orarion

user manual

1. About this manual

Welcome to Orarion! With this simple but powerful scorewriter, you can write as much Orthodox sheet music as you like, quickly and easily. This manual will cover all the basics of setting chants, using them to create scores, formatting and creating PDFs.

The process for writing scores in Orarion is a little bit unusual, but this is because it is optimised for writing the kind of music we sing in Orthodox services. Due to the fact that you control every part of the music with only a few clicks/buttons, learning and using Orarion is very quick and easy!

For tips and features for making your scores look professional, see the Arranger's Guide, which you can find on the Orarion website.

To use Orarion, you need:

- a computer with an internet connection
- access to an English language keyboard

For best compatibility, we recommend using the Google Chrome web browser.

If you have any questions or comments, please write to us and we'll be very happy to help! Our e-mail is support@vesperus.co.uk.

2. Basics

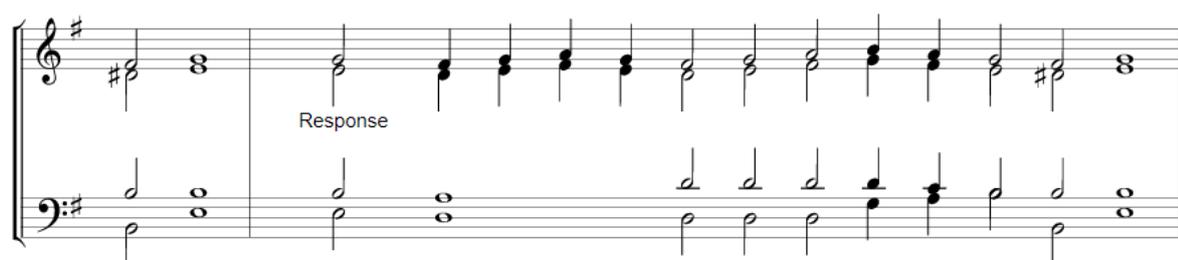The process for creating a score in Orarion is as follows:

1. **Set the chant** – give Orarion a stripped-down template of the melodies and harmonies for the chant you wish to use (see example below). This template can be edited at any stage of the process.
2. **Enter the lyrics** – in the Lyrics Editor, enter the text with some markings indicating how music from your template will be used to write the score, fitting around the lyrics.
3. **Preview the score** – at any stage of the process, you can preview your score, and if necessary, go back and edit the music.
4. **Add musical markings** – when you're happy with the music itself, write in musical markings such as slurs, dynamics, and pauses.
5. **Create PDF** – this is immediately downloaded to your computer.

By a template, we mean a set of musical phrases, each containing a melody harmonised for a choir. When you're writing your score, each bar of music will take its melody/chords from a phrase in the template. Orarion takes your lyrics (with the markings) and uses this information to write a bar of music of those words set to the music from the phrase you selected. All the usually time-consuming formatting is done automatically, so you can concentrate on just writing the music!

As an example, a template for the Stikhira Tone 6 minor melody could look like this:

Note: the rhythms depicted here are just to demonstrate how this chant could be sung. You can, of course, set your own rhythms!

3. Setting a chant

There are three ways of setting a chant in Orarion:

- **Select a ready-made chant from the library**: the Orarion website contains a library of fully customisable chants. These include the troparion, stikhira, irmos and prokimen melodies for the Eight Tones, a selection of podobens and other commonly-sung melodies for a variety of standard services.
- **Upload a .orarion file:** if you have an existing Orarion score, you can upload this. Doing so automatically sets the chant from that score.
- **Create a new chant:** you can write your own chant from scratch.
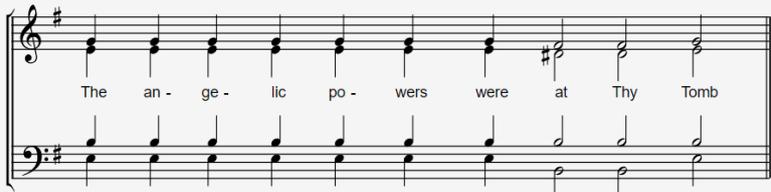
3.1 Chant Library

When you enter the Orarion Editor (click 'Editor' on the toolbar at the top of any page on the website), you will see the Chants Menu. The core of this page looks like this:

Choose a chant:

| Troparion | Kontakion | Stikhira | Irmos |

| Common Melodies | Podoben | Prokimen |

| Load .orarion file |

New Score

To access the library, click on the chant you want to use from the first two rows of buttons. If the chant you've selected is subdivided into Tones, then the subsequent menu will ask you to select the Tone.

In the subsequent menu, choose a version of the chant you've selected. Many chants will have several different melodies/harmonisations, and each option will look like this:

Melody in alto, ||: 1-2-3 :|| - Conclusion or ||: 1-2-3 :|| - 1 - 2b - Conclusion

See Full Example

Each grey 'card' of music shows the first line of that chant, set with an example lyric. The text below the card gives a brief description of the chant, with instructions on how (traditionally) the phrases of this chant are put together. For example,

||: 1 – 2 :|| - Conclusion

means that Phrase 1 and Phrase 2 of this chant repeat until the final bar, where the Conclusion phrase is used. You can, of course, use any ordering you like! The 'See Full Example' button gives you an example of an extract of a hymn written in that exact chant, so you can see how the other phrases of this chant look.

To select a version, just click on the grey card – this will take you straight to the Lyrics Editor, where you can start creating the music. All the chants in the library are fully customisable – you can change any note in any chord, add/remove chords, add/remove phrases, transpose to a different key, change the arrangement style, and more.

If there's a chant/variant of a chant that you would like to see included in our library, please write to us! If it's sufficiently different from what we already have, we'll happily include it for everyone to use!

3.2 Loading a .orarion file

In the Chants Menu, select the 'Load .orarion file' button and this will bring you to this screen:

### Please select an Orarion score to upload:

Select a file

Load Score   Load Chant Only

Each **.orarion** file contains both the musical template (all the chords for a chant) and the lyrics that were saved. If you wish to load only the chant, and start with a blank score using that chant, click the button on the right.

Loading a .orarion file automatically sets the chant (from the file) and if you click 'Load Score', you can start editing the score straight away. If you click 'Load Chant Only', you will start with a blank score, using the chant from the file.
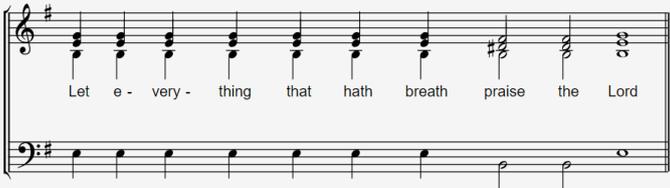
3.3 Writing a new chant

To write your own chant, click 'New Score' in the Chants menu, and you will see the following options:
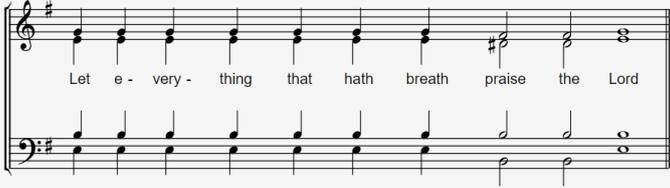
SA-TB: the tenor part will be written on the bottom stave.

SAT-B: the tenor part will be written on the top stave.

TT-BB: arrangement for male choir.

This sets the arrangement style for your score. You can always change this later! Once you have selected this, set the key signature for your score. Changing this later will transpose your score into the new key.

With the arrangement style and key signature set, you come to the Chant Editor:

Currently, Orarion supports up to four voices. For each voice, you will need to type in the notes, using English letter notation, e.g. **A4**. In every phrase, each voice needs to have the same number of notes (to be able to form the chords correctly).

In Orarion's letter notation, every note consists of three things: a **note letter**, an **accidental letter** and an **octave number**, in that order. Accidental symbols are written like this:

- s - ♯, b - ♭ , n - ♮
- x - 𝄪, d - 𝄫

If a note doesn't have an accidental, just write the note letter followed by the octave number.

For example:

|			
Soprano:	G4	F4	G4
Alto:	E4	Ds4	E4
Tenor:	B3	B3	B3
Bass:	E3	B2	E3

This produce a phrase like this:

Phrase   1

Any lyrics you set to this phrase will use an E minor chord followed by the B major chord, then returning to the E minor chord.

Once you've finished writing the chant, click 'Save Template' and this will bring you straight to the Lyrics Editor. You can always return to the Chant Editor to edit anything you want.

3. Writing the score

Now that you have a chant set, you can start creating your score! This is done in the Lyrics Editor, which looks like this:
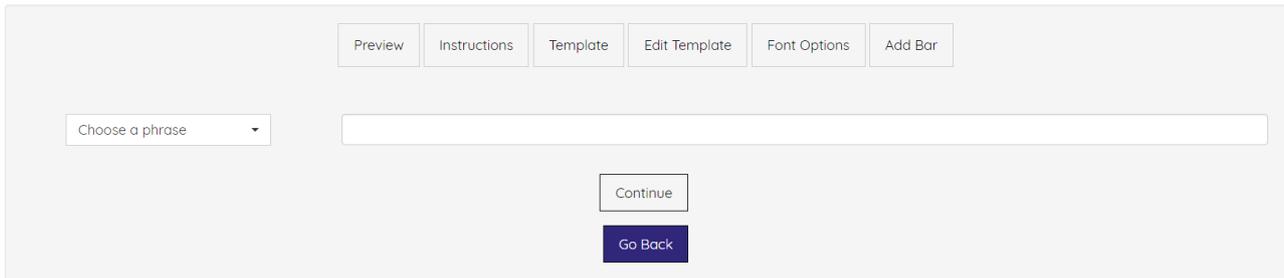
The toolbar at the top has the following buttons:

1. **Preview** – this button saves and generates the sheet music that you have written so far, so that you can preview it in a graphical format. From there, to go back, click the purple **Edit** button at the top of the page, or save the score.
2. **Instructions** – this brings up a dialogue box with all the rhythm symbols and chord change commands.
3. **Template** – this brings up a dialogue box with the template of the chant you are using.
4. **Edit Template** – this takes you to the Chant Editor, where you can edit the chant itself. Make sure you've saved your lyrics before going here!
5. **Font Options** – here, you can change the spacing between the notes, the font of the text, and the font size. You can also change whether or not the final line of music is stretched across the width of the page.
6. **Add Bar** – add a bar of music.

Each text box on this page represents a bar of music. In the textbox, you will need to type in the lyrics, together with the markings representing rhythms and chord changes. For example:
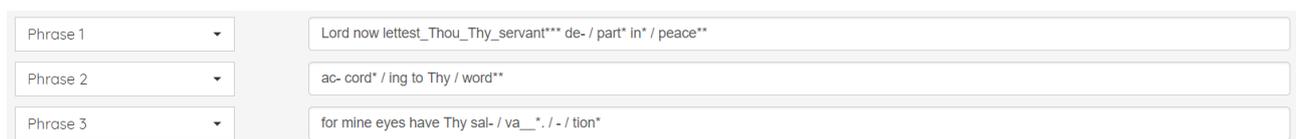
Phrase from template   *lyrics with rhythmic and chord change markings*

To see what the melody is for a particular phrase, click on the **Template** button in the Lyrics Editor toolbar.

Syllables and Phrases

Any bit of text you type in the lyrics box which is separated by blank spaces from other bits of text will be treated by Orarion as one chord. For example:
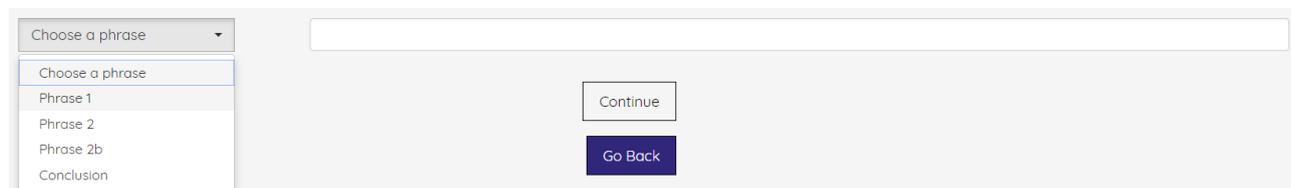
What you type: *These   are   some   lyr-   ics*
Orarion sees: *chord* *chord* *chord* *chord*   *chord*

It's therefore very important to remember to split up your text into syllables first. Make sure that for each bar, you've selected a phrase from the drop-down menu to the left of the textbox:

Choose a phrase ▾	
Choose a phrase	
Phrase 1	
Phrase 2	
Phrase 2b	
Conclusion	

Continue

Go Back

Markings

There are two types of markings: **rhythmic** and **melodic**. Rhythmic markings are symbols typed after a lyric that indicate the duration of the chord. The main ones are:

Input	Output
Lord	♩ Lord
Lord^	♪ Lord
Lord*	♩ Lord
Lord**	o Lord

To add a rhythm dot to the duration, just add a full stop **after** the rhythm symbol. For a dotted quarter note, just add it after the text.

So for example, if we typed:

Have   mer-   cy   up-   on   me   O*   God***

Orarion would interpret this as:

♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ o

Have   mer-   cy   up-   on   me   O*   God***

If, alternatively, we typed:

Have   mer- cy up- on me*. O God**

Orarion would interpret this as:

*Have   mer- cy up- on me*. O   God***

Music *without* lyrics

Whenever you need just chords **without lyrics** below them, for example whenever there is a melismatic passage, just type the rhythm symbol on its own. *For quarter notes, use the '*✂*'* symbol. So for example, to have the same rhythms as above, just without lyrics, you would type:

✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ * * **

Melodic markings

Once you have selected a phrase from the drop-down menu to the left of the lyric box, and written in your lyrics, you can mark where the chord changes take place. To indicate a chord change, type a forward slash '/'. For example, if we had a phrase 1 consisting of these three chords:
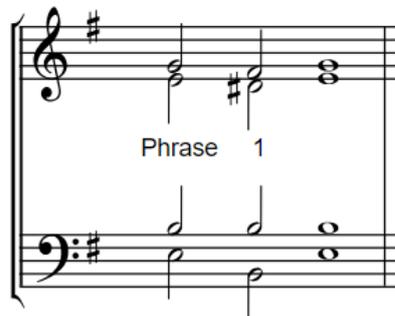
whatever lyrics we have typed, would include at most two chord changes. The /'s would split up the text, indicating which syllables are sung on an E minor chord, which on the B major chord and which on the final E minor chord.

Suppose our text is '*Have mercy upon me, O God*', and we have split it up into syllables and have added rhythmic markings:

Have   mer- cy   up- on me,* O* God**

We could put two chord changes like so:

Have   mer-   cy   up-   on   /   me,   O*   /   God***

This would produce:

Orarion has a self-formatting feature which detects when two or more notes in adjacent chords should be connected as one note of longer duration. To see this in action, look at the second bar of the example below.

This feature can be turned off for individual chords by typing an exclamation point [!] **after** the rhythm symbol.
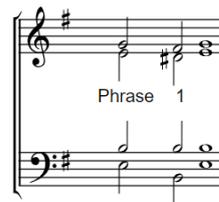
Worked Example

Here is a more complete example, in which we will notate '*Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord*' in Tone 6.
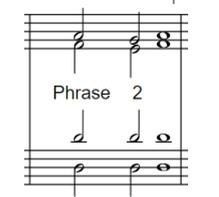
We will need the following phrases:

Phrase 1:
      S: G4 F4 G4
      A: E4 Ds4 E4
      T: B3 B3 B3
      B: E3 B2 E3

Phrase 2:
      S: A4 G4 A4
      A: F4 E4 F4
      T: D4 D4 D4
      B: D3 D3 D3

Phrase 3:
      S: B4 A4 G4 F4
      A: G4 F4 E4 Ds4
      T: D4 D4 B3 B3
      B: G3 D3 E3 B2

Phrase 4:
      S: G4 A4 B4 A4 G4 F4 G4
      A: E4 F4 G4 F4 E4 Ds4 E4
      T: B3 D4 D4 D4 B3 B3 B3
      B: E3 D3 G3 A3 B3 B2 E3

This will give a template that looks like this:

Then we enter the lyrics, with all the rhythmic and melodic markings:

Phrase 1 ▼		Let e- very- thing that hath breath / praise* the* / Lord**
Phrase 2 ▼		praise the Lord from the hea* / -* / vens**
Phrase 3 ▼		praise Him / in* / the / heights**
Phrase 4 ▼		to Thee O God / be- /long* / - / * / eth* / song!**

and click 'Preview':

Saving Orarion files

Once you have created the chant and some lyrics, you can save your work as a .orarion file.

You can do this by previewing the score and clicking the 'Save' button to the right of the 'Edit' button. Then give your Orarion file a name and click 'Download'! You can then load this in the Chants menu to carry on working on it at any time!

4. Formatting

Once you're happy with the music you've written, click 'Continue' in the Lyrics Editor to start writing in slurs, dynamics and other music symbols.

The final two steps in creating a complete score are: (1) writing in any musical symbols such as slurs, dynamics and musical directions and (2) creating the PDF.

The Formatting Editor is a toolbar for selecting musical symbols and a viewer for editing your score. To save any added symbols, click the 'Save' button below the viewer, or to go back and edit the lyrics, click the 'Edit' button next to it.
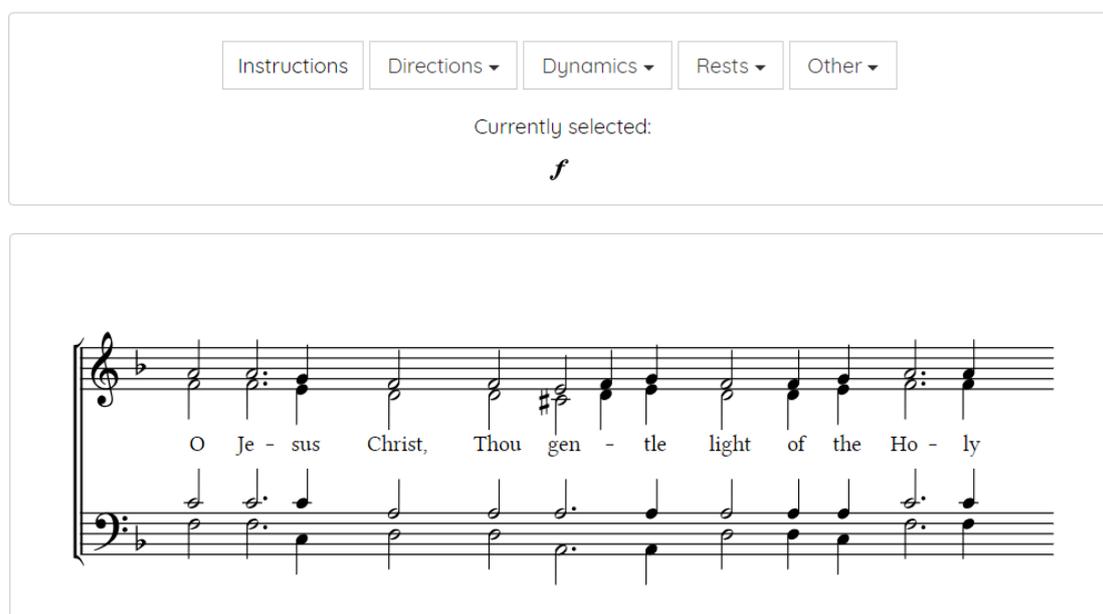

Writing in musical symbols

Select the symbol you want to add to the score from one of the drop-down menus in the toolbar, and just click anywhere on the score to draw in that symbol.

To add multiples copies of the same 'Currently Selected' symbol, hold down [Ctrl] and click on where you would like to add that symbol. To deselect the 'Currently Selected' symbol, press [0] on the numpad.

To zoom in or out in the viewer, hold down [Ctrl] and move the mouse wheel up or down, keeping the mouse inside the viewer. To move the viewer's position, hold down the right mouse button and drag the mouse as needed. To move a symbol, click on it, drag it to its new location. To delete a symbol, click on it and press either [Del] or [Backspace].
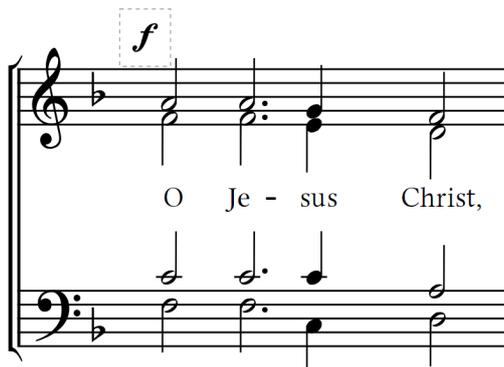
You can change the shape of slurs by clicking on them and dragging the control squares:
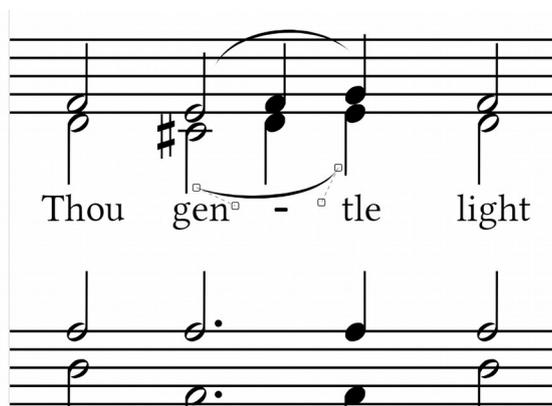
Similarly with dynamics hairpins:
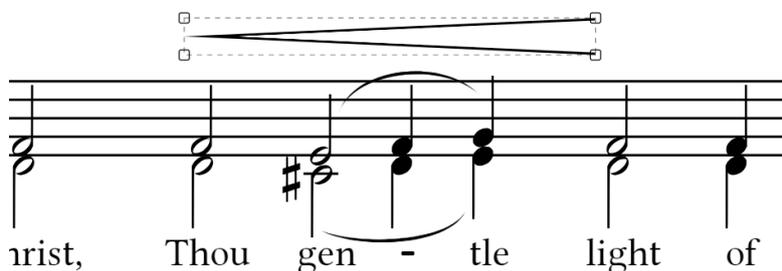
Finally, you can duplicate any already drawn symbol by clicking on it and pressing [+].

You can add additional text to the score by selecting 'Text' in the toolbar. A textbox will appear in the toolbar. Type your text in the textbox and then hold down [Ctrl] and click on the score where you want the text to be written.

Making the PDF

In the final menu, enter the title/author/headers of the piece into the relevant textboxes and click 'Download PDF'. The title options are: **Title, left header, right header, author, tempo markings**, and they will be placed on the document like so: