz

Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis

Ariettes oubliées

Prélude à "L'Après-midi d'un faune"

Rhapsody in Blue

Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street

Proper Names

- 1.21 *Composer and Performer Names.* Use transliterated, American English names for composers and performers. Absent reason to the contrary, adopt the most common version. The usual resource

is “Biographical Names” at the back of *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (or at m-w.com using the tab “Encyclo.”).

Stravinsky	Dussek
Tchaikovsky	Josquin des Prez
Scriabin	Fauré
Machaut	von Bülow
Yvonne Loriod (Mme Messiaen) or Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen	
Yo-Yo Ma <i>but</i> Lang Lang	
Ravi Shankar, often with his honorific Pandit	
Ali Akbar Khan, often with his honorific Ustad, and sometimes as Khansahib	
Pak Cokro (Chokro, Tjokro; the noted master of gamelan, 1909–2007), known variously under the increasingly honorific names K. R. T. Wasitodipuro, K. R. T. Wasitodinigrat, K. P. H. Notoprojo	
50 Cent / Curren\$y / Eminem / Snoop Dogg (now Snoop Lion)	
Sean “Diddy” Combs (formerly “Puff Daddy” and “P. Diddy”)	
Invisibl Skratch Piklz	

and, late-breaking:

Jay-Z, then (after July 2013) Jay Z

The Germanic rendering *Tchaikovsky* is practically universal in symphony halls and opera houses, as well as at the ballet. But Professor Taruskin’s massive oeuvre on Russian music uses Chaikov-sky. If you adopt the latter spelling, make certain to put a cross-reference in any alphabetical bibliography or index.

- 1.22 *Professional Names.* Take care to use true professional names, and do not make assumptions about nicknames.

Beth E. Levy (not Elizabeth)

R. Anderson Sutton (not Andrew)

- 1.23 *The Beethoven Problem.* According to the standard (*Webster’s*) system, the name is broken “Bee·tho·ven.” For those who are aware of the fact that *-hoven* is a common Dutch suffix, the proper

break is "Beet•hoven." It is preferable to avoid the issue entirely, separating the word as "Beetho•ven."

- 1.24 *The Mendelssohn Problem.* Remember "Mendel's son" in this most frequently misspelled of composers' names.

Mendels•sohn

- 1.25 *The Problem of Possessives.* There are any number of theories about the proper formation of possessives for names. We recommend that of CMS (7.17): add an apostrophe *and* an *s*.

Berlioz's

Boulez's

Brahms's

Saint-Saëns's

Incidentally, the *z*'s in Berlioz and Boulez, as well as the final *s* in Saint-Saëns, are pronounced.

- 1.26 *The Russian Problem.* Transliteration from the Russian alphabet is, at best, troublesome; see 2.50. Generally use the spellings with *v*, not *w* or *ff*, and *y* at the end, not *ii*. In the case of Rachmaninov (or Rachmaninoff, as he spelled it in the West; or Rakhmaninov, as some argue), the best advice is to make a reasoned decision and stick to it.

Glazunov

Scriabin

Koussevitzky (note the *z*)

Stravinsky

Prokofiev

Tchaikovsky

Rachmaninov

- 1.27 *Umlauts: the Schoenberg Problem.* Schönberg dropped the umlaut and added an *e* when he immigrated to the United States. Charles Münch did, too, but after a very brief period of being Muench he became Charles Munch (no *e*), a decision jointly made by himself, his agents, the papers, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Händel emigrated only so far as England but loses his umlaut anyway (and does not gain an *e*).

Handel (but the complete edition is *Georg Friedrich Händels Werke*)

Munch

Schoenberg

- 1.28 *Names with "von" and "de."* By and large these particles are omitted, except in the full name.

Dittersdorf

Gluck

Weber

La Guerre

Lassus

Machaut

but usually

von Bülow

de Gaulle (because "Gaulle" is only one syllable)

- 1.29 *Summary.* The following is a list of names that pose difficulties of one sort or another, with their hyphenations. Note that in typography words may not break after the first letter or before the last two letters.

Bach, Carl Phi • lipp Ema • nuel

Bar • tók, Béla

Beet • ho • ven

Ber • lioz

Bi • zet

Bo • ro • din

Brahms

Bruck • ner

Cho • pin, Fré • dé • ric

Cle • menti

Cop • land

De • bussy

De • libes

De • lius

Dia • ghi • lev

D'Indy (uppercase *D*)

Du • kas

Dvo • řák

Fauré

Franck

Glinka

Gou • nod

Grieg

Han • del, George Fri • deric

Haydn

Hof • manns • thal

Ko • dály

Kre • nek

Mah•ler	Schu•bert
Men•dels•sohn	Schu•mann
Mo•zart	Scri•a•bin, Alex•an•der
Mus•sorg•sky	Sme•tana
Pa•ga•nini	Strauss
Rach•ma•ni•nov <i>or</i>	Stra•vin•sky
Rach•ma•ni•noff	Tchai•kov•sky
Ra•vel	Verdi
Res•pi•ghi	von Bü•low
Rim•sky-Kor•sa•kov	Wag•ner
Ros•sini	We•ber
Schoen•berg	

Remember that you can always look in *Webster's* for the latest notions of what constitutes a proper American spelling of a famous biographical name, and its word divisions.

As for first names, the usual convention for running text is to include a person's full name on first mention, then only the surname. Where this strategy won't work is with big families of musicians like the Bachs and Mozarts and Seegers, and famous couples like the Schumanns, appearing close to one another in the same text. We generally talk about J. S. and C. P. E. Bach—but about Leopold and Wolfgang and Nannerl and Constanza Mozart, and Robert and Clara Schumann.

Thematic Catalogs of Composers' Works

- 1.30 Thematic catalogs are abbreviated with a letter or letters suggesting the author's name, followed by a period.

K. 191	In Köchel's catalog of Mozart, the Bassoon Concerto in Bb Major
D. 628	In Deutsch's catalog of Schubert, <i>Erlkönig</i>
J. 277	In Jahn's catalog of Weber, <i>Der Freischütz</i>
Hob. XXII:9	In Hoboken's catalog of Haydn, the <i>Missa in tempore belli</i>
BB. 62	In Somfai's <i>Béla Bartók Thematic Catalogue</i> (in progress), <i>Bluebeard's Castle</i>

The exception is BWV, for *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*, Wolfgang Schmieder's catalog of the works of Bach. This is usually abbreviated without periods.

BWV 1050 In the *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis*, the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto

There are online versions of most composer catalogs, typically unofficial databases prepared by a third party. The *Wikipedia* work lists ("Lists of Compositions by") are typically good; those in *Grove Online* are mostly authoritative.

Pitch Names

- 1.31 *Letters for Pitch Names.* For most purposes a simple uppercase letter defines pitch names well enough.

The high C immediately descends two octaves and loses every trace of energy.

The bass moves sequentially from G to B \flat to D.

The plural of a pitch name takes simply an *s*, not *'s*.

Its symmetrical images (m. 7: the Cs) are now stable and dramatically executed.

When a series of pitches is given, join the pitch names with en dashes (see 2.30).

The initial F–G–G–B \flat provides the framework for the vocal phrase that begins songs 3, 5, and 7.

- 1.32 *Naming the Octaves.* The conflicting systems in use descend from medieval practice, national habit, pipe-organ terminology, the work of Hermann von Helmholtz and Arnold Dolmetsch, and on and on. What has (recently) prevailed, largely because of its adoption for synthesizers and music-typography software, is the so-called Scientific Pitch Notation. Here middle C is the beginning of the fourth octave:

C₄ middle C
 A₄ A = 440 (*above* middle C)

The octave changes on C, not A; take care when dealing with pitches just below a particular C to refer to the previous octave.

C₅–B₄–A₄–G₄

The C-major chord C₄–E₄–G₄ consists of separate tones vibrating at 262, 330, and 392 Hz.

The most common alternative is the Helmholtz system, which calls the C two octaves below middle C “Great C,” then c, cⁱ (for middle C), cⁱⁱ, and so on.

If it is not self-evident from the context, specify the octave nomenclature in a note. Be particularly attentive to these nuances for subject areas that have traditionally used other systems—MIDI, for instance, and organ building.

Dynamics

1.33 *Use Italics.* Directions for dynamic nuance are given in italic.

piano, pianissimo

forte, fortissimo

mezzo piano, mezzo forte

sforzando

Returning to the *pianissimo* level, it reinterprets the B as an element of a normal V⁷.

The Horowitz recording shows an astonishing control of dynamics through a myriad of levels between *pianissimo* and *mezzo forte*.

1.34 *Abbreviations.* Abbreviations of these terms for dynamic nuance may be in italic as well. Boldface italic is even clearer. (See also 2.4, concerning Unicode music symbols.)

The movement originally ended *ff* at what is now m. 493.

Numbers

- 1.35** *Meter Signatures.* These are given in roman or boldface roman characters. In proper musical notation, the constituents of a numerical meter signature go directly over each other, not as a fraction.

The one is in major and $\text{C}(\frac{4}{2})$, and the other is in minor and $\frac{2}{4}$.

It is better to avoid meter signatures entirely (using, instead, such formulations as “the passage in triple meter”) than to settle for fractions in the published product, since the slash in a fraction suggests all sorts of relationships that do not apply. But in ordinary manuscript, simply type meter signatures as fractions (e.g., $6/8$) and postpone the question of how they will appear in the finished publication until the design phase. See 2.4.

- 1.36** *Chords and Figured Bass.* Roman numerals, uppercase (for major) and lowercase (for minor), are used for chord progressions. The arabic numbers and the sharps and flats that modify the numerals are quite small, since two and sometimes three of them must fit within a line of type. Take care to specify the exact position of the sharps and flats, so as not to confuse $\text{D}^{\flat 7}$ with $\text{D}^{\flat 7}$.

The second chord of ex. 3 is $\frac{7}{5}$ on the dominant.

The first movement opens with a bold, terse gesture, a $\text{I}_4^6 - \text{V}^{13} - \text{I}$ cadence which echoes down the whole length of the exposition and development.

- 1.37** *Jazz Chords.* Roman numeral notation also suffices for jazz progressions. The basic vocabulary (describing a chord’s root, quality, and extensions beyond the triad) is the same, though the notational conventions are hardly standardized. Consult the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, now part of Oxford Music Online.

The bridge to [Ray Noble’s] *Cherokee* moves downward sequentially in whole tones from $\flat\text{II}$ (Cb) to V (F) and then returns to the main key, Bb .

- 1.38** *Pitch-Class Symbols.* A caret over an arabic numeral is sometimes used to indicate pitch class.

In mm. 229–33 the rising fourths, which had always been left open ($\hat{1}-\hat{4} / \hat{2}-\hat{5}$), are closed ($\hat{1}-\hat{4} / \hat{5}-\hat{1}$).

Given the complexity of typesetting them, however, authors should consider if they are really necessary to the argument.

- 1.39** *Other Notation Systems.* Systems consisting entirely of letters and numbers—for instance, set-class trichords and tetrachords, simple guitar “tabs,” and very simple cipher notations for Asian genres—can occasionally be presented in the running text.

The two opening trichords, 027 (05t) and 012 (+2–1), are prevalent throughout the work.

[A7] D
Just as quiet as a churchmouse
G
He stole in the Martins' henhouse
D A7 D
For the Coys they needed eggs for breakfast too.

These passages may appear to be identical in both Yogyanese and Solonese versions, as in the following excerpt from Gendhing *Capang*: 5653 2123 ..35 2353N.

Most other notation, for both classical and popular idioms, belongs in musical examples, not the running text. See, for instance, in chapter 4, exs. 11–12, 14, 15 (transcriptions), 11 (cipher notation), and 18 (fakebook notation).

- 1.40** *Rehearsal Numbers.* Rehearsal numbers are generally given in boxes.

The Adagietto at [52] is centered on D and carries a signature of two sharps, while the music from [54] to [58] has E at its center.

An alternative is to use boldface for rehearsal numbers (or letters), sometimes preceded by “reh.” A typical way of referring to passages

from standard scores that lack published measure numbers is to cite the nearest rehearsal number, plus or minus the correct number of measures.

The standard cut goes from 28 to 29+7, then 41 to 43-3.

Other

1.41 On the question of italic or roman typeface for such musical terminology as "pizzicato" and "tremolo," see 2.81. The latter is generally preferable.

1.42 Pitches reside on a *staff* (sing.) or *staves* (pl.).

manuscript paper of thirty-two staves

twelve-staff paper

the crosshatching in staff 8