Using the Divide Durations Plugin

by Bob Zawalich February 17, 2011, updated April 15, 2020

Divide durations will split selected notes and chords, rests, or bar rests into smaller pieces.

Divided notes can be tied together or left separate, and there is an option to skip notes or chords that initiate a tie (a chord will be skipped if any note in the chord initiates a tie). There is no really way to tell which note a tie ends on, so the "tied-to" notes will be processed even if the tied notes are not.

Notes or rests within tuplets can be split.

The plugin lets you filter for a specific duration, or for a range of durations.
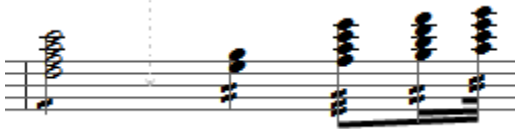
The Different Ways To Divide Durations

There are several options for splitting durations.

- The first is to split them into an even number of equal-sized pieces; typically you might want to split a note or rest into 2 pieces. To do this use the option "*Divide duration by*", and choose 2, 3, 4, 8, or 16. This way you can split a half note into 2 quarter notes, or a dotted half into 2 dotted quarter notes. (If you divide by 3, you will often produce a triplet, though you can divide a dotted note into 3 without triplets).

- The second way is to specify the "base" duration you want to split the note into (using the "*Make durations multiples of*" option). Note that it is possible to specify a base duration which is larger than 1/2 the duration of the source note or rest. In this case, it will be split into as many occurrences of the base duration size as possible, and anything left over will be written as a separate note or rest. (If it is the same size or smaller than the base duration, it will not be changed).

  So if you use an 8th note as the multiple, then a half note will become 4-8th notes, and a dotted quarter note will become 3-8th notes. A dotted 8th will become an 8th and a 16th.

- There are also 2 special-purpose options, which "unfold" dotted notes or notes containing single tremolos (which may contain 1 or 2 slashes).
  - *Unfold single dotted rhythms* will replace any note or rest with a single dot with 3 notes whose duration is half of the original. So a dotted half will become 3 quarters, and a dotted quarter 3 8th s. *Note: as of 2018 on the plugin download page, or shipping Sibelius Ultimate 2020.1 or later, the plugin can also unfold double and triple dotted notes, despite what the dialog says. The dialog was not updated to avoid having to translate it into all shipping languages*

  - *Unfold measured single tremolos* will replace notes with 1 or 2 slashes on

    the stems with an appropriate number of unslashed notes.

    Unfold measured single tremolos follows the rules described in the Sibelius reference: for notes that are quarter notes or larger, a single slash will produce a number of 8th notes, and a double slash will produce 16th notes. For 8th notes and smaller, each slash produces notes that are ½ of the previous duration for each slash. So a half note with 2 slashes will produce 4-8th notes, and a double-slashed quarter note 2-8th notes. A single slashed 8th note will produce 2-16th notes, and a double-slashed 8th note will produce 4-32nd notes.

Examples follow.