Rhythmic Hits above the Staff
# Creating a new Staff Style

Many band charts have a rhythm line above the melodic lines. Percussion, guitar, or rhythm sections might follow this line, while another part solos. This article will discuss how to create a staff style to insert this line. This is for Finale only. The other MM products cannot do this, although they **can** utilize a template made in Finale.
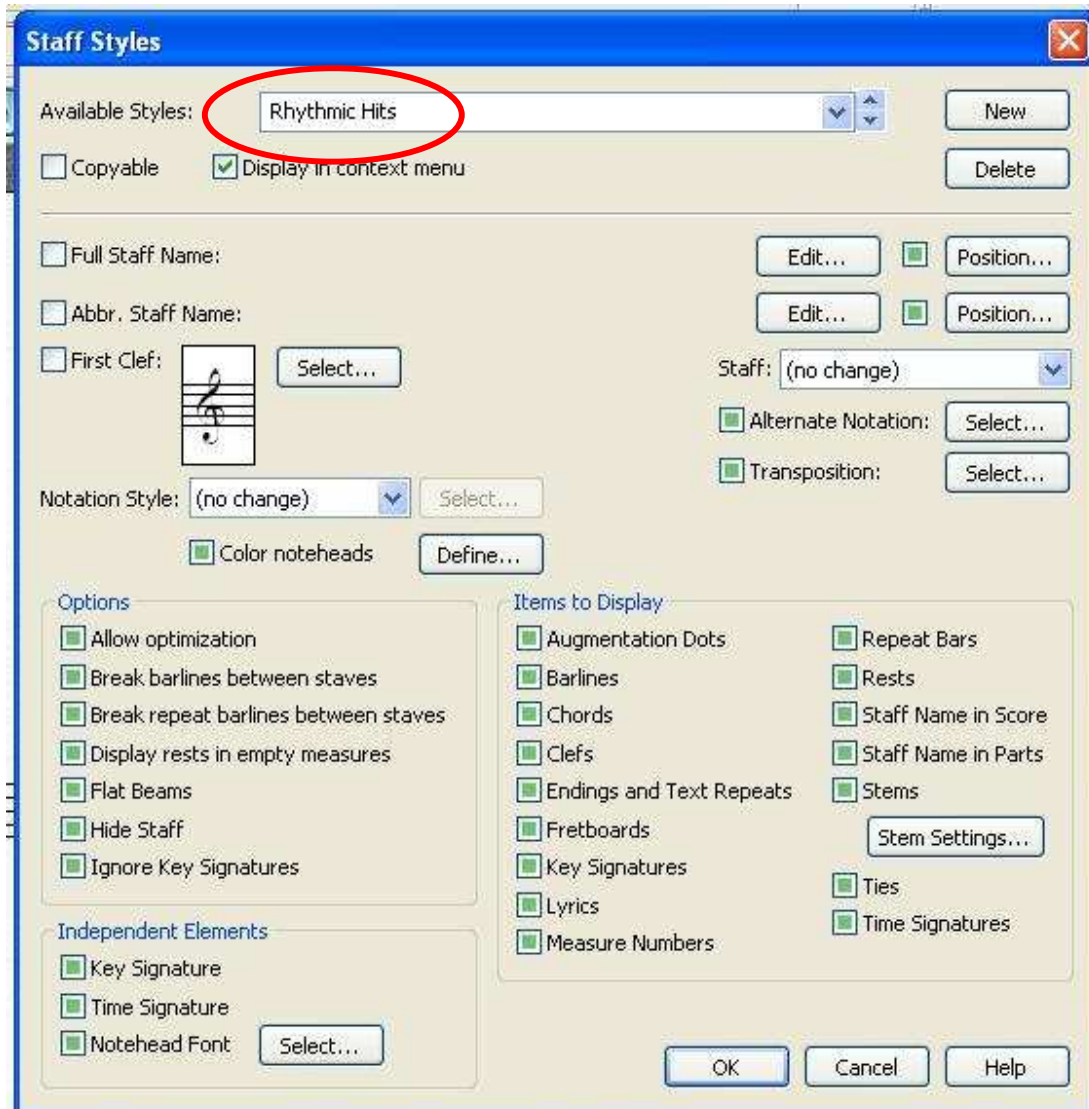
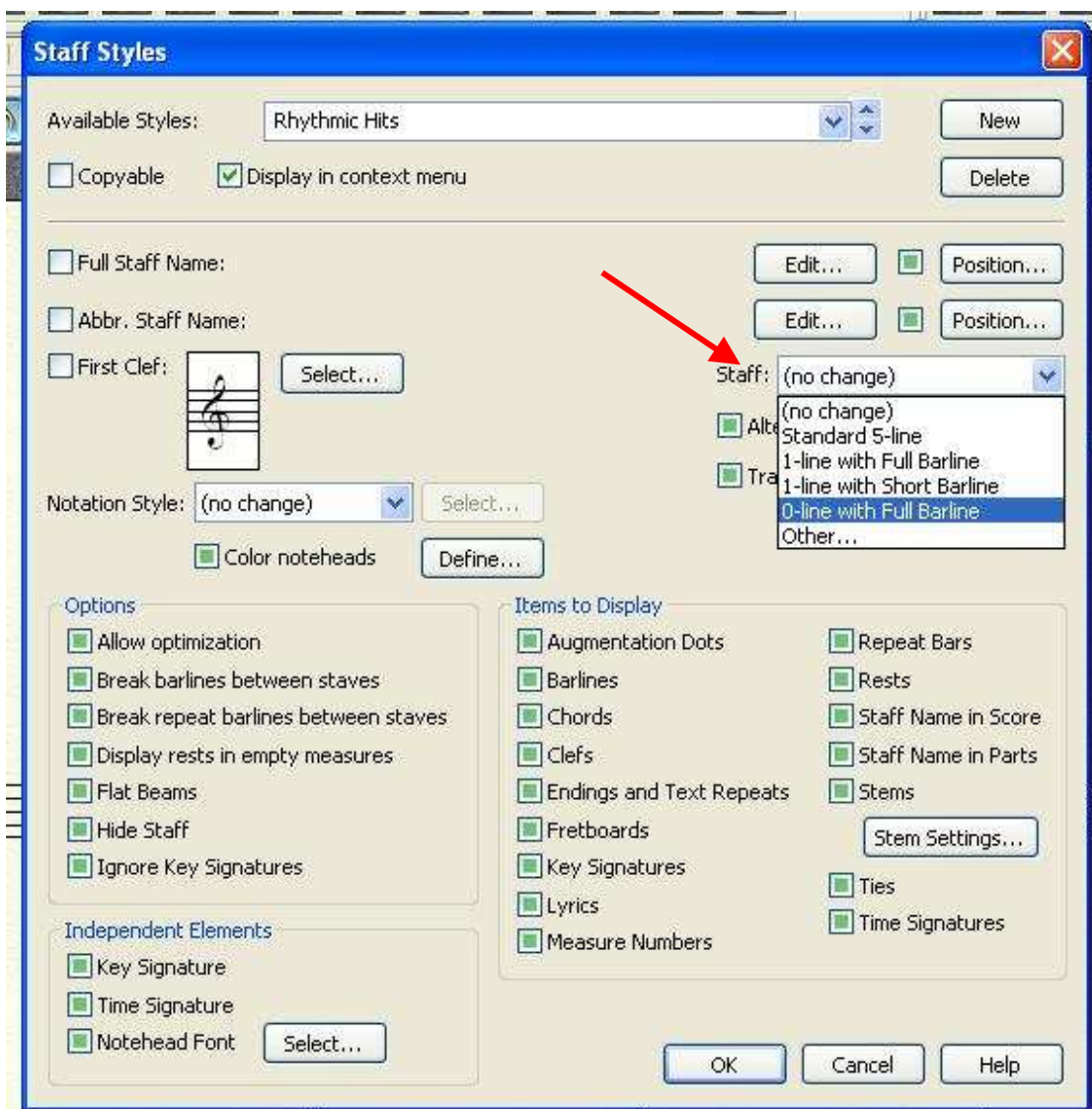First, set up your score, with an additional staff above the solo staff.

Select the Staff Tool, and from the Staff menu, choose Define Staff Styles
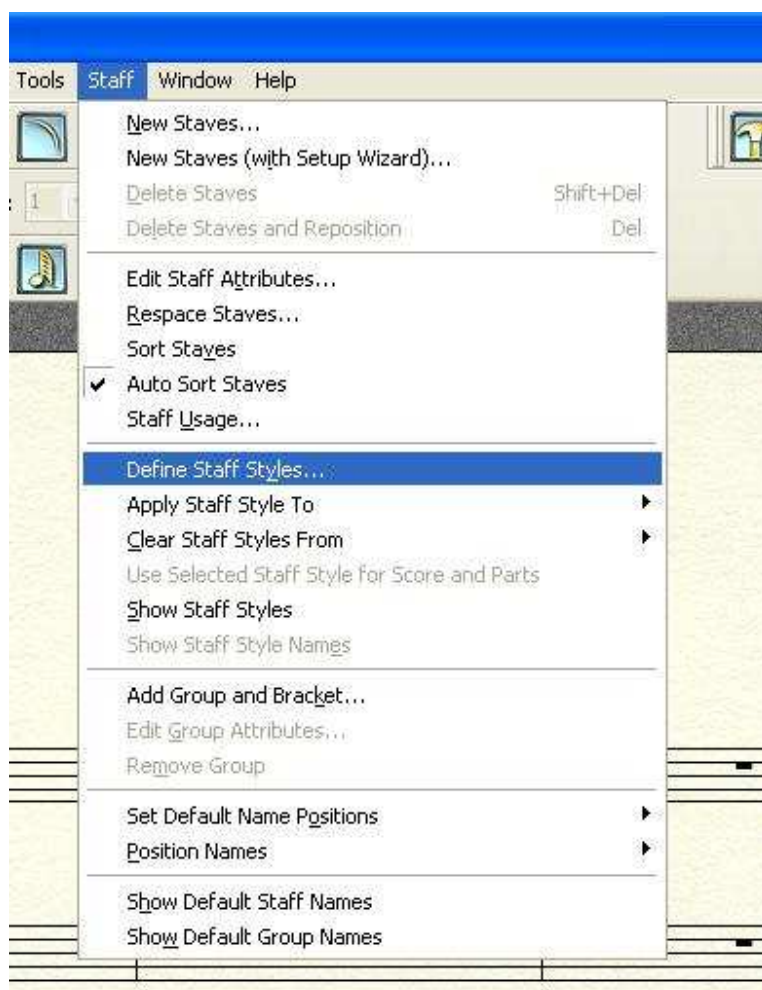
In the next screen, select New, and give your style a name. I called mine Rhythmic Hits.

Now, we have to make a lot of changes in this style. First, in the Staff: window, choose O-line with Full Barline.

Just below that Staff setting, you will see a line for Alternate Notation. Click in the Select… box. In the following dialogue box, choose Rhythmic Notation, and Stems Up. Click OK.
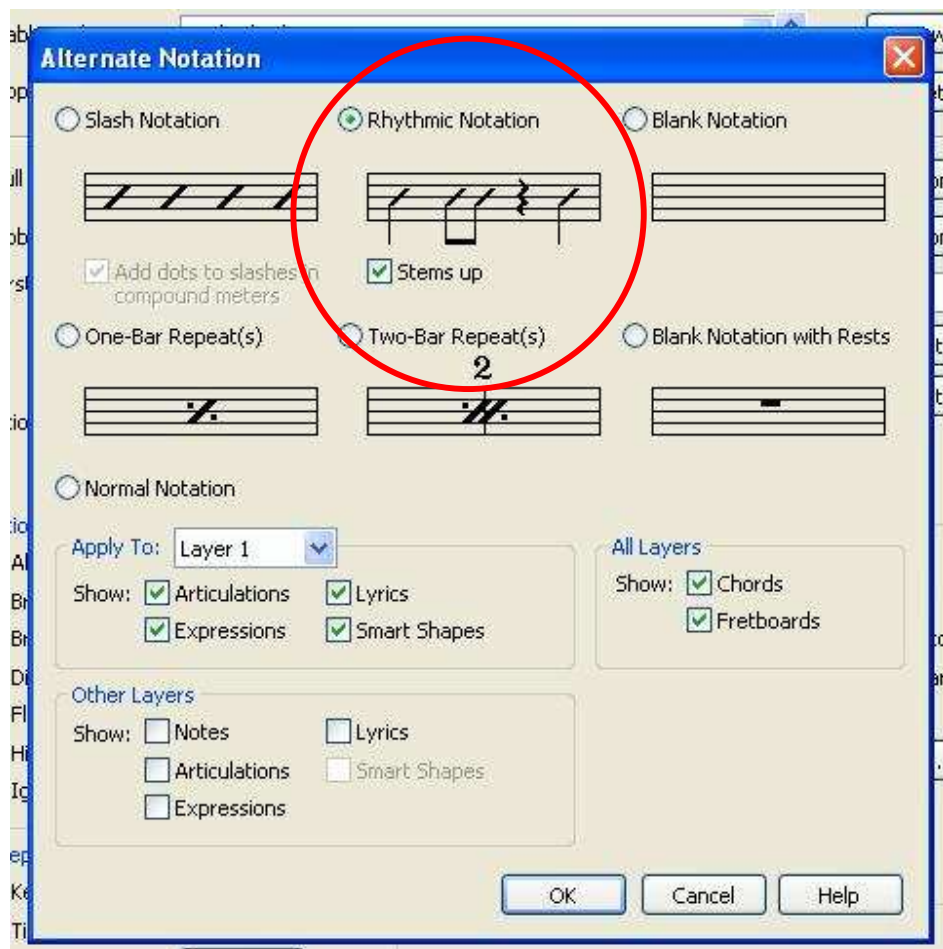
Back in the staff style window, check the box labeled Copyable. Down in the Options section, uncheck Display rests in empty measures. In the Items to Display section, uncheck everything except Augmentation Dots, Chords, Fretboards (optional), Rests, Stems, and Ties. The panel should look like the one below. Click OK.
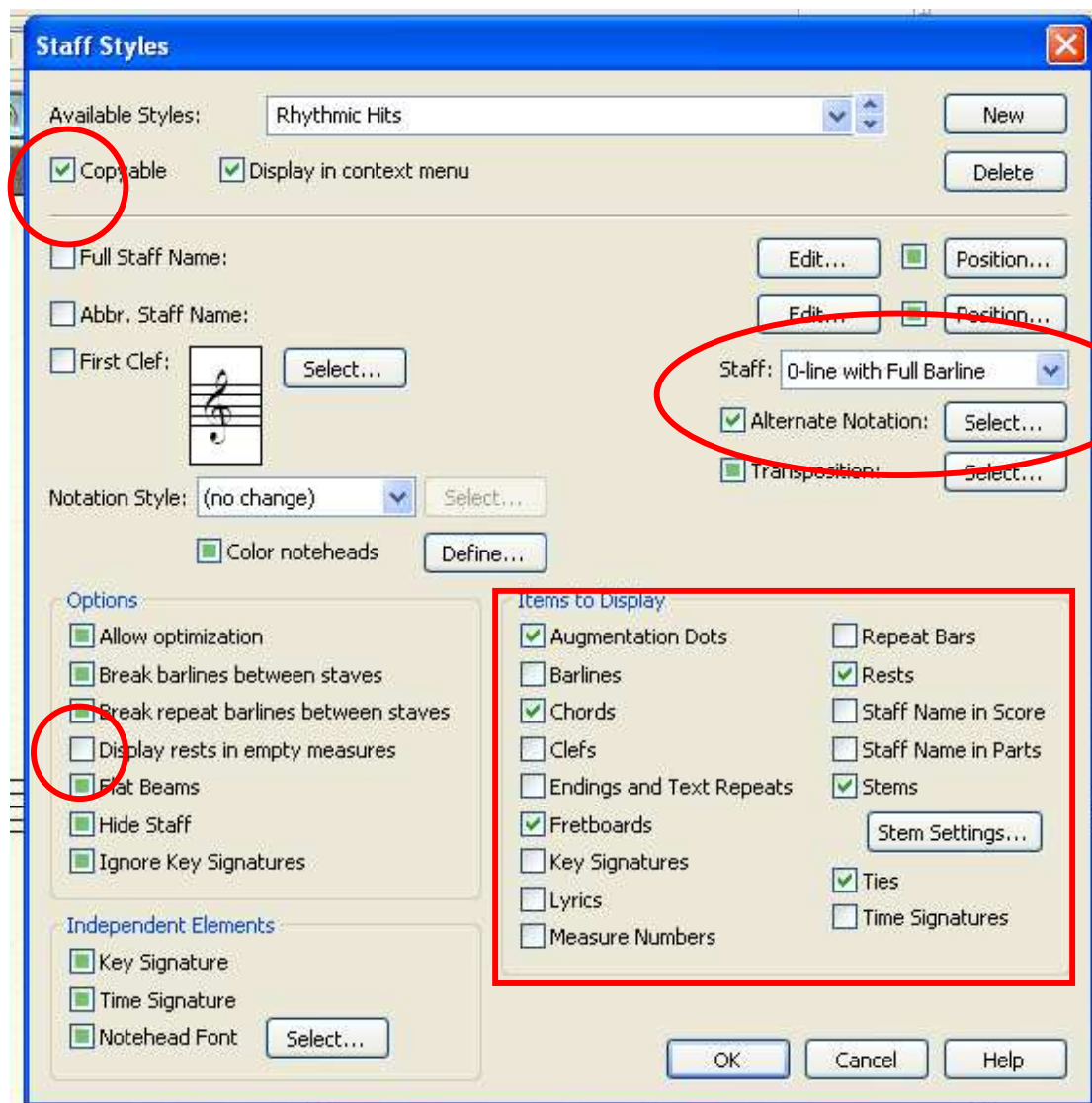
Now we can return to our score. In the upper staff, enter the rhythm that you want your section to follow.

If the same pattern repeats, you can copy it forward as much as needed. Select the Staff tool, select the staff, and right-click in the staff. From the drop-down menu, choose the Rhythmic Hits staff style.

Your notes will change to rhythmic notation, and all of the other elements will be hidden.

Almost done! With the Resize tool, click in the staff, and choose Resize Staff… 60% should be about right, although you can decide that for yourself.

Your rhythm line will be reduced in size.

Go back to the staff tool, and drag that rhythmic staff down to where you want it.

To remove that little stub of a barline on the left, go to Document Options… Barlines.
In the Left Barlines section, uncheck Display on Multiple Staves. This is fine for a
document with a single, solo line. If you have entered your rhythm section into a full
score, you might want to leave the left barline in place.
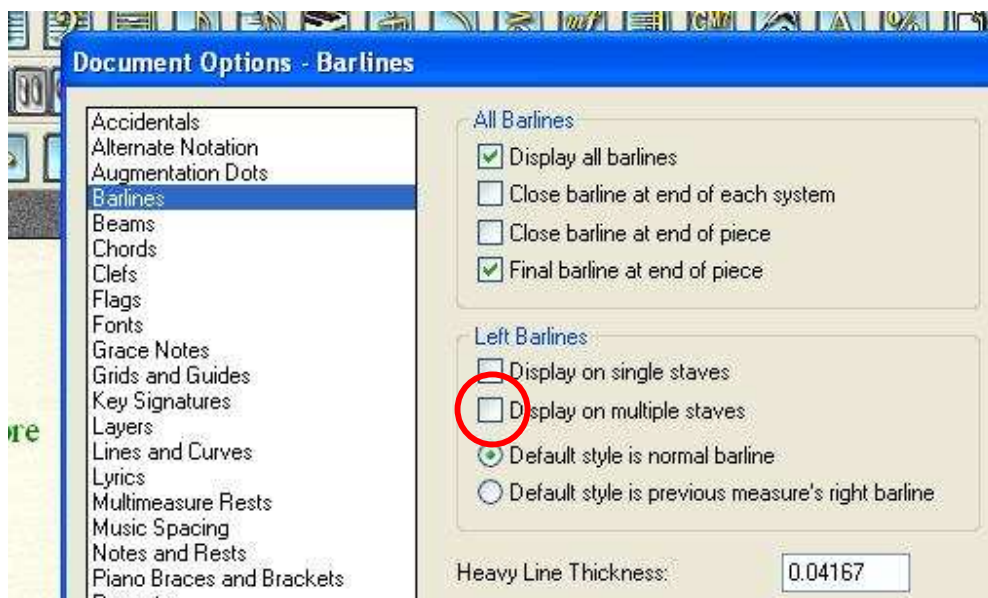
If you like, you can enter Chords. Since the rhythm staff has been reduced in size, the chords would be smaller, too. To avoid that, enter them on the solo staff, and drag them up to where they need to be.

Finally, enter the notes for the soloist.

All that's left now is to clean up a couple of details. Go to the instrument list, and mute the staff that you used for rhythm notes. Also, you probably want to save this style. You can do it by saving the document you just used as a template, or by saving the library.

Mike Rosen
3/8/2010

Based on work by Peter Thomsen, David Morehead, and Zuill