Forte in 10 minutes

Welcome and thank you for your interest in Forte, a full-featured notation-based MIDI sequencer for Windows. Forte combines all the tools you need to create, edit, and perform MIDI and digital audio with a full-featured score notation engine and visual editing tools for creating professional-quality printed scores. In this article you will learn quickly about the workspace and use of Forte.

1. Workspace

The workspace consists of the following elements:
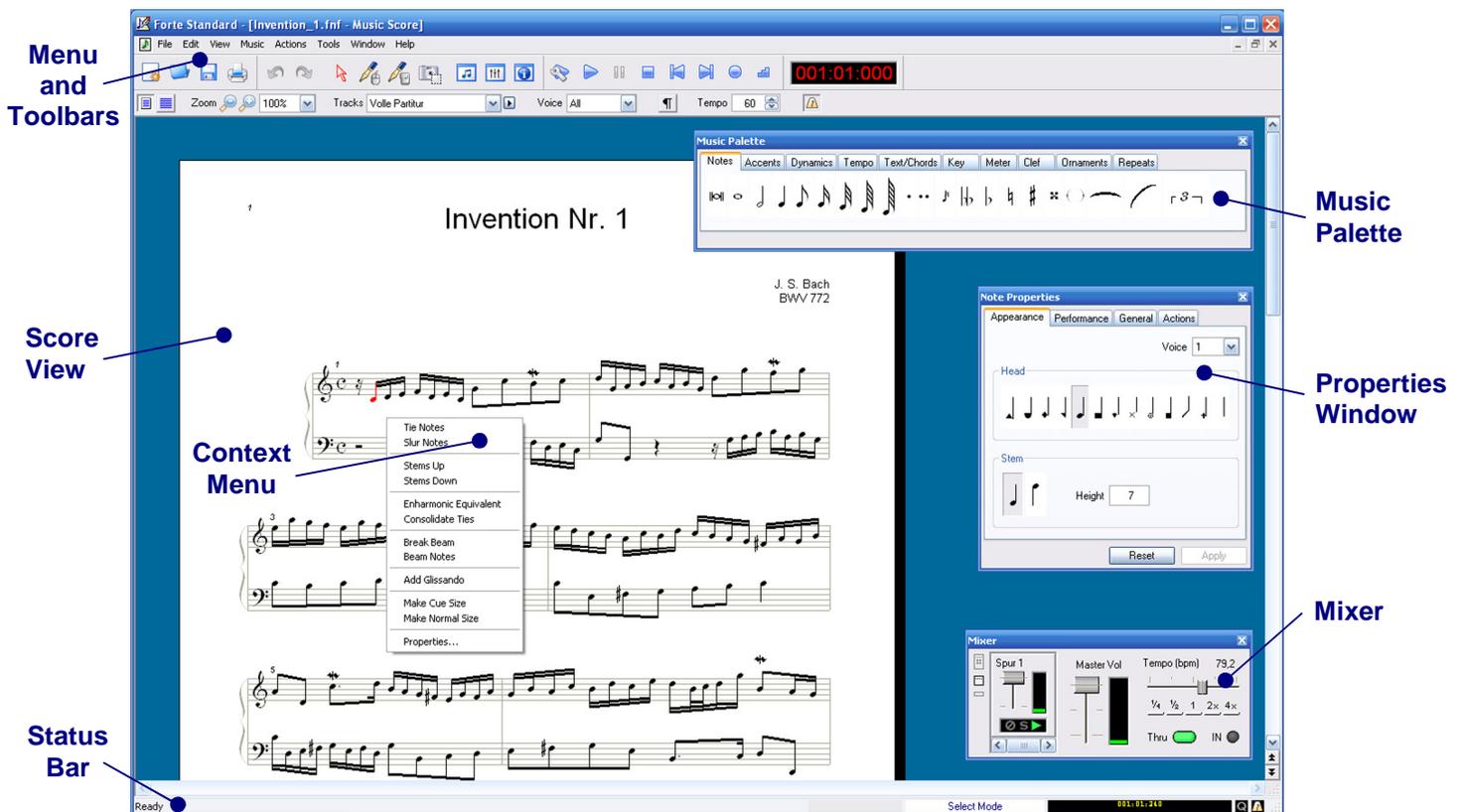
Four of these elements you will frequently use during the course of creating your compositions:

- The *Music Palette* - [icon] - contains all the music symbols that you can add to your score;
- The *Properties Window* - [icon] - provides a single location to edit the properties of all music symbols;
- The *Mixer* - [icon] - can be used to adjust tempo, volume and other performance properties;
- The *Context Menu* - (right mouse click) - provides commands specific to the current selection.

The other elements are also important and most of them are certainly already familiar to you:

- The *Menu* contains all commands to open, save, edit, view and configure your score;
- The *Toolbars* contain the most frequently used commands of the *Menu*;
- The *Status Bar* provides information about the current state of the application;
- The *Score View* features a WYSIWYG[1] display and a revolutionary drag-and-drop interface for editing all music symbols, markings and expressions.

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[1] WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) means that the page will be printed exactly the way you see it on screen.

2. Using Forte

One of the most powerful features of Forte is its well-designed user interface. Instead of learning several different approaches to perform each single command, with Forte you learn some basic concepts and start using it by yourself. These concepts are the *Music Palette*, the *Properties Window*, the *Mixer*, the *Modes* and the *Music Ruler*.

2.1 – The Music Palette

The Music Palette is quite literally a palette of music symbols that you can add to your document. Whenever you want to add a music symbol you should go to the Music Palette first.

(It can be displayed by clicking on its respective tool button or by pressing Alt+1)

2.2 – The Properties Window

The Properties Window is used to edit and modify all music symbols you have inserted into your music document.

The usual method of editing your score is to select a music symbol then use this tool window to change the desired properties.

It can be used to modify literally hundreds of different symbol characteristics. Everything from the style of a note, the shape of slurs and ties to the spacing around a staff can be changed using the Properties Window.

It's one of the most commonly-used tool windows in the entire application.

(Double-click on a music symbol or press Alt+3)

2.3 – The Mixer

The Mixer is a full-featured mixer that you can use to control the interaction of different tracks in your music document.

It's is also used to select tracks so that you can change any track properties (e.g. instrument, device and appearance) just by using the *Properties Window*.

Information and settings for each track are displayed in a scrolling track list

The master area contains controls for master volume, tempo and MIDI Thru
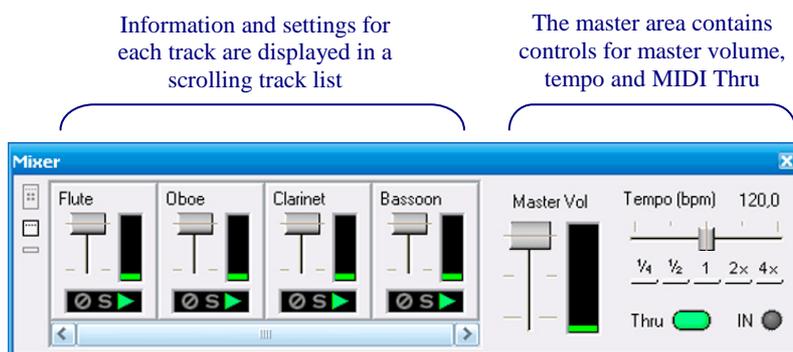
(The Mixer can be displayed by pressing Alt+2)

2.4 – The Modes

The following toolbar buttons are used to toggle between the different modes:

Select Mode:
(Ctrl+1)

Use this mode when you want to select music symbols in order to edit, copy, delete, move or perform some other actions. In this mode you can use the *Properties Window* and the *Context Menu*.

Insert Mode:
(Ctrl+2)

Select this mode when you want to add new music symbols to your document using the mouse. This mode is automatically selected when you click on a symbol in the *Music Palette*.

Keyboard Mode:
(Ctrl+3)

Select this mode when you want to add new music symbols to your document using the computer keyboard. See the Help menu for a key mapping (*Help > Keyboard Mode*).

Camera Mode:
(Ctrl+4)

Change to this mode so that you can export part of your score as a picture to other applications.

2.5 – The Music Ruler

The Music Ruler appears automatically when you are entering music symbols in your score (in *Insert Mode* or *Keyboard Mode*) and provides a very intuitive way of specifying in which beat or sub-beat in the measure the symbol is to be entered.
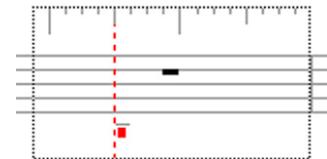
Thank to the Music Ruler you can enter notes anywhere in the measure without first having to enter rests. The following example shows you how it works:

a)

b)
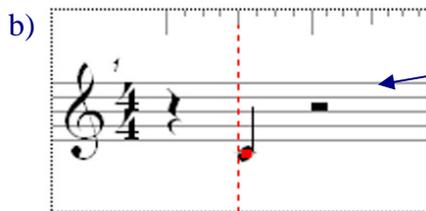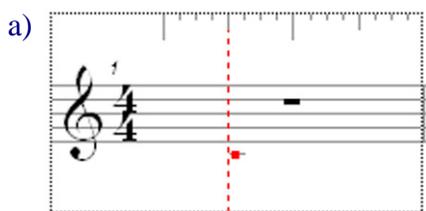
Rests are automatically created to fill in the space when a note is entered

c)

d)
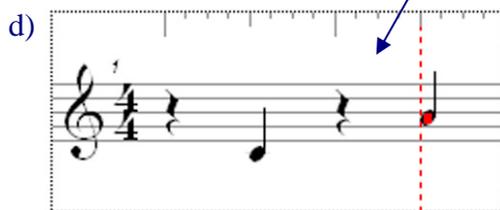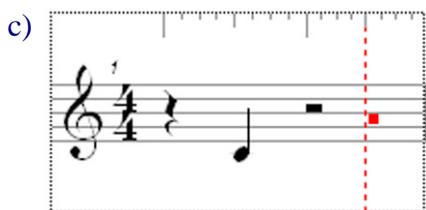
The ruler is also automatically updated according to the meter and symbol you want to insert.

(tuplets)

(forte)