Chapter 6
Accidentals and Key Signatures

6.1 Accidentals

Flat: \( b \)  
Sharp: \( # \)  
Double Flat: \( bb \)  
Double Sharp: \( xx \)  
Natural: \( \frac{d}{1} \)

6.2 Directions for Brailling the Accidentals

The accidental is brailled in front of the note it affects.

Example 6.2.1

Accidentals are marked in braille wherever they occur in print. As in print, if two tied notes affected by an accidental are separated by a bar line, the accidental is usually not repeated for the second note.

Example 6.2.2

As in print, the accidental remains in effect during an entire measure for the same note at the same pitch, but not for the same note in a different octave.

Example 6.2.3
Printed music may include accidentals that are not strictly necessary. Such “courtesy accidentals” must also be included in the braille transcription.

Example 6.2.4

Random or confusing associations between the music and literary braille codes should of course be avoided, but occasionally there is a natural and easy association which can be a helpful mnemonic. A prime example is the coincidence between the musical sharp sign and the literary “sh” sign. Similarly, the musical whole rest is identical to the literary “m” as in “measure.” Take advantage of these mnemonics if they are handy and helpful for you.

6.3 Examples for Practice

Example 6.3.1

Example 6.3.2
6.4 Key Signatures

If a key signature consists of one, two, or three accidentals, it is transcribed as the corresponding number of flat or sharp signs, brailed consecutively without spaces between them.

If a signature consists of four or more accidentals, it is brailed as an upper number (including the numeric indicator) followed immediately by a single flat or sharp sign.

Example 6.4.1

The key signature and time signature are centered together on the braille line immediately above the first line of music. The key signature is brailed first; then the time signature is brailed, without an intervening space.

Example 6.4.2

6.5 Examples for Practice

Example 6.5.1
Braille readers, even more than print readers, need to know and apply music theory. In braille the key signature is shown just once, at the beginning of the music, and remains in effect unless and until there is a change. Moreover, the braille key signature does not tell the reader what specific notes are sharped or flatted. To interpret the music correctly, the braille reader must know the names of the flats and sharps for each major and minor key. As in all other aspects of braille music, the transcriber’s accurate presentation of the key signature is crucial for the braille reader’s success.
Drills for Chapter 6
(Correct transcriptions of these drills are at the end of this chapter)

Drill 6.1

Drill 6.2

Drill 6.3

Drill 6.4

Drill 6.5
Exercises for Chapter 6
(Submit the following exercises to your instructor in BRF file format)

Exercise 6.1

Exercise 6.2

Exercise 6.3

Exercise 6.4

Exercise 6.5

Exercise 6.6
Exercise 6.7

Exercise 6.8
Correct transcriptions of the Drills for Chapter 6

Drill 6.1

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