

## **Dorico tips for former users of Finale (2024-2025)**

*These tips were recently sent to me by Arnold Friedman at Berklee College.  
Thank you, Arnold!*

If you are switching from Finale to Dorico, you must adapt to Dorico's workflow, which is very different (but also efficient once you've learned it). Don't try to make it work like Finale. Especially important for Finale users is to become accustomed to Dorico's Frames.

This video is a good starting point:

“Finale to Dorico Equivalents - Learning Dorico Video (ASMAC September 3, 2024)”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa2OJdAwN7w>

The most complicated area of Dorico to adapt to is likely to be page layout. Generally, the program does a great job of note spacing and placing of symbols, but making adjustments for page turns and the like can be mysterious. Before making any manual adjustments in Engraver Mode, it is worth tweaking settings in the Layout Options. There are several good videos on this topic in the Dorico Youtube Channel.

Now some tips:

1. Learn to use Dorico's Popovers, and the "Jump" command (letter J), which allow you to enter all kinds of notation very quickly and easily, without leaving the computer keyboard.
2. Many layout problems such as arranging a good page turn can be solved by tweaking note spacing--Layout Options: Note Spacing. There you can slightly tighten or widen the spacing calculations, and often create or close off extra space that is needed to move a measure from one system or frame to another without manually changing everything else. You can make the changes per layout (score or part).
3. In Dorico, expression markings (e.g. *expressivo*, *dolce*) must be attached to letter dynamics which, if need be, can then be hidden so only the text expression displays. So, for example, in Write Mode, select the note/beat location where you want the expression to appear, type shift-D for the dynamics popover, then p dolce and enter/return. With the "p dolce" still selected, open the lower zone properties panel, and

from the Dynamics panel select Hide Intensity Marking. Fortunately you can then copy and paste your "dolce" anywhere else in the score you like.

4. If you prefer to compose without meters or barlines, and then enter those later, Dorico will accommodate you. When initially setting up your score you can choose a meter of "open". When you are ready, you can enter your time signature(s) anywhere in the music. Dorico will even accommodate independent time signatures in different staves.

5. Horizontal lines in Dorico can attach to beats, bars, or notes, and each possibility will affect the placement of the line. Once you've entered a line you can't change what it's attached to, so you need to do a bit of advanced thinking about it.

Here is a very short video on a shortcut for dotted notes:

[https://youtube.com/shorts/\\_aueMoUowWA?si=9CarrD-PSiYkvs\\_O](https://youtube.com/shorts/_aueMoUowWA?si=9CarrD-PSiYkvs_O)

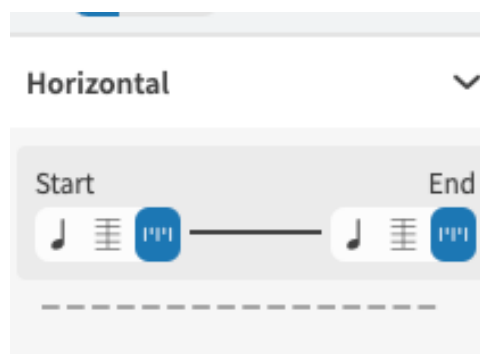
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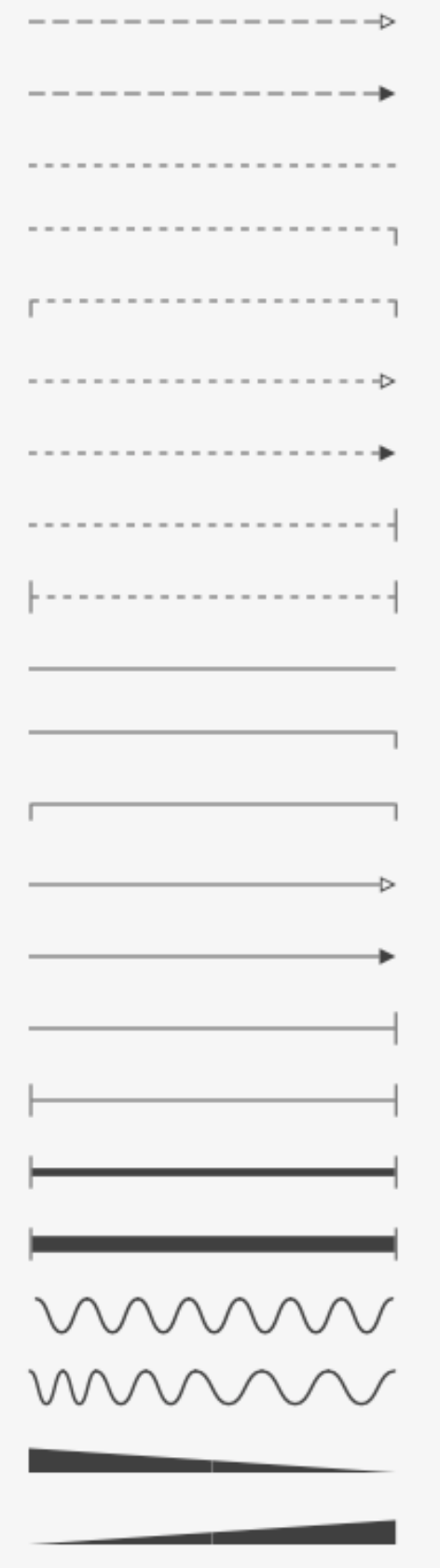
*Here are more tips from Arnold:*

In Dorico the Lines panel functions a bit like the Smart Shapes tool in Finale, also Finale's Shape Designer. However in Dorico some common items that are Finale Smart Shapes occur in other functions:

In Dorico hairpins are dynamics, and are made somewhat as they are in Sibelius. Slurs are more-or-less their own category, and are also similarly made to Sibelius. Trill wiggly lines are made as "ornaments". 8va are in the same category as clefs.

Dorico Lines, which have vertical and horizontal categories, are useful for providing brackets, arrows, voice leading lines in piano music, etc.





Users can design their own lines, for example to make box notation for quasi-

random playing:

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Flute 1, Flute 2, and Oboe 1. The score is organized into seven measures, numbered 1 through 7 at the top. Above measures 1-4 are boxes containing the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively. Above measure 5 is a box containing a diagram of a flute's key mechanism with a red dot on the key. Above measure 6 is a box containing a diagram of an oboe's key mechanism with a red dot on the key. The Flute 1 staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The Flute 2 and Oboe 1 staves also have treble clefs. The Flute 1 staff has a large black bar across measures 5, 6, and 7. The Flute 2 staff has a large black bar across measures 1, 2, and 3. The Oboe 1 staff has a large black bar across measures 1, 2, and 3. The Flute 1 staff has a large black bar across measures 4, 5, 6, and 7. The Flute 2 staff has a large black bar across measures 4, 5, 6, and 7. The Oboe 1 staff has a large black bar across measures 4, 5, 6, and 7.

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