



# The quick guide to Sibelius Note entry

by Katie Wardrobe

[www.midnightmusic.com.au](http://www.midnightmusic.com.au)

Music technology workshops and  
online courses for teachers

# The Quick Guide To Sibelius Note Entry

## Before you start

---

There are multiple ways to write notes into your Sibelius score and some ways are more efficient than others. If you only use the mouse to write notes into your score, you're using the slowest method! It's OK to use the mouse when getting started with Sibelius, but if you want to speed things up a little you will need to move on to one of the other methods.

Four **main** methods of note entry:

1. Mouse entry
2. Alphabetic entry (using your computer keyboard)
3. Step-time entry ("manual" entry with a MIDI keyboard)
4. Flexi-time entry (live recording with a MIDI keyboard)

My advice is to find a method that suits you, your style and your resources. I highly recommend learning Method 2 - Alphabetic entry. Not only is it more efficient than using the mouse, an understanding of Alphabetic entry will help greatly when it comes time to edit your score.

Katie Wardrobe, Midnight Music

[www.midnightmusic.com.au](http://www.midnightmusic.com.au)

*Music technology training and online courses for teachers*

## Method 1: Mouse entry (the slowest way!)

---

### Step 1

Click on a rhythmic value on Sibelius's **Keypad** (if the Keypad isn't open, go to **Window > Keypad**). Your mouse pointer will turn blue to indicate that it's "loaded up"

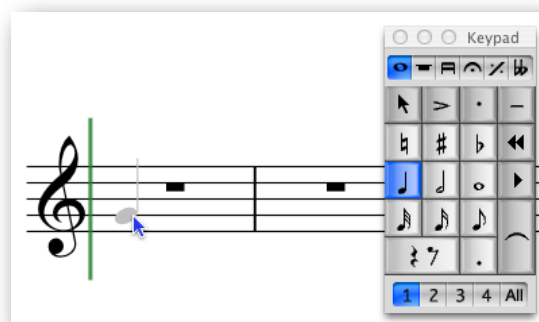
Optional: choose additional markings from the Keypad (accidentals, articulations and so on)

### Step 2

Click in the score where you want the note to appear  
If you make a mistake, press Ctrl+Z (Win) or Cmd+Z (Mac) to undo/remove your last note

### Step 3

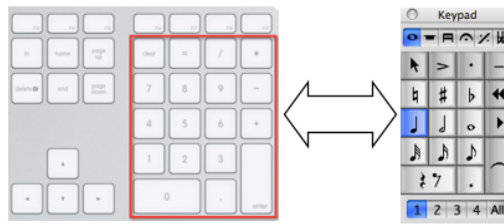
Press **Escape** twice when you're finished



# Method 2 and 3: Alphabetic and Step-Time entry

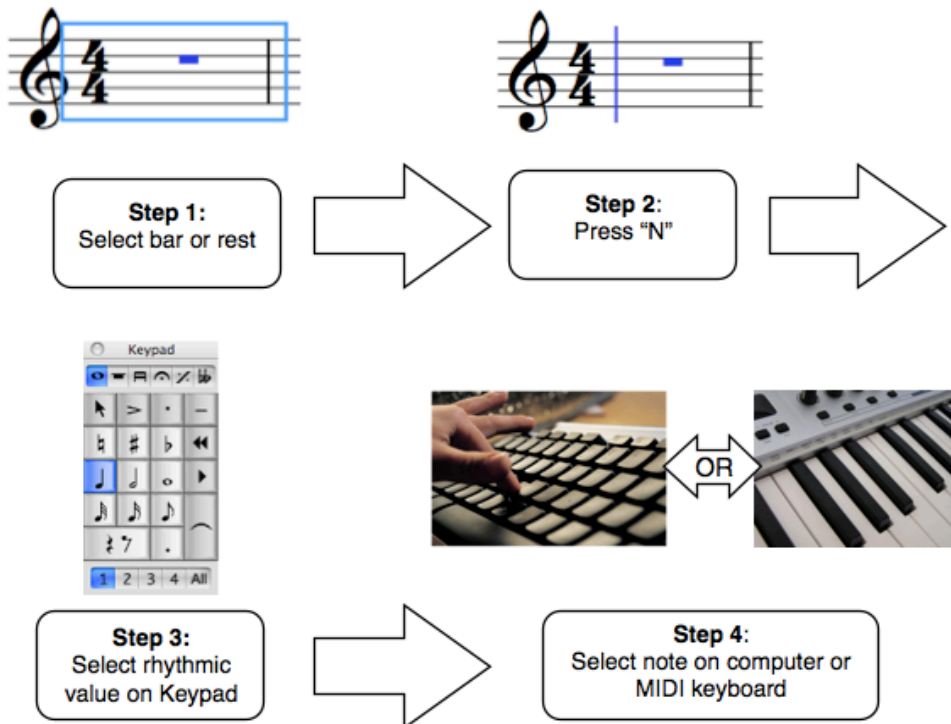
## The MOST crucial piece of information

The numeric keypad on your **computer keyboard** maps exactly to **Sibelius's on-screen Keypad**



## Visual guide

Written instructions below.



## Step 1

Select the bar or rest in the score where you'd like to start entering notes.

## Step 2

Press **N** (for "note entry"). A cursor will appear telling you that Sibelius is now in note entry mode.

## Step 3

Select a rhythmic value by pressing a number on your numeric keypad (ie. 4 = crotchet, 3 = quaver etc).  
Optional: choose additional markings from the Keypad (accidentals, articulations and so on).

## Step 4

Enter the pitch by doing **one** of the following (as soon as you select the pitch, a note will appear in your score)

- Computer Keyboard: type the letter name of the note you want, using the letters **A-G**
- MIDI Keyboard: play the note you want

## Step 5

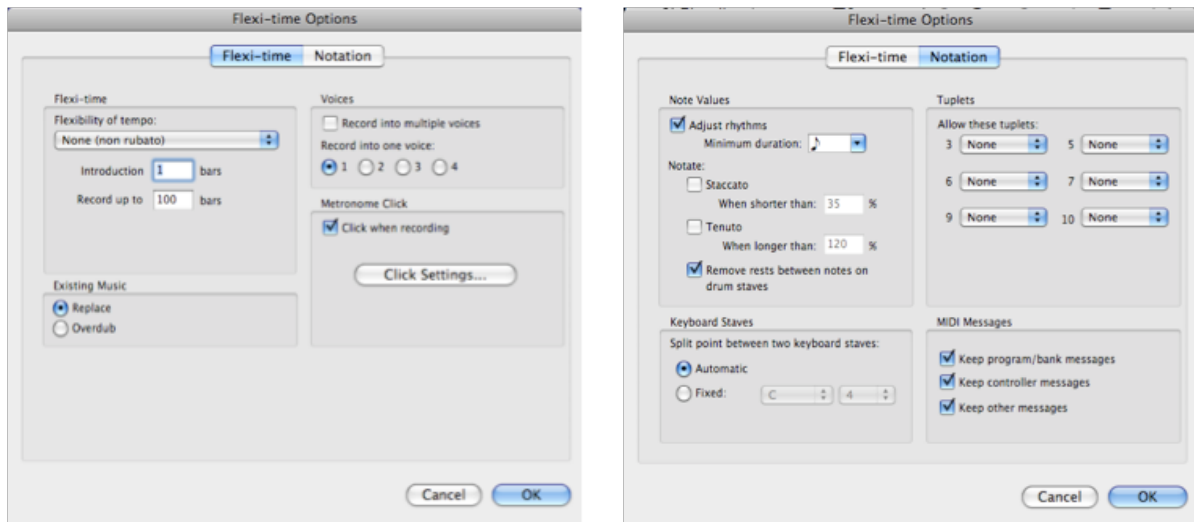
Press **Escape** twice when you're finished

# Method 4: Flexi-time entry

## Before you record

The Flexi-time method allows you to record your playing to a metronome beat. To ensure success with Flexi-time, you need to give Sibelius a little information about what you are going to play:

- open the Flexi-time Options dialogue by pressing Ctrl+Shift+O (Win) or Cmd+Shift+O (Mac)
- choose your settings (in particular, the **Minimum duration** setting on the Notation tab)
- suggested settings pictured below



Then, proceed with the recording:

## Step 1

Get ready to record: select the bar or rest in the score where you'd like to start entering notes.

## Step 2

Click on the **Record** button or type the shortcut **Ctrl+Shift+F** or **⌘⇧F**.

## Step 3

A metronome will start straight away, giving you a one-bar introduction (unless you increased the number)

## Step 4

Start playing on your MIDI keyboard after the one-bar introduction

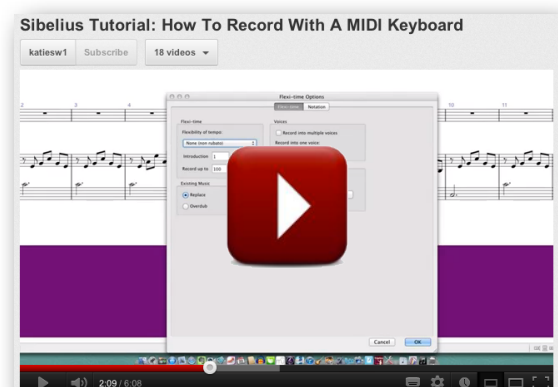
## Step 5

Hit **Escape** (or press the **Spacebar**) to stop recording.

## Tutorial video

For details about Flexi-time Options and tips about the recording process settings, watch my tutorial video about Flexi-time on Youtube:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_pfiI8k\\_LJE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pfiI8k_LJE)



## Other note entry methods

---

You might like to explore some of the other note entry methods in Sibelius, including:

- Using the guitar fretboard window (Sibelius 6 and 7)
- Using the keyboard window (Sibelius 6 and 7)
- Scanning music using Photoscore
- Importing of MIDI files

For more information about any of the note input methods, see the Sibelius Reference manual located under the **Help** menu.

## About Midnight Music

---

Katie Wardrobe offers **hands-on training** and **online courses** through her business Midnight Music. She is an expert Sibelius trainer and offers a range of courses including:

- Sibelius Basics
- Sibelius Advanced
- Sibelius: Scanning and Importing MIDI files
- Sibelius Projects for Students: Using Sibelius in Your Classroom



Katie also offers courses in the following:

- iPads in Music Education
- Interactive Whiteboards in Your Music Classroom
- Audacity
- Acid
- GarageBand
- Mixcraft
- Free music technology resources
- Much more!

For more information about face-to-face training and online courses, visit [www.midnightmusic.com.au](http://www.midnightmusic.com.au)