

Sibelius Hints and Tips

Managing Bar Numbers in Sibelius 3



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Bar numbers appear automatically in Sibelius 3. By default, they appear at the beginning of each system in both scores and extracted parts. This default frequency can be changed to your preference. For example, what if you wanted the bar numbers in the score to appear centered in every bar? What if you also wanted the bar numbers to appear in the piccolo staff (for the winds) the timpani staff (for the percussion) and the first violin staff (for the strings)? Let's do one more thing: let's place the bar numbers below the bottom of the bottom staff as well. This tutorial will take you through the steps to do just that (and more), and by doing so, you will understand the techniques of bar number customization in Sibelius 3.

Mac keyboard shortcuts are listed first, Windows second

1. Getting Started

First, let's open up an orchestral manuscript paper.

- 1) Use the keyboard shortcut **Command N** or **Ctrl+N** to open a new score.
- 2) From the **Manuscript Paper** list, choose **Orchestra, Romantic**.
- 3) Click **Finish**

2. Bar Number Frequency and Centering

- 1) Use the keyboard shortcut **Command Shift E** or **Ctrl+Shift+E** to open **Engraving Rules** from the **House Style** menu.
- 2) From the list, choose **Bar Numbers** and then select **Every bar** from the **Bar number frequency list**.
- 3) Now check the box next to **Center in the bar** and do not click **OK**: leave the window open.

3. Bar Number Repetition and Vertical Position

- 1) Click on the **Edit Text Style** button. This is a direct link to the **Edit Text Styles** (for bar numbers) section of the **House Style** menu.
- 2) Choose the tab at the top of the window labeled **Vertical Posn**.

A word to the wise here: do not change the settings under the **Vertical Position** section of this window. These options do not apply to bar numbers and only apply to page numbers, headers, footers and footnotes. For bar numbers, we are only concerned with the **Multiple Positions** section of this window.

- 3) Since by default the **Top staff** and **Bottom staff** are already checked, all we need to do now is to check **2nd position**, **3rd position** and **4th position** to accommodate the repetition of the bar numbers for the brass, percussion and strings. Notice that if you wanted to, you could check **All staves** and the bar numbers would appear on every staff.
- 4) Click **OK** and then **OK** again.

Now, do not worry what the score looks like in terms of its bar numbers at this point: not all the bar numbers are present. That's o.k. because we are not finished yet!

What we have done in the first two sections of this tutorial is to choose our bar numbers' horizontal frequency and centering. We have also set the number of times the bar numbers appear vertically in the score, in this case five including the top staff and bottom staff. Now what we need to do is to define or assign the staves in which the bar numbers will appear. This is done in **System Object Positions**.

4. Defining Bar Number Vertical Position

- 1) From the **House Style** menu choose **System Object Positions**. You will see a complete listing of all of the instruments and staves in the score.
- 2) Notice that by default, the top staff or in this case the **Piccolo** staff is selected and can't be unselected: we want bar numbers to appear above the top staff. When you scroll down the list, you will notice that the **Violin I** staff is also selected. Since we want bar numbers to appear above the string section, leave this staff selected.
- 3) Complete the selection process by selecting the **Horns in F (a)** staff so the bar numbers appear above the brass and then select the **Timpani** staff so the bar numbers appear above the percussion.
- 4) Finally, scroll down to the bottom of the list and select **Below bottom staff** so that the bar numbers appear below the bottom staff of this score, in this case the Bass staff. However, **do not select the Double Bass staff** as that will put bar numbers above the bass staff and reset the assignment of positions.
- 5) Click **OK**.

You will now see that the bar numbers appear in every bar, centered and in the instruments, staves or positions of preference:

Piccolo	= Top staff
Horn in F (a)	= 2nd position
Timpani	= 3rd position
Violin I	= 4th position
Double Bass	= Bottom staff/Below bottom staff

Let's review the basics of what we have done and where we go in the House Style menu to achieve the desired results:

- **House Style/ Engraving Rules/ Bar Numbers:** This is where you choose the horizontal frequency and position in the bar of the bar numbers, i.e. on the barline or centered in the bar.
- **House Style/ Edit Text Styles/ Bar numbers/ Vertical Posn** (We went there by clicking on the link from **Engraving Rules**): This is where you decide on how many appearances there will be of the bar numbers vertically down the score. In other words, this is where you answer the question: How many times do you want the bar numbers to repeat down the score?
- **House Style/ System Object Positions:** This is where you define or assign the staves or instruments in which the bar numbers will appear. In other words, this is where you answer the question: In which instrument staves do you want the bar numbers to appear?

5. Other Formats

In some formats, such as lead sheets, you might want bar numbers to appear in every bar and under every bar, either under the barline or centered in the bar. Setting this up is identical to the above example. The important thing to keep in mind is that the staff in a single staff format is both considered a **Top staff** and a **Bottom staff**:

- 1) Use the keyboard shortcut **Command N** or **Ctrl+N** to open a new score.
- 2) From the **Manuscript Paper** list, choose **Lead sheet** and click **Finish**.
- 3) Use the keyboard shortcut **Command Shift E** or **Ctrl+Shift+E** to open **Engraving Rules** from the **House Style** menu.
- 4) From the list, choose **Bar Numbers** and then select **Every bar** from the **Bar number frequency** list.
- 5) Check the box next to **Center in the bar** and do not click **OK**. Leave the window open.
- 6) Click on the **Edit Text Style** button. Choose the tab at the top of the window labeled **Vertical Posn.**
- 7) Uncheck **Top staff** and leave **Bottom staff** checked.
- 8) Click **OK** and then **OK** again.

Again, do not worry at this point that the bar numbers have disappeared. Remember that we still need to assign the staff to the Bottom staff position in System Object Positions.

- 9) From the **House Style** menu choose **System Object Positions**.
- 10) Again, the top staff, in this case **Alto Saxophone**, can't be unselected. Select **Below bottom staff**.
- 11) Click **OK**.

Some score formats require all the bar numbers that are assigned to staves to be under the staff, not just under the bottom staff. The bar numbers might also need to be in a box:

- 1) Use the keyboard shortcut **Command N** or **Ctrl+N** to open a new score.
- 2) From the **Manuscript Paper** list, choose **Orchestra, Romantic** and click **Finish**.
- 3) Use the keyboard shortcut **Command Shift E** or **Ctrl+Shift+E** to open **Engraving Rules** from the **House Style** menu.
- 4) From the list, choose **Bar Numbers** and then select **Every bar** from the **Bar number frequency** list.
- 5) Check the box next to **Center in the bar** and do not click **OK**.
- 6) Click on the **Edit Text Style** button. Choose the tab at the top of the window labeled **Vertical Posn.**
- 7) Leave **Top staff** and **Bottom staff** checked.
- 8) Choose the tab at the top of the window labeled **Border**.
- 9) Check **Boxed** in the **Border Shape** section.
- 10) Click **OK** and then **OK** again.
- 11) From the **House Style** menu choose **System Object Positions**.
- 12) Again, the top staff, in this case **Piccolo**, can't be unselected. Select **Below bottom staff**. It does not matter that the **Violin I** staff is selected because we have not selected **2nd position** in the **Vertical Posn** tab of **Edit Text Styles**.
- 13) Click **OK**.

Now we need to change the default position of the bar numbers so that they all appear under the selected staves:

- 14) From the **House Style** menu, choose **Default Positions** and then select **Bar numbers** from the list.
- 15) Under the section labeled **Creating Text**, select the radio button labeled **Below bottom of staff**.

Now we need to make sure that the boxed bar numbers do not crash into the staff:

- 16) Under the Creating Object section of the window (top center), increase the number in the **Vertical position__spaces** from the staff field to 3.5 or more.
- 17) Click **OK**.

6. Some Final Tips

- Remember that the instrument in the top staff can't be unselected in **System Object Positions**. However, if you do not want bar numbers assigned to the top staff, simply uncheck Top staff in the **Vertical Posn** tab of **Edit Text Styles** (for bar numbers).
- At any time, you can click and drag an individual bar number to move it. You can also move a bar number using the arrow keys. The bar number can be moved within an invisible boundary box.
- What you have learned in terms of the **Vertical Posn** tab of **Edit Text Styles** and **System Object Positions** can be applied to other system text or marks such as tempo marks and rehearsal marks. System lines such as endings and tempo alterations (rit., accel, etc.) are also affected by the choices you make in **System Object Positions**, however the vertical frequency of lines can't be chosen in **Edit Text Styles** as these objects are not text. The frequency of these lines down the score is therefore managed only in **System Object Positions**.
- To delete a vertically repeated line, rehearsal mark, etc. from a staff, simply select it and hit **Delete**. This may be necessary when you have set **System Object Positions** to accommodate your bar number preference, but you want your tempo text or lines to repeat or appear on fewer staves. Note that you can't delete bar numbers in this way.

To delete (hide) a bar number:

- 1) From the **Create** menu, choose the sub menu **Other** and then choose **Bar Number Change**.
- 2) When deleting a bar number, you are really just hiding it. Simply retype the number of the bar number you want to hide and click **OK**.
- 3) With the arrow now loaded, click on the bar number you want to hide.
- 4) With the bar number selected, use the keyboard shortcut **Command Shift H** or **Ctrl+Shift+H** to hide the bar number.

It might be necessary to change bar numbering in the middle of a score or to create a bar number in the first bar (bar number 1), which by default does not exist.

To change or create a bar number:

- 1) From the **Create** menu, choose the sub menu **Other** and then choose **Bar Number Change**.
- 2) Type the new bar number in the field and click **OK**.
- 3) With the arrow now loaded, click on the bar number you want to change. If you are adding bar 1 to a score, simply click in the first bar of the score.

Be aware that if you perform a bar number change on a bar number that is centered in the bar, it will default back to being aligned with the barline. This does not matter if you are hiding the bar number, but if your goal is to change the bar number, you will have to move the bar number back to the center of the bar.

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