

Chamber Musicians of Northern California

CMNC.org

How to add measure numbers to your music

Although there is no universally-agreed-upon system for counting measures, all players in a group should use the same method. Here is a method that is useful and common to many chamber musicians:

1. The first **full** measure of the first line of a movement is measure 1.
 - a. Do not count any partial (pick-up) measures at the start of a movement.
2. Carefully count measures and write the measure number at the beginning of each line/staff.
 - a. If a single measure is divided across a double bar, across a repeat, across a change of clef, key or meter, or from one staff system to the next, be sure not to count it twice.
 - b. Don't count subdivisions within measures marked by dotted lines.
3. At a repeat with first and second endings, don't count measures in the first ending, just the measures in the second ending. (This will then address the issue of some parts having first and second endings and others having just the repeat bar.)
4. Count trios (e.g. after a minuet), codas or variations in continuity with the preceding printed measures, even if they are not played in that sequence; do not restart from 1.
5. Count each movement individually, starting again with measure 1.
6. Check scores or other parts to confirm accuracy of your numbering. Rehearsal letters are a good place to confirm measure number accuracy among different parts.

For more information and some measure numbers for well-known chamber works, visit:

<https://cmceast.org/downloads/MeasureCounts.txt>