

# Plaine & Easie Code

This version of the code is being maintained by the International Association of Music Libraries and the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales in order to be adopted as an exchange format in the library environment.

Observations or queries may be addressed to [Massimo Gentili-Tedeschi](#) or [Klaus Keil](#).

Last update: 28.04.2004

Source: *Rism guidelines for fields 820-826; matches Unimarc 036 and proposed Marc21 789 fields.*

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Documentation of music manuscripts requires a short music incipit.

As a general principle that should be taken:

for instrumental music from the first violin or the highest part

for vocal music from the highest voice and the first violin or the highest instrumental part.

The incipit should be not too long and not too short and musically as senseful as possible. It should contain at least 3 bars or 10 non-repeated notes.

In its typewritten version the code should be written on a single line. Special characters preceding the content of the code should be omitted in MARC format subfields.

## 1. Clef

**Unimarc field 036 \$m – MARC21 field 789 \$e – MAB field 681 \$j  
(Rism field 820)**

The clef code is preceded by ‘%’, and is three characters long.

The first character specifies the clef shape.



The second character is ‘-’ to indicate modern notation, ‘+’ to indicate mensural notation.

The third character (numeric 1-5) indicates the position of the clef on the staff, starting from the bottom line.

If the music is written for a transposing instrument, the incipit has to be coded as it sounds.

E.g.:

G-2 G-clef on the second line: violin clef



g-2 G-clef on the bass octave: 'violin/tenor clef'



C-3 C-clef on the third line: alto clef



C+3 C-clef on the third line: alto clef; mensural notation



F-4 F-clef on the fourth line: bass clef



## 2. Key signature

**Unimarc field 036 \$n – MARC21 field 789 \$f – MAB field 681 \$k  
(Rism field 826 – first part)**

Accidentals are preceded by the character '\$'; if there are no accidentals the '\$' is omitted. The symbol 'x' indicates sharpened keys, 'b' flattened keys; the symbol is followed by the capital letters indicating the altered notes.

E.g.:

\$xFC F and C sharp [key is D major or B minor]



\$bBEA B, E, A flat [key is E flat major or C minor]



## 3. Time signature

**Unimarc field 036 \$o – MARC21 field 789 \$g – MAB field 681 \$h  
(Rism field 823)**

The time signature is preceded by '@'.

The time value or the mensuration sign of the incipit. If the incipit has no time value the '@' is omitted.

Fractional or numeric values are transcribed as fractions, mensuration signs are transcribed with a lowercase letter, if necessary followed by '/' or '':

E.g.:

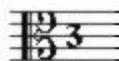
2/4



12/16



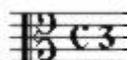
3



c (= common time)



c3



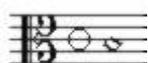
c3/2



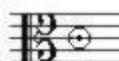
c/ (= allabreve,  $\phi$ )



o



o. (= 'perfect' time)



3/4 4/4 (permanent change  
between 3/4 and 4/4)



## 4. Musical notation

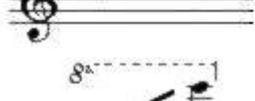
**Unimarc field 036 \$p – MARC21 field 789 \$h – MAB field 681 \$l  
(Rism field 826 – second part)**

The music incipit transcribed in coded form.

The beginning of the real musical context is preceded by a space.

Symbols 4.1-4.3 should precede the notes (4.4) and should not be repeated until a different value occurs.

#### 4.1. Octave symbol:

'	octave c'-b'	
"	octave c''-b''	
'''	octave c'''-b'''	
''''	octave c''''-b''''	
,	octave c,-b,	
,,	octave c,-b,,	
,,,	octave c,-b,,,	

#### 4.2. Rhythmic values:

0	longa	
9	breve	
1	whole note / semibreve	
2	half-note / minim	
4	quarter-note / crotchet / semiminim	
8	eighth-note / quaver / fusa	
6	16th-note / semiquaver / semifusa	
3	32nd-note / demisemi-quaver	
5	64th-note / hemidemisemi-quaver	
7	128th-note	

- 4. dotted quarter-note 
- 8.. double-dotted eighth-note 
- 7. neumatic notation 

**4.3. Accidentals:**

- x sharp #
- xx double sharp x
- b flat b
- bb double flat bb
- n natural n

**4.4. Notes (Tone letters):**

C,D,E,F,G,A,B

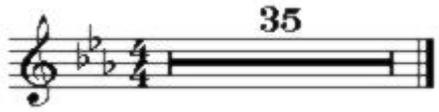
**4.5. Grace notes:**

- g acciaccatura (with no rhythmic value, precedes the note) 
- q appoggiatura (with mandatory rhythmic value, precedes the note) 
- qq...r double appoggiatura, slide or multiple appoggiatura (with mandatory rhythmic value) 

**4.6. Rests:**

- single-note rest (preceded by rhythmic value like tone letters)
- = measure rest (followed by number of measures and bar line)

E.g.

- 8- eighth-note rest 
- 2- half-note rest 
- = or =1 One measure rest 
- =35 35 measures rest 

#### 4.7. Bar lines:

/	bar line	
//	double bar line	
//:	double bar line with repeat sign on the right	:
://	double bar line with repeat sign on the left	:
::/:	double bar line with repeat sign on the left and on the right	::  :

#### 4.8. Other symbols:

t trill (follows immediately the note)

+ slur (follows immediately the note: only for same-pitch notes)

fermata (includes only one note or rest; accidentals or octave  
( ) symbols must be outside the parentheses. See also Irregular  
rhythmic groupings)



#### 4.9. Beaming

{ beginning of beaming  
} end of beaming

E.g.:

{"6E'B8G}{GA}-'C{'3B8..G}



#### 4.10. Irregular rhythmic groupings

( beginning of irregular group  
) end of irregular group

Before '(' there must be the total value of the group;

After '(' there must be the rhythmic value of the first note, even if it is equal to that of the group;

Before ')' there must be the number of notes of the group, preceded by ';':

E.g.:

4('6DEFGA;5) Quintuplet, 5 semiquavers, in the whole a quarter-note



8({'3DEFGA};5) Quintuplet, 5 thirty-seconds, in the whole an eighth-note, with grouped notes



The triplet is a special case in irregular groups; it should be coded as follows:  
8(6ABC;3) or 8({6ABC};3)

it is instead possible to code it as:  
(6ABC) or ({6ABC})

The rhythmic value inside parentheses is mandatory.

## 4.11. Abbreviated writing

### 4.11.1 Repetition of notes

! beginning and end of notes that will be repeated  
f repetition mark of the notes included within !...!

The group will be repeated as many times as the 'f' is found after the second '!'; the repetition is possible only inside the same measure.

E.g.:

!{'8ABAG'}!ff repeat twice



The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a 3/2 time signature. It contains a triplet of eighth notes (A, B, G) in the first measure, which is repeated twice in the second and third measures. The notation is preceded by the code !{'8ABAG'}!ff and the text 'repeat twice'.

### 4.11.2 Repetition of measures

i repeat last measure

The symbol 'i' repeats the last measure; it must always be included within measure bars.

E.g.:

'4ABAG/i/i/ repeat measure twice



The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of eighth notes (A, B, A, G) in the first measure, followed by two identical measures of the same sequence. The notation is preceded by the code '4ABAG/i/i/ and the text 'repeat measure twice'.

### 4.11.3 Rhythmic model

When the same rhythmic figures are repeated, the group of rhythmic values can be assumed as a model as follows:

E.g.:

instead of {'8.A6B"8C}{8.D6E8F}  
the code can be '8.68{AB"C}{DEF}



The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. It contains a rhythmic model consisting of a sequence of eighth notes (A, B, C) in the first measure, followed by two identical measures of the same sequence. The notation is preceded by the code '8.68{AB"C}{DEF}.

The rhythmic model ends when a new rhythmic value appears.

## 4.12. Change of-clef, key signature, measure

The three elements (% , \$ , @) can be used within the musical context. They are followed by the new measure, accidentals or clef symbols. They must be followed by a space. The introductory symbols are mandatory.

E.g.:



## 4.13. Abbreviations

Abbreviations of notes like tremolo, slash, etc. must be reported to their effective notation:

E.g.:



## 4.14. Chords

The upper note is transcribed first; then follow the lower ones, each one separated by '^'.

E.g.



## 5. Codified note

**Unimarc field 036 \$r – MARC21 field 789 \$h (at the end of the notation, preceded by ~) –  
MAB field 681 \$m  
(Rism field 827)**

A one-character codified note can be introduced by a '~' at the end of the code.

Accepted characters are:

- ? non-rectifiable mistake in incipit
- + rectified mistake in incipit
- t incipit transcribed in modern notation

These symbols may be completed by an explicatory note (Unimarc 036 \$q).