

# Music Education Network - for The Visually Impaired -

## *An International Coalition of Parents, Educators, and Students*

- MENVI Headquarters -

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## **MENVI**

*- Advice for reproducing music in braille; Piano Teaching continued; more ...*

### **TRANSCRIPTION & MUSIC REPRODUCTION**

MENVI Member Andy English has contributed this interesting and informative article dedicated to music transcribers and their readers. All of us who are involved in the use or production of braille are affected by the discussion that follows. Whether you are a transcriber, a braille reader, a parent, or an educator, we hope that you will find this article of use. As always, articles are contributed by our members and specialists, and do not necessarily reflect MENVI advisory policy or administrative opinion.

The issue of copyrights and sharing of files is an ongoing problem. It has been our experience that seemingly no one has definitive answers regarding this area with respect to music and/or music braille. Everyone is urged to use due caution and prudence, and mostly, always respect the concept of intellectual property and the wishes of those agencies and schools that serve us.

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### **REPRODUCING MUSIC FOR BRAILLE TRANSCRIPTION**

by Andrew English

I wrote this article to help instructors, student services staff, and blind musicians reduce the amount of time that it takes the braille transcriber to complete a piece of music. This document and many other digital print and braille resources are available at [www.papermusic.org](http://www.papermusic.org).

**Legal Obligations:** Before sending material to be transcribed, it is extremely important that you observe care and prudence when reproducing copyrighted materials. If you are a student, and the transcriptions are required for your education, you

are allowed under the *fair use exemption to the copyright law* to reproduce materials for that purpose. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to secure permission **BEFORE** [sharing or copying] music. It is also important to exercise due restraint in re-distributing printed or electronic copies, including your embossed braille volumes.

**Reproduction Guidelines:** The quality and readability of the manuscript dramatically affects the amount of time it takes to produce the finished braille. It is optimal for the transcriber to have the published print edition, but if you must send a photocopy or a digital image of the manuscript, please observe these guidelines:

1. Ensure that the music is aligned straight, horizontally and vertically, when copying. Sloppy or careless scanning techniques possibly cause the greatest amount of frustration for transcribers.
2. Though it increases the size of the scanned files, it's preferable to have a black & white grayscale image instead of two-tone. Faxed copies of music are [often] not acceptable. A resolution of 300dpi is good for standard sized music. Increase the scanner resolution as the music gets smaller. For example, a standard choral octavo-sized piece scans well at 300dpi. Miniature study scores should be scanned at 600dpi.
3. Minimize shadows in the copy, especially within the valley of the spine of a book, by applying gentle pressure to keep the copy flat against the scanning glass. It is expected to have some shadow around the outside of the image, but try to ensure that everything

on the page has at least a half-inch of white space around it. Most published music is slightly larger than can be copied directly onto standard 8.5 × 11 inch paper.

Reduction to 93% is acceptable as long as the music remains completely legible (see the point #2). Avoid the temptation to scan two print pages side-by-side. This level of reduction makes the music very difficult to read, especially for electronic processing through optical character readers (OCR), and also for those who have been staring at computer monitors all our lives.

4. Always check the entire scanned document to ensure that nothing has been omitted from the original, including the full title of the piece and individual movements or sections, the composer information, copyright information, etc. If the copy you send is an excerpt from the middle of a larger work, please include a scan of the first page of music that includes all of this important information.
5. Because individual performers' markings are not part of the original published manuscript, they are generally not included in the finished file. This includes such markings added *after publication* (i.e., by the performer, instructor, or conductor) such as bowings, fingerings, pedaling, etc. If these markings are part of the original, they should be included. If the instructor and student need other “after-print” markings, the transcriber needs to know this. The transcriber’s intent is always to faithfully reproduce the original published print copy.
6. Again, please double-check the scan/copy to ensure that it is completely legible and clear throughout. Frequently encountered problems include: Missing or fragmented bottom staff (bass line), missing clefs, missing bar lines at the ends of staves, faint or missing stems, overabundant performers’ markings that obscure or distort the music, and technical problems with the reproduction technology that obscures and/or distorts the music.

By following these simple guidelines, you can greatly increase the productivity of your friendly neighborhood braille transcriber by decreasing the amount of time it takes to transcribe your music.

Thank you for helping us to help you help us all!

Andy English, *Music Transcription  
and Consultation Services*

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[Editorial Commentary:]

Since the beginning of this network in ca.1993, we have had a dream that one day there would be a comprehensive registry of as many music titles in braille as possible. This listing would **NOT** be considered a catalogue resource or database such as we commonly see online, web, and other venues; it would be a simple listing of every title that we could find. Imagine the thousands upon thousands of titles going to waste in the old computers of retired and deceased transcribers - precious music in braille that will never be shared by deserving readers. Moreover, imagine the vast thousands of unnecessary hours that have been wasted by transcribers re-transcribing music that already exists, while readers do without. With only about thirty or so active certified and/or experienced music transcribers in the country, this is no less than a shameful waste of a finite resource!

This listing would not provide the music itself, only the fact that it exists and where to seek information. It would then be up to the reader to contact the source, and to make his or her own arrangements. The responsibility of copyrights and other “sharing” issues would remain with the person or agency that would provide the file or hard copy.

Unfortunately, with every turn in the road towards progress for such a project, there has been someone or something holding up a proverbial hand saying: “STOP!” Readers, it’s now up to you to begin an advocacy for yourselves. Perhaps you will be more successful than we have been. For every well-intentioned attempt, private interests and fear has prevailed, and the braille readers are the losers.

Our heartfelt thanks to crusaders like Andy, and so many agencies that tirelessly confront this constant adversity standing in the way of access and education for our blind readers. - R. Taesch [Ed.]

## TRIVIA FORUM:

Which one is correct?

1. *Music Education Network for the Visually Impaired*  
Or:
2. *Music Education Network for The Visually Impaired*

Discussion: Well, this one always brings interesting arguments regarding the title for our acronym, MENVI. Essentially both are correct in that the first presentation grammatically avoids the capital letter on an article, “*the*.” However, since

the network long ago elected to create the title “*The Visually Impaired*” as a formal entity, the first example is then completely incorrect. We see the first one erroneously quite often, as word processors automatically correct the grammatical spelling, and few are willing to argue with Mr. Gates.

Before you disagree, consider the title for our National Library Service as: The Library of Congress, and not the Library of Congress; or perhaps, The United States of America.

## TEACHING EARLY PIANO FORMATS TO A BLIND STUDENT ... Continued

*Article adapted from CTEBVI Journal (formerly CTEVH), Winter 2010 – with permission*

CTEBVI stands for *California Transcribers and Educators of the Blind and Visually Impaired*. It is open for membership to all who are interested in the educational welfare of blind individuals. [www.ctebvi.org](http://www.ctebvi.org)

As we continue a journey through the music educator’s world and the braille reader, we’ll take a new path expanding duet work into that of piano ensembles. Groups can easily be assembled for students who may not even study the piano formally. The keyboard remains our learning and reading tool no matter what instrument or voice is preferred, and all students who study music braille can participate. Teachers need not be trained pianists to work with basic ensemble groups.

Read through the two steps provided in a previous issue, and then apply them to this simple blues duet. If you cannot play the teacher’s Part II, simply recruit another student to learn the left or right hand alone, thereby creating a trio. [Used with permission; *Introduction to Piano for the Blind Student* – Dancing Dots, Publisher]

### TWO FOR THE BLUES Duet Part I

R.T.

The musical score is for 'Two for the Blues' Duet Part I, measures 1-14a. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The first system (measures 1-4) has a treble staff starting with a first finger (1) on G4 and a fifth finger (5) on D5, and a bass staff starting with a first finger (1) on G2. The second system (measures 5-8) has a treble staff starting with a fifth finger (5) on D5 and a bass staff starting with a fifth finger (5) on G2. The third system (measures 9-14a) has a treble staff starting with a ninth finger (9) on G4 and a bass staff starting with a ninth finger (9) on G2. The score ends with a double bar line at the end of measure 14a.


Braille musical notation for the first system, consisting of three staves of music.

TWO FOR THE BLUES  
Duet Part II

R.T.

Standard musical notation for the second system, labeled 14b. It features three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and two grand staff systems (treble and bass clefs) below. The music is in 4/4 time and includes various notes, rests, and accidentals.

Braille musical notation for the second system, corresponding to the standard notation above. It consists of three staves. Several Braille slurs are highlighted in yellow to indicate specific musical instructions.

For those who may not have seen the highlighted braille slur signs in Part II before, it is a special slur meaning to simply “let the note ring.” 

***Is your membership roster information up to date?***  
Be sure to fill out an updated application online, or ask Jared to fax one to you

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS / REMINDERS**

### **Membership Rosters**

Be sure to update your member contact information, as new rosters will soon become available. When you see names in the roster listings with no addresses or emails, it usually means that someone forgot to update. Changes can ONLY be implemented when an update application is filled out: go to [www.menvi.org](http://www.menvi.org). Need to contact the Webmaster for online service or a hard copy? Call toll-free at: **866-824-7876**

### **The Lime Lighter from Dancing Dots**

This new technology has brought quite a bit of interest. With The Lime Lighter, many low vision performers can sight-read music while playing. See the Dancing Dots site at:

[www.dancingdots.com](http://www.dancingdots.com).

Our last issue 32 included a fine article by Mr. Bill McCann about this exciting new product!

### **CTEBVI – New Student Membership / Upcoming Conference – Oakland, CA**

CTEBVI (formerly CTEVH) now offers a [post high school] Student Membership at only \$25 per year. See their site at [www.ctebvi.org](http://www.ctebvi.org).

CTE's 52<sup>nd</sup> annual conference will be held in Oakland on March 10-13. Workshops and exhibits are unique, and our own Ayaka Isono will be presenting on behalf of music braille. See the website for information.

### **National Braille Association Conference**

NBA is conducting its professional development conference on April 13-16 at the Doubletree Hotel in San Diego/Del Mar. See the website for information: [www.nationalbraille.org](http://www.nationalbraille.org).

### **New Materials for Music Readers and Teachers**

Christina Davidson and Karen Gearreald have announced a new resource for braille music literacy: **HAPPY FINGERS: Easy Songs for Braille Music Readers**, Book 1. Dedicated to Louis Braille and Bettye Krolick. Get free downloads from <http://www.ctdcreations.com>

### **Important Information for Blind Music Majors**

*A Blind Music Student's College Survival Guide* is available as a free download at: [www.menvi.org](http://www.menvi.org); see the special downloads section.

## **MENVI Specialists Committee**

**Band Music/Director** - Rick Coates,  
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**Braille Piano Music Library Resources** - Stephanie Pieck,  
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**Braille Music Textbooks and Formats** - Ed Godfrey,  
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### **College/University Disabled Student Services -**

1. Jeff Senge, Cal State University, Fullerton  
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2. Mary Ann Cummins-Prager, Cal State University,  
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**Electronic Music and VI Computer Music Arts** - David Pinto,  
VI Computer Composition - [pinto@tvimusic.org](mailto:pinto@tvimusic.org)

**International Braille Music Code** - Mrs. Bettye Krolick -  
Compiler, *New International Manual of Braille  
Music Notation* - Retired

**Large Print** - Joan Hudson-Miller, Consultant - *Library  
Reproduction Service (LRS)* - [lrsjhm@aol.com](mailto:lrsjhm@aol.com)

**Music Transcriber Training and Certification** - Karen  
Gearreald, Braille Music Advisor/Instructor for The  
Library of Congress, Washington DC -  
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**Postsecondary Braille Music Literacy & Advocacy** -  
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**Professional Transcriber Software and Technology** -  
Robert Stepp, President of Computer Application  
Specialties Company (*ED-IT PC; Braille 2000*)

**Student Certification (Practical/Theory Examinations)** -  
Grant Horrocks, L.A. Chair - Los Angeles  
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### **VI Computer Assisted Technology**

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