

GRANDE MUSIQUE

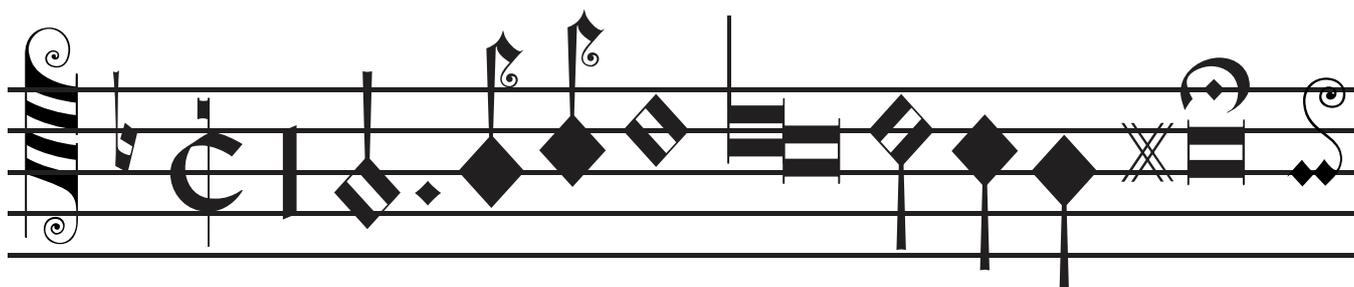
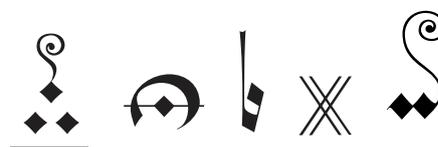
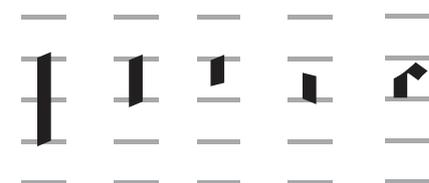
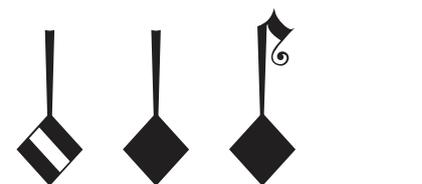
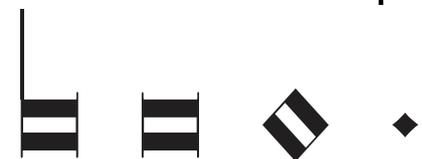
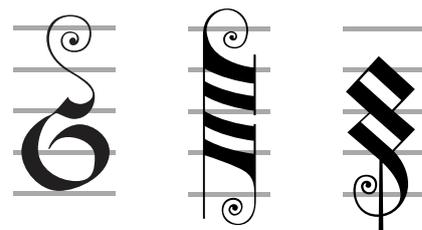
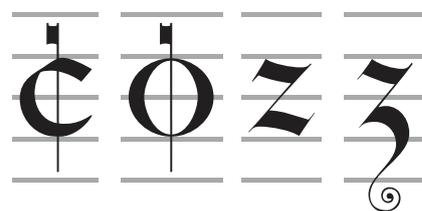
A 16th-century design for music type

In 1577, Christophe Plantin published a collection of eight masses by George de la Hèle. The book was designed as a 'choirbook,' with a page size of 35 x 40 cm (21.65 x 15.75 in.) To accommodate this large size, Hendrik Van den Keere created a new set of music type.

The set is known as *Grande Musique*, owing to its large staff size of approximately 22.5 millimetres (64 pt, 0.89 in.). Van den Keere also produced sets called *Petite Musique* and *Moyenne Musique*. The grand scale of this design allows for subtle detail and delicate ornament, which are lost when scaled to smaller sizes.

There are 43 surviving steel punches, which were used to create matrices (moulds) in copper blocks, into which the molten lead would be poured to make the type. Although this set of punches is not complete (not containing forms for every pitch), there is at least enough for one of every symbol used in the choirbook. The punches usually contains the symbol and the staff lines on which it sits; the same piece of type can often be turned upside-down, to be used either side of the middle staff line.) Additional forms survive in the matrices and type.

The symbols of the punches are digitally recreated here at original size, carefully traced as vector graphics, smoothed to remove distortions and blemishes from use and time. The staff lines have been removed, or shown in grey, to show the symbols individually.



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METRE / TIME SIGNATURES / MAATSOORT:



Tempus imperfectum



Tempus perfectum



2



3

CLEFS / CLÉE / SLEUTELS:

G
Sol



C
Ut/Do



F
Fa



NOTES / NOTEN:



Longa



Brevis



Semibrevis



Minima



Seminima



Fusa



Punctus
augmentationis

RESTS / PAUSES / RUSTEN:



Longa



Brevis



Semibrevis



Minima



Seminima

MISCELLANY / RECUEIL / DIVERSEN:



Signum
congruentiae



Fermata



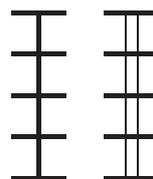
Flat
Bémol
Mol



Sharp
Dièse
Kreis



Custos



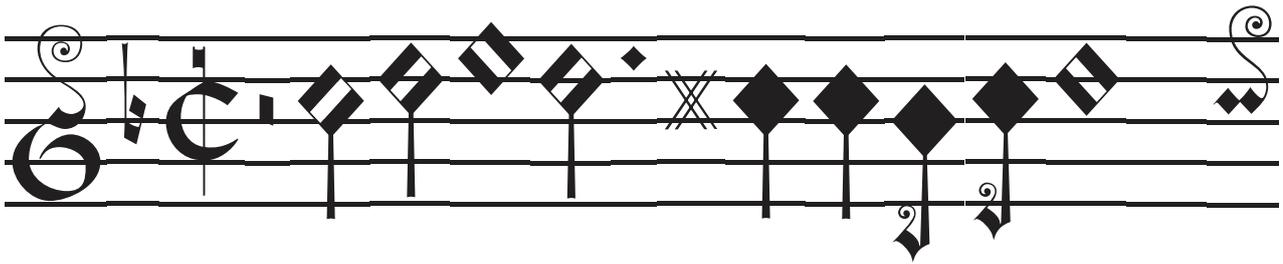
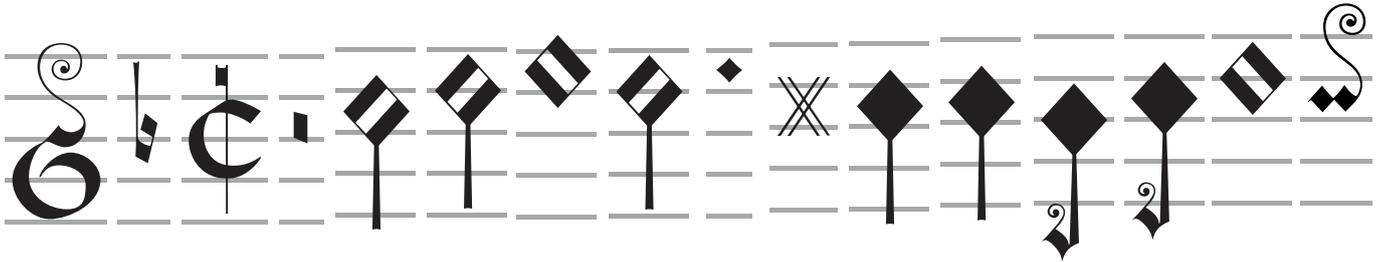
Barline
Barre
Streep

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The sample line of music below was created by placing each digital piece of type next to the previous one, much as Plantin would have assembled each piece of type in turn (except he would have done it backwards!)

Each piece has been very slightly mis-aligned here, to give a 'rough' appearance. Plantin was one of the most accurate printers, who was able to achieve very consistent lines (also due to the skill of Van den Keere in creating precise type).



Plantin's publication contains some interesting juxtaposition of type, which would impossibly overlap one blocks of type with another, unless some alternative strategy was used, like creating type with fewer staff lines.

The very existence of punches with only one staff line, suggests that there was a way to get them inbetween other blocks of type.

