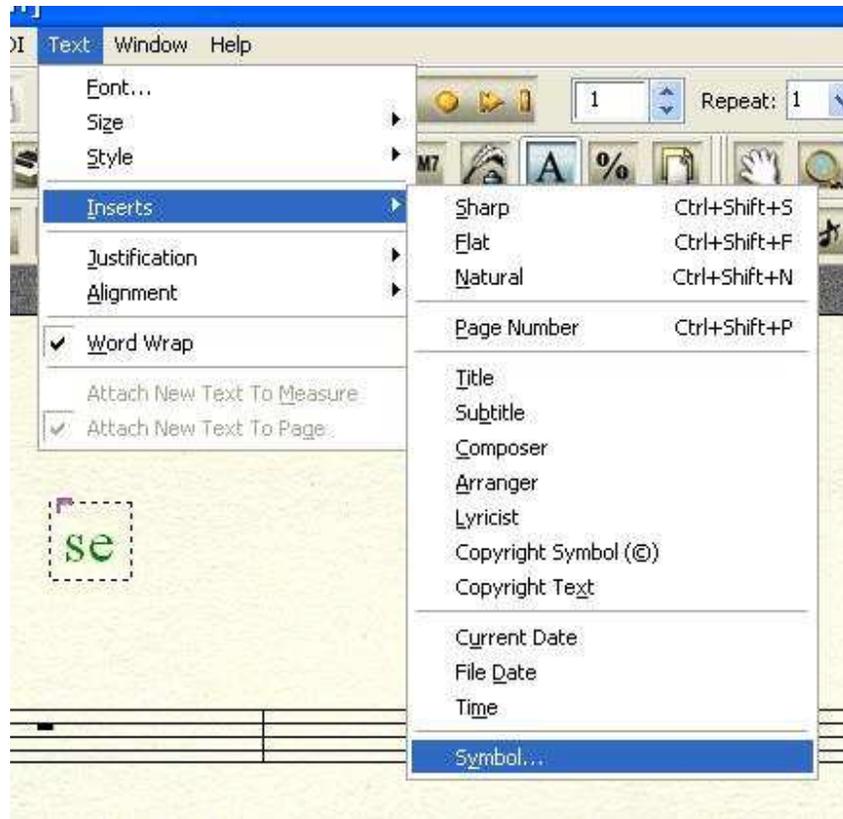# Foreign Languages in Finale (Windows)

A common question is, "How do I get characters like ñ, ç, or ß to show up in my text or lyrics?" As usual in Finale, there are a few ways. First, I'll talk about it "out of the box," and then go on to discuss various alternatives.

Let's say we want to enter the word *señor*. Open a text frame, and type in the *se.* Then, go up to the Text menu>Inserts>Symbol…

That will open the Symbol Selection box, showing all the characters in the default font. Scroll down, until you find the one you want. Notice, in the corner of that box, is the number 241. Remember that number! Either select that box and press the ENTER key (or click the SELECT button,) or just double-click the box.
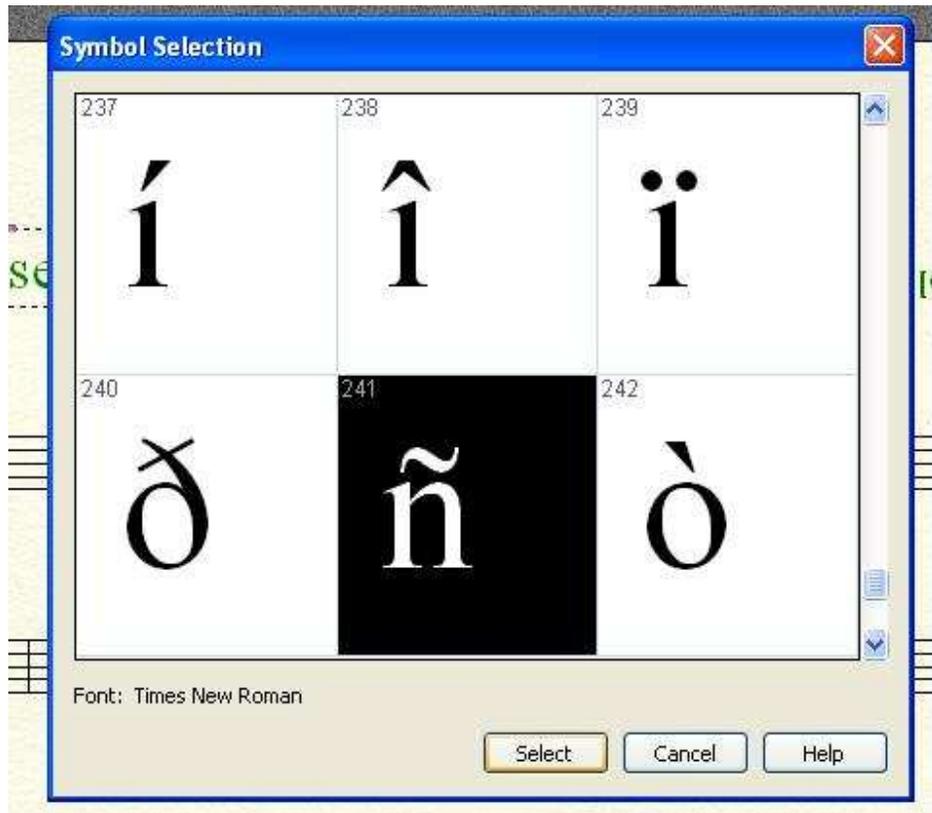
That character will be placed in your text, and the box will close, returning you to your document. Enter the remaining letters of your word.
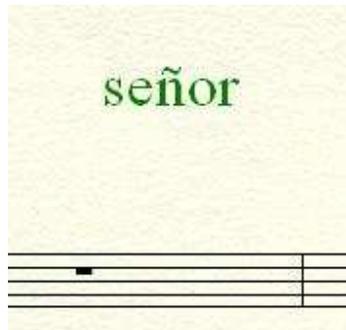
Why did I tell you to remember the number 241? Because that's the ALT code for that character in that font. The next time you want it, hold down the ALT key, and type 0241 on the number pad. Presto! You have your *ñ*. (You add the preceding 0 because ALT codes are 4 digits. And you must use the number pad, with the NumLock active. The numbers at the top of the keyboard don't work for this.)

To learn more about ALT codes, and to see a chart of all the codes, go to www.wackycodes.com. That will also show you the codes for Webdings, Wingdings, and Symbol fonts.

At times, we need to go beyond the basic Latin symbols, and use characters that might be found in Central European, Turkish, or Russian. Since Finale doesn't utilize Unicode, we have to rely on scripts. These are subsets of a particular font.

To start, go to the Text menu, and select Font…

This will open the Font selection window. In the lower left corner, you will see a drop-down called "Script." Hitting the arrow will show you all the scripts available in that font. Not all fonts have all of the scripts. You will have to check to see if the font you are using has the script you need. Some common fonts with extended scripts are Arial, Palatino, and Times New Roman. When you select a script, you will be able to enter characters from that font and script, either by selection, or ALT code.
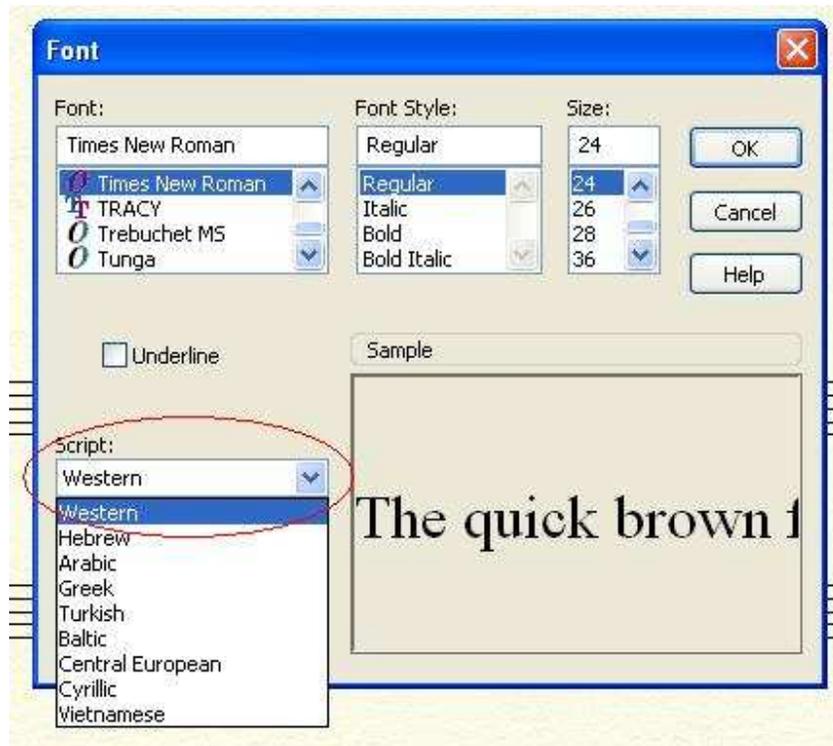
Here is a screen shot of part of the Cyrillic script set:
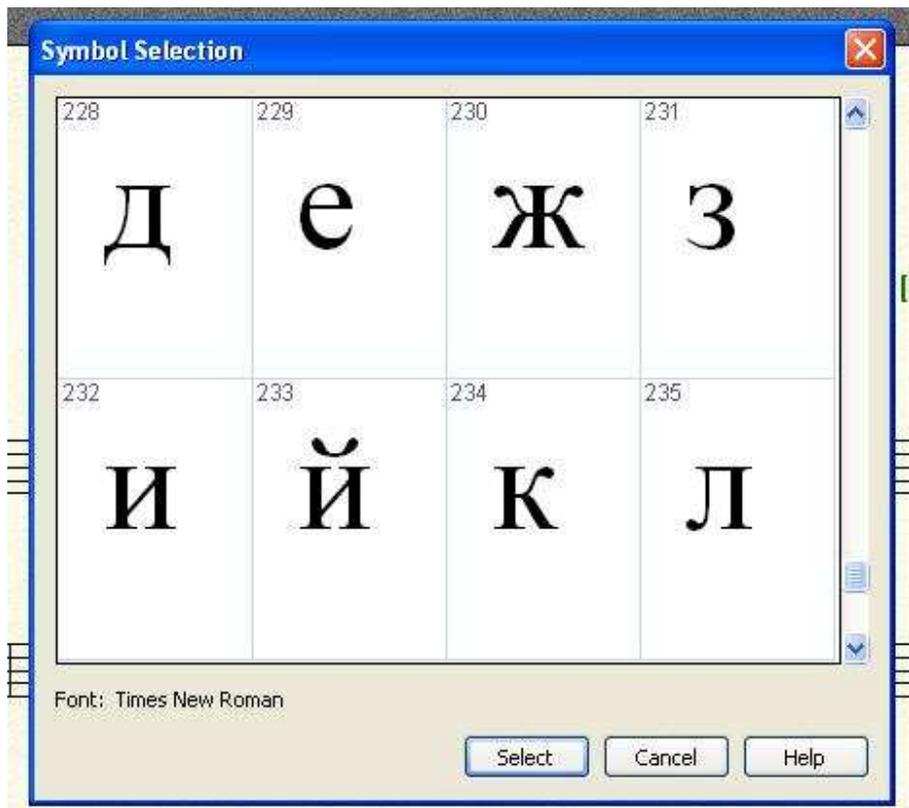
Remember that this is for the occasional use of accented characters. If you are planning to, for example, enter all of the lyrics in a foreign language like Russian or Greek, you will be better off if you get a dedicated font, generally available on the internet, and set up the keyboard mapping in the Windows OS.

I use a Hebrew font called Shalom Old Style to enter song titles. I have a cheat sheet that tells me what the keyboard equivalents are for the characters. So, if I wanted to enter the title of a piece called Aleinu, I look at my cheat sheet and enter *vnyli* (remember that I'm working backwards, too!) Then I select those letters, and in the Text menu, I choose the font Shalom Old Style.

My title becomes עלינו. Cool, no?

AllChars for Windows

For quick and simple insertion of accents, I use a free program called AllChars for Windows, available from http://sourceforge.net/projects/allchars. This program runs in the background, and lets you enter accented letters by hitting a hot key, and following that by a 2-key code, which in most cases is pretty easy to remember. Here are a few examples: (You just hit the keys sequentially, and ignore the commas.)

CTRL, n, ~ = ñ	CTRL, c, , =ç
CTRL, a, ' = á	CTRL, s, p = non-breaking space
CTRL, E, ` = È	CTRL, 2, - = non-breaking hyphen

It does text string macros, too. For example, I have /, a, l, l, set up to insert:

http://sourceforge.net/projects/allchars

You can also select scripts, although the codes may not be quite so mnemonic. I have found that when you are working from a script, the characters may not show up correctly as you insert them, but when you move out of that entry field, they will correct themselves. You need to have the script selected both in Finale, and AllChars for this to work.

A great investment, since there is no investment! (Note: I am using version 4.x, which works very well. V 5 is in beta, but from what I've seen, I like 4 better. You can download them both from the address I gave, above.)

Resizing the Symbols Window

I've been bothered by the size of the Symbols window for quite some time. You have to do a lot of scrolling to see all of the choices. Last night, I started poking around in the Configuration file, and I made a few changes. The Configuration file is in the program folder, in the Program Files folder on your hard drive.

SAVE A COPY OF THE FILE, IN CASE ANYTHING GOES PEAR-SHAPED!!!

Double-clicking on the Configuration file will open it in Windows NotePad. In the Configuration file, you will find two entries:

SelSymbolZoom=-2
SelSymbolWinpos=289 178 736 550 (your numbers here may be slightly different)

The first, the Zoom, controls the size of the characters. -1 is smaller than -2, 0 is smaller yet, 1, and 2, likewise.
The second is the position on your screen and hence, the size of the window. (I think it refers to pixel positions, for top, left edge, right edge, and bottom.)

I went to Zoom -1, which got more characters in the window, and changed the position to 50, 50, 950, 700. This increased the window size to almost the full size of my monitor. This will probably vary for you, depending on your screen resolution. Make your changes, close and save the file, and restart Finale. The result for me was allowing me to see about 150 characters at once. Now, when I go to Text>Inserts>Symbol... I can see a whole lot more to choose from, without much scrolling. This will work for whatever font you have chosen, so it's great for accents, musical symbols, etc.

This should also work for expression, articulation, and chord windows, although I didn't try them.

I have been told that the full Finale (at least, the newer version) will allow you to resize that window directly, rather than as I described.

Foreign Language Fonts

If you are doing lyrics, the rules change slightly. For the occasional foreign character, such as ñ or ç, the ALT+ and AltChars methods are fine. But if you need to input an entire set of lyrics (or a lot of text) then you should have a dedicated font.

(I know that the Windows OS has foreign language input, set up through the Regional and Language Options control panel. This works for text in Finale, but not for lyrics.)

For the sake of this article, let's consider a font as having High characters, and Low characters. The high characters are the ones accessible directly from the keyboard, using the ABCD keys. The low characters are the ones using the ALT codes. For ease of entry, obviously, we would like our foreign characters to be "high."

I found two Cyrillic fonts, by using Google and a lot of downloading samples. I'll discuss two of my finds, Times Roman Cirilica, from http://www.serbianorthodoxchurch.net/misc/fonts/index.html, and ER Bukinist 1251, from http://www.slovo.info/eurocp.htm. I use a clever little program called FontDings from http://www.forumsoftware.com/software.htm to view the fonts. This showed me that ER Bukinist had Latin characters in the high position, with the Cyrillic in the low, so I set that one aside. Times Roman Cirilica, however, was fine, showing me that I could type Cyrillic characters directly from the keyboard. I installed it into my fonts folder, and set up Finale to use it as the lyric font. I entered my notes, and started entering lyrics.

I found that Finale enters the lyric as Latin characters as you type them in, and only changes them to the correct font when you use the spacebar to advance to the next syllable. I don't know why it works this way, but it seems to be the way Finale gathers the lyric text, waiting for the "input" signal. Unfortunately, this behavior seems to be unavoidable when using NotePad, SongWriter, and PrintMusic, and Finale, when in Type Into Score mode. You can get around it, but only in the full Finale, by typing your lyrics into the Edit Lyric box, and using Click Assignment to transfer the lyric to the score.

One step further: I was trying to help a user enter Ukrainian lyrics. I was unable to find a font that had the "high" Ukrainian characters, although a number of them had them in the low locations. I used another program called FontCreator, from High-Logic (http://www.high-logic.com/fontcreator.html.) With this program, I moved the characters from their existing positions into the positions where the user wanted them. FontDings let me print out a sheet showing where they were.

Mike Rosen
5/19/2010