Note Input Bar Redesign

Tantacrul
Pain Points Addressed in this Document

- The NOTE INPUT BUTTON requires unnecessary steps when notating, which complicates the first time experience
- There are too many options at the outset
- Customisation is difficult to discover
- Certain icons are hard to read (mainly ‘Note input’, ‘Tie’ and ‘Flip direction’)
- There are some inefficiencies with adding rests

Out of Scope

- Shortcuts
Overview

A brief description of visual & layout changes
Duet no.9

Altered Phrygian Mode

Staff Text

Expression

Change Instr.
This is the proposed default layout of the Note Input Bar

- **Palettes**
  - Add more palettes
  - Accidentals
    - More
  - Clefs
    - More
  - Time signatures
    - More
  - Key signatures
    - More
  - Grace notes
    - More
  - Grace notes
    - More
  - Bar lines
    - More
  - Text
    - More

- **Customise** button on the far left
  - Only two voices (more can be accessed)
  - *This particular suggested optimisation should not be done without seeking wider approval*

- **Note Input** button
  - More descriptive Note Input button
  - (New icon TBD)

- **Inspector**
  - A new Tuplet dropdown
  - Redesigned icons for ‘Tie’ and ‘Flip direction’
    - (These are not final & ‘Flip direction’ needs to be tested)
  - Less cluttered rest icon
Unlike Sibelius, Finale and Dorico, MuseScore requires the user to click a Note Input button before you can actually enter notes. Where the other notation apps have the same concept, they allow the user to immediately enter this mode by clicking on a note duration. In all cases, they do not require the user to ‘get’ the concept of a Note Input Mode. Sibelius has a note input button but it’s not prominently exposed. Dorico has done away with it altogether.

This document proposes to make small changes to the Note Input functionality that seeks to streamline the existing system without discarding functionality that certain users will have become accustomed to. It is recommended that Telemetry be plugged in to record the overall usage of this interface to inform future re-designs.
In this example, the user is moving to click on a half Note (there is nothing selected in the score)
Doing this automatically selects the NOTE INPUT BUTTON

Notice that the first beat in the score has not been selected. This will be explained later in this document.
Now, the user moves to select a note.
The user is not currently in NOTE INPUT MODE
On selecting the note, the appropriate note value also becomes selected.
The user now moves to deselected the note by clicking away on blank area in the score (this can also be done by pressing ESC).
Doing this also deselects the note value in the top bar. This is an important change that will clear the way for further NOTE INPUT mode improvements.
Rests

With the previous changes implemented, adding rest can now be much easier
With nothing selected in the score, the user moves to click on a note.
With a note selected in the score, the user now moves to click on the 'rest' button.
Duet no.9

The note is changed to a rest.
The user now moves to deselect the rest by clicking on a blank space on the score (or pressing ESC).
Notice that both buttons in the top bar have also been deselected.
If the user clicks back on the rest again, the note duration and rest buttons will become highlighted.
Rests (Continued)

Additional improvements
With nothing selected in the score, the user moves to click on the rest button.
By doing this, the user has triggered NOTE INPUT MODE. When a note value isn’t already selected, the quarter note is chosen by default.

Rests can now be applied as normal.

Duet no.9
Augmentation Dots

These can also now also trigger NOTE INPUT MODE
With nothing selected in the score, the user moves to click on an augmentation dot.
By doing this, the user has triggered NOTE INPUT MODE.
When a note value isn’t already selected, the quarter note
is chosen by default.
Accidentals

Some small improvements to allow for corrections
The user now moves to select a note that has a flat accidental.
Duet no.9

Altered Plagalian Mode

The flat accidental is now highlighted
If the user clicks on the flat accidental now...
Duet no.9

It is removed from the selected note
Multiple Accidentals
In this example, the user has selected multiple notes - all of which have flat accidentals.
Clicking the flat accidental button at this point causes all selected accidentals to be removed.

Duet no.9

Altered Phrygian Mode
If multiple notes are selected which have dissimilar accidentals, then no accidental is highlighted in the top bar.

Example of dissimilarities:
One note with an accidental / one without;
One note with a natural accidental / one with a flat, etc.
If the user clicked on the flat accidental button again...

Duet no.9

Altered Phrygian Mode

Staff Text  Expression  Change Instr.
Flat accidentals would apply to both notes and the accidental button in the top bar would now remain highlighted.
Now, if the user clicked on the flat accidental button one more time...
Duet no.9

The flat accidentals would be removed from both notes
Accidentals Continued

Triggering NOTE INPUT MODE
With nothing selected in the score, the user moves to click on an accidental button.

Duet no.9

Altered Phrygian Mode

Staff Text  Expression  Change Instr.
By doing this, the user has triggered NOTE INPUT MODE. When a note value isn’t already selected, the quarter note is chosen by default.
Once the note has been placed, the accidental switches off.
Default Note Input Mode

The default NOTE INPUT MODE automatically selects the first bar of a composition when you trigger it. This creates some unusual points of confusion with the interface. For example, a user can select a half note as the desired duration and then click on the NOTE INPUT BUTTON to begin writing. However, because this now requires the first bar to be selected, if the first beat of that bar is actually a quarter note, the original choice of a half note will be overridden. This is a hidden consequence of the existing system. Again, this requires the user to ‘get’ the complicated idea of a NOTE INPUT MODE. Ultimately, this concept can be removed altogether but for this first design, I’m recommending that we simply reduce its importance.
In this example, the user moves to select the NOTE INPUT BUTTON.
If no other duration is selected, a quarter note is selected by default.

At this moment, nothing is highlighted in the score.

Altered Phrygian Mode

Staff Text

Expression

Change Instr.

Add more palettes

Accidentals

Clefs

Time signatures

Key signatures

Grace notes

Grace notes

Bar lines

Text
Duet no.9

The user can still see the ghost of the quarter note when rolling over the score
Once the user places the note, the next beat becomes highlighted. This alternative method of determining where to place the highlight is less confusing and more likely to reflect the user's area of focus.
Tuplets

Additional UI Interface
This interface is a visual representation of the options provided in the main menu: 'Add/Tuplets'.

Apart from this, it also contains some additional functionality tweaks (described later in this document).

In this example, the user is about to select a triplet.
In this example, the user has selected a triplet.
The user changes the duration to an eighth note.
The user can now see the highlighted notehead along with an indication of the length of the tuplet.
Once placed, it erases any other notes covering the same duration in the same voice.
In this example, the user has selected a whole note. NOTE INPUT MODE is not currently enabled.
Duet no.9

Altered Phrygian Mode
The user moves to select the Triplet option.
The note value updates accordingly

When the tuplet is applied, it is deselected

Duet no.9

Altered Phrygian Mode
Tuplets

Error states when tuplets can not be applied
The user has selected a quarter note along with a triplet.

In this example, the user is rolling over an area in the score, which currently does not support the placement of a quarter note triplet. Due to this, the UI updates to communicate that this is an unsupported action.

NOTE:
If the user still attempts to place the triplet in the score, an error message dialog should be triggered. This dialog should have the option 'Don’t show me this again'.
Thanks!