


Getting Started With MuseScore: Lead Sheets

In this lesson, we will learn how to create a “lead sheet” on MuseScore. A lead sheet consists of two main features: a melody and chords. It usually has only a treble clef with the chord symbols written above.

(See example 1)

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Traditional

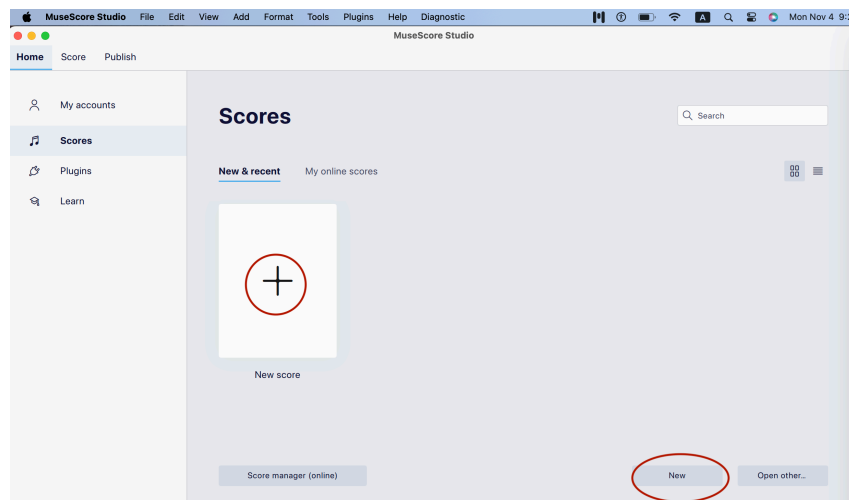


The image shows a musical score for the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb". It is a traditional lead sheet. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of a sequence of notes: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), and C5 (quarter). Above the staff, the chord symbols C, G, and C are placed above the first, second, and third measures respectively. The first measure contains the notes C4 and D4, the second measure contains E4, F4, and G4, and the third measure contains A4, B4, and C5.

Example 1: A lead sheet with melody and chords.

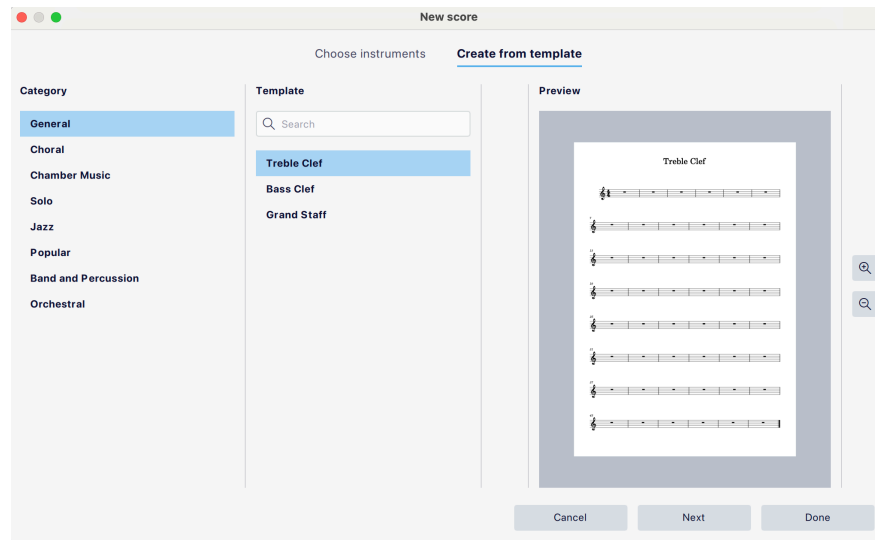
Create a New Score:

- 1) Open MuseScore.
- 2) Start a new score: Click on the “new score” icon or click on the “new” button at the bottom right. (See example 2)



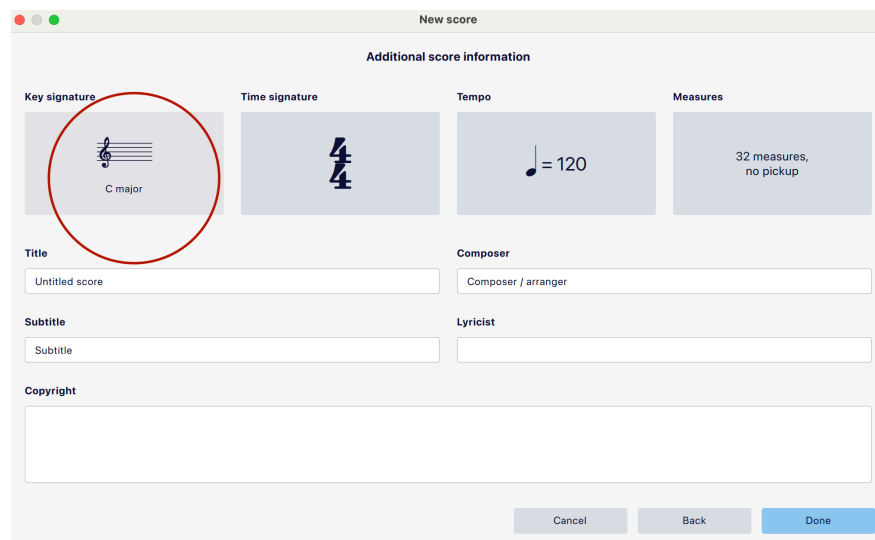
Example 2: Click on “New score” or “New” to start a score

- 3) You will now be on the “New Score” page. Leave the default settings as is. The default settings should be set as in Example 3.



Example 3: Default settings of new score.

- 4) Correct the settings to default if needed.
- 5) Select a key signature. (You can do this later, but here we'll do it at the beginning of creating your score.) Click on “next.”
Click on “Key Signature”. (See example 4)



Example 4: Click on the C major key signature icon to select any key signature.

A pop-up window will display all the key signatures. Click on the one you want.

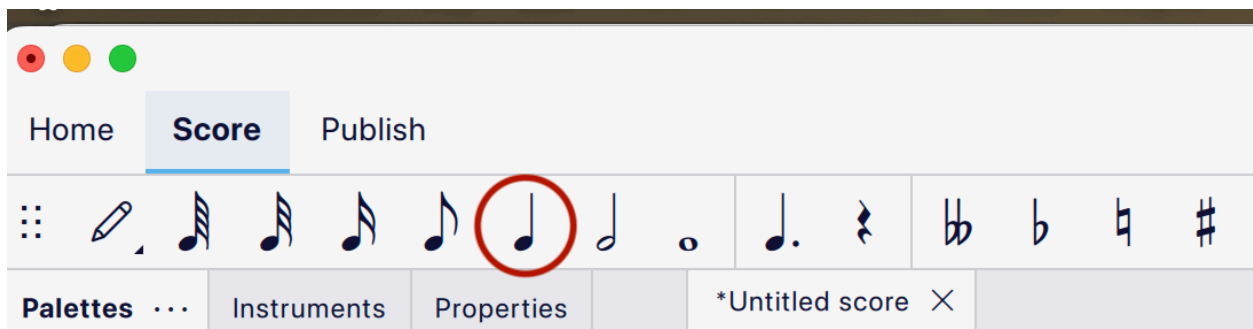
You can also enter other information, such as the title and composer here. When you're finished, click on "Done."

- 6) You're now on your score sheet. If you haven't entered a title or composer yet, you can also do that here. Simply double click on either "Untitled Score," "Subtitle," or "Composer/arranger," delete what's there and type in your own.

Manual Note Input:

- 1) There are two ways to enter notes on the staff from the computer keyboard. One is by manually inputting every note and rhythmic value. The other is by using keyboard shortcuts. In this lesson, we will focus on manual input.

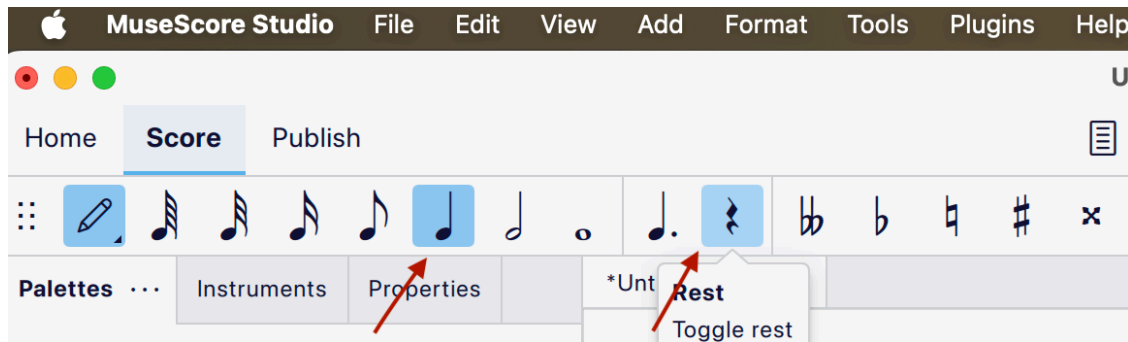
First, decide on the rhythmic value of your first note. Let's say it's a quarter note. Click on the quarter note at the top left. (See example 5)



Example 5: Click on the rhythmic value of the first note.

- 2) Move your cursor to the staff. A note will appear. Click on the line or space that you would like to start your first note on.
Rests: To input a rest, you must click on both the note value and the rest in the toolbar. The quarter rest icon only indicates that you are inputting a

rest. It does not indicate the value of that rest. (See example 6)



Example 6: To add a rest, click on both the note value and the rest.

Pick-up measures: To create a pick up measure, turn off note input by clicking on the blue pencil icon in the upper LH corner, or use the shortcut “n.” (If it’s not blue, it’s already turned off.) Then control-click (or right-click on Windows) on the first measure. In the menu that appears, click on “measure properties.” You will see measure duration. The number of beats in the measure is indicated by the number on the left. Click on the down arrow to lower the number of beats that you’d like in the pick up measure. Click “Apply” then “OK.”

Adding Chord Symbols:

- 1) To enter a chord symbol, click on the note or rest above which you’d like the chord to appear.
- 2) Press Cmd (⌘) + K (Mac), (or Ctrl + K Windows). A line will appear above the note. (See example 7)



Example 7: Type the chord symbol at the line above the note.

- 3) Type the letter(s) of the chord symbol you would like. (The correct way to write chord symbols will be addressed in another lesson.)
- 4) Use the space bar to move to the next note where you would like to enter the next chord symbol.
- 5) To delete a chord symbol, simply click on it and click “delete.”