

Tutorial-Generating a Custom Macro Using Add Text To Blank Page

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Introduction and preparation

The installable plugin **Add Text To Blank Page** lets you choose text, a blank page text style, and a blank page in a score, and will add the text to the selected blank page.

This tutorial will explain how to generate a custom macro using the **New macro/plugin** button in the plugin **Add Text To Blank Page** to create the same Blank Page text, without needing to see and fill the plugin dialog each time.

To find out **how** and **why** this works, please see the detailed companion document **Using New macro/plugin to Generate a Custom Macro or Plugin** at bobzawalich.com/parent-child-plugins/

Required Tools

You will need to install or update to **the most recent versions** of these plugins:

- **Add Text To Blank Page**
- **Execute Commands**
- **cmdutils**
- **Command Search Shortcut**

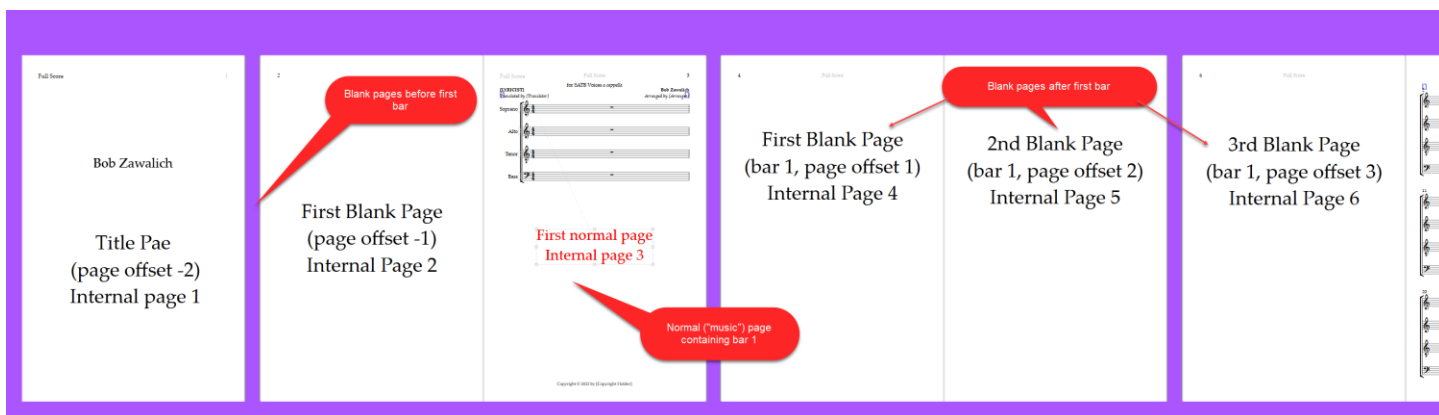
Specifying Blank Page Text

When you create a piece of blank page text, as for a title page, you typically need to choose the text style, then with a “loaded” blue cursor, you need to click on a blank page. This will open a cursor, and you can type text into at that location. For a plugin, it would be useful to be able to specify which blank page to use, the text style, and the position on the page.

One problem is that it is tricky to specify a blank page. Internally, every page, including blank pages, have a sequential page number, starting from 1. That page number is not visible to the user, though. A user sees the displayable, or external page number, and this can be affected by page number changes.

Blank pages are attached to bars in the score. Only the first bar in the score can have blank pages **before** the bar, but all bars can have blanks page **following** the bar. Plugins represent a blank page by using

the associated parent bar, and a page offset. Blank pages before the first bar use negative page offsets, where -1 is the page closest to the parent bar. If you have a title page, then a blank page preceding the first bar, the title page offset will be -2, and the second blank page will have page offset -1.



Specifying a blank page

Add Text To Blank Page gets around having to specify either an internal bar number or a bar number and page offset by providing a list of all the blank pages in the score. You specify which blank page you want by choosing the page from the list.

Add Text To Blank Page - Version 01.13.00 - by Bob Zawalich

Write some text, which may include editing wildcards, onto a blank or title page. Choose the target blank page from the list of blank pages in the score. Choose the text style for the blank text.

For some text styles you can specify a vertical (y) offset from the bottom left of the page and/or a horizontal offset from the bottom left page margin. You can choose inches, mm, or spaces for the offsets. If the style does not support offsets, the offset controls will be disabled.

See Help for more details.

Text to add: Title: \\${Title}

Blank page numbers (with "parent" bar numbers)

- Title page 1 before bar 1
- Page 2 before bar 1
- Page 4 after bar 1
- Page 5 after bar 1
- Page 6 after bar 1

Text offsets from bottom of page (in units)

Horizontal (X)	Vertical (Y)	Units for offsets
5	5	inches

Blank page text styles

- Boxed text (on blank page)
- Composer (on blank page)
- Dedication (on blank page)
- Instrument name at top left (on blank page)
- Plain text (on blank page)
- Plain text, centered (on blank page)
- Plain text, right (on blank page)
- Subtitle (on blank page)
- Title (on blank page)

New macro/plugin... Help... Cancel OK

The **Blank Page Text Style** must also be chosen, along with the text itself.

Specifying horizontal and vertical positions on a blank page

In an ideal world, you would also be able to specify where on the blank page the text should go. When we are not on a blank page, text is attached to a bar, but there are no bars on a blank page. A plugin can specify an offset for the baseline of the text from a location whose x and y coordinates are (0, 0). This represents the very bottom of the page vertically, outside the page margin, and the left hand page margin horizontally.

Internally, these offsets are specified in units of 1/32 of a space, but this is not very convenient (who knows how big a space is really?), so the plugin lets you specify offsets in inches, millimeters, or spaces. It calculates how many spaces there are in an inch or mm, based on the current staff size, and converts an offset in inches or mm to 32nds of a space.

If you specify a vertical offset of 5 inches, the bottom of the text, when printed, will be 5 inches from the bottom of the page.

Text Styles that accept Offsets

Unfortunately, many blank page text styles ignore offsets, and always position the text based on the Horizontal and Vertical positions specified in **Edit Text Style** for the text style. For the built-in Blank Page text styles, and any styles derived from those styles, only **Boxed**, and the 3 styles based on **Plain Text** pay any attention to the offsets.

Add Text To Blank Page disables the offset controls for all the other blank page text styles that disregard offsets, which are **Composer**, **Dedication**, **Instrument name at top left**, **Subtitle**, and **Title**.

An example

For an example, let's add a piece of **Subtitle** blank page text to the title page.

Add Text To Blank Page - Version 01.13.00 - by Bob Zawalich

Write some text, which may include editing wildcards, onto a blank or title page. Choose the target blank page from the list of blank pages in the score. Choose the text style for the blank text.

For some text styles you can specify a vertical (y) offset from the bottom left of the page and/or a horizontal offset from the bottom left page margin. You can choose inches, mm, or spaces for the offsets. If the style does not support offsets, the offset controls will be disabled.

See Help for more details.

Text to add: Subtitle \\${Subtitle}

Blank page numbers (with "parent" bar numbers)

- Title page 1 before bar 1
- Page 2 before bar 1
- Page 4 after bar 1
- Page 5 after bar 1
- Page 6 after bar 1

Text offsets from bottom of page (in units)

Horizontal (X)	Vertical (Y)	Units for offsets
5	5	inches

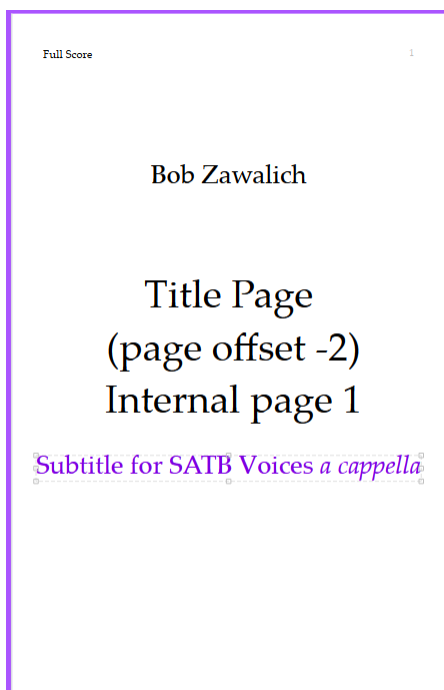
Blank page text styles

- Boxed text (on blank page)
- Composer (on blank page)
- Dedication (on blank page)
- Instrument name at top left (on blank page)
- Plain text (on blank page)
- Plain text, centered (on blank page)
- Plain text, right (on blank page)
- Subtitle (on blank page)
- Title (on blank page)

Offsets ignored for this style

New macro/plugin... Help... Cancel OK

I am using the \{\$Subtitle\ keyword, which has the value “Subtitle for SATB Voices a cappella” in this score, so I get this result:



Knowing I can do that, I want to plan out a set of actions that I can reproduce.

I want to add all of the following text to the title page:

- Title
- Subtitle
- Dedication
- Composer
- Some left-aligned boxed text 1 inch below the top of the page
- Some centered plain text one inch above the bottom of the page.

For the first 4 pieces of text I will use the corresponding wildcard for the text, so the actual text will come from **File>Score Info**, and the positioning will come from the text style. For the boxed and plain text I will hard-code the text and position it with offsets. For simplicity, the Boxed Text will say “**Boxed Text**”, and the Plain Text will say “**Centered Plain Text**”.

I will position the text on an 8 1/2 x 11 inch Letter-size page with .59 inch top and bottom margins, with the baseline (bottom) of the text 1 inch below to top of the page, and 1 inch above the bottom of the page.

The only real problem I have is to figure out appropriate offsets for the **Boxed** and **Plain** text. Let’s assume that the top, bottom, left , and right page margins are all .59 inches (15 mm).

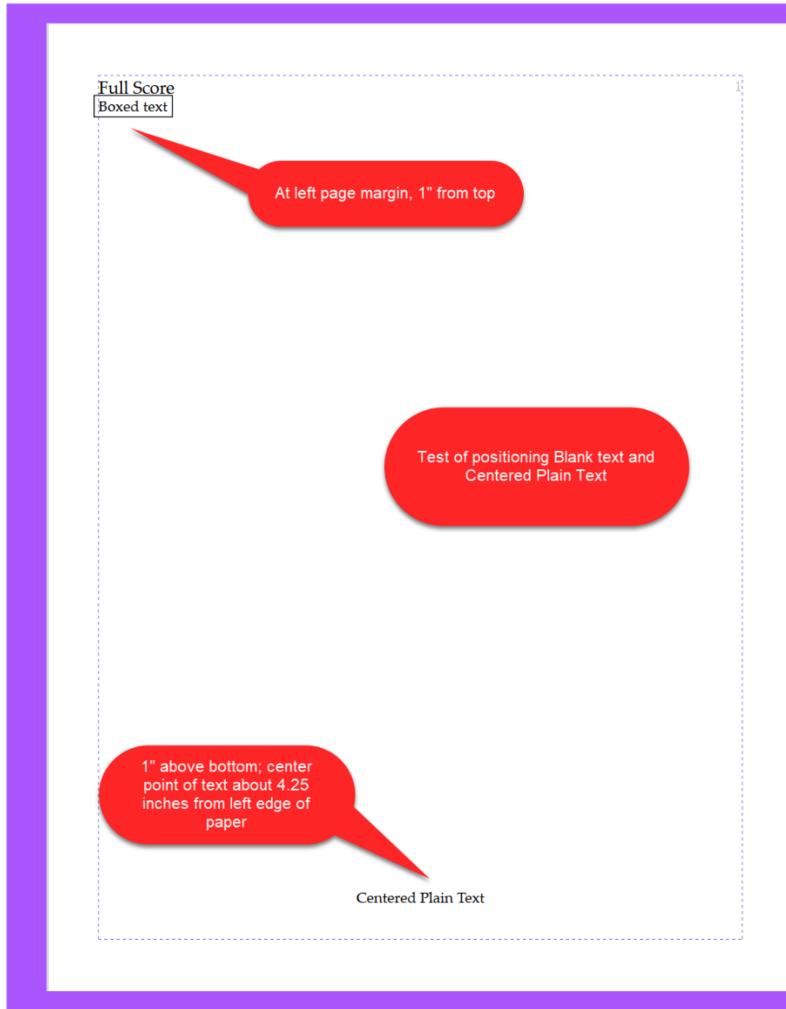
Determining text offsets

For the **Boxed** text, I know that the vertical offsets are based on the page itself, not the margin. To place the baseline of the text 1 inch below the top of a page that is 11 inches tall, I need the **vertical offset to be 10 inches**, and the **horizontal offset of zero (0)** will place the text at the left page margin.

For the Plain text, I can use the **Plain text, centered (on blank page)** style. The offset will place the horizontal attachment point of the text, which will be the center of the text, at the horizontal center of the page,

starting from the left page margin. For a page that is 8.5 inches wide, I want the attachment point to be 4.25 inches from the left edge of the paper, or $(4.25 - .59) = 3.66$ inches from the left page margin.

I will test these 2 positions first.



It is hard to tell if the vertical positions are correct when looking at the screen, but the horizontal positions look fine, and if I print the page to a physical piece of paper, it looks close to the vertical positions I wanted. So let's move on.

Now that I know what I want to produce, I will figure out how to produce this text with the plugin.

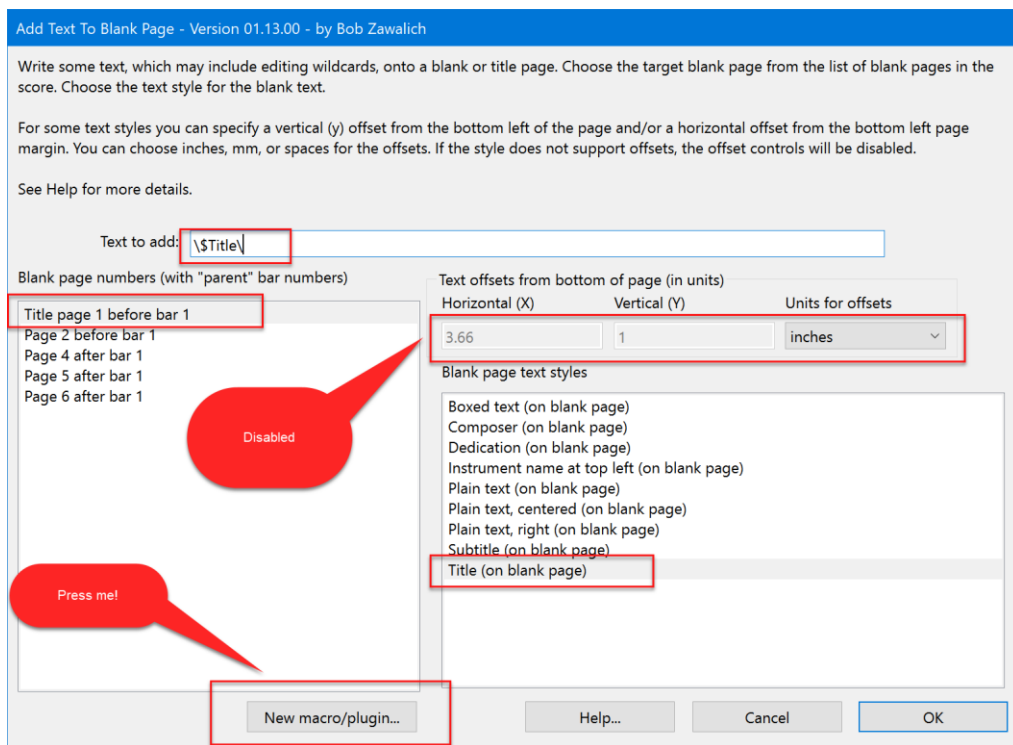
I will set up the plugin to produce each of the pieces of text I want, and use the **New macro plugin...** button to generate a macro command for each piece of text. I will add that text to the Command List of the **Execute Commands** plugin.

Creating the Macro

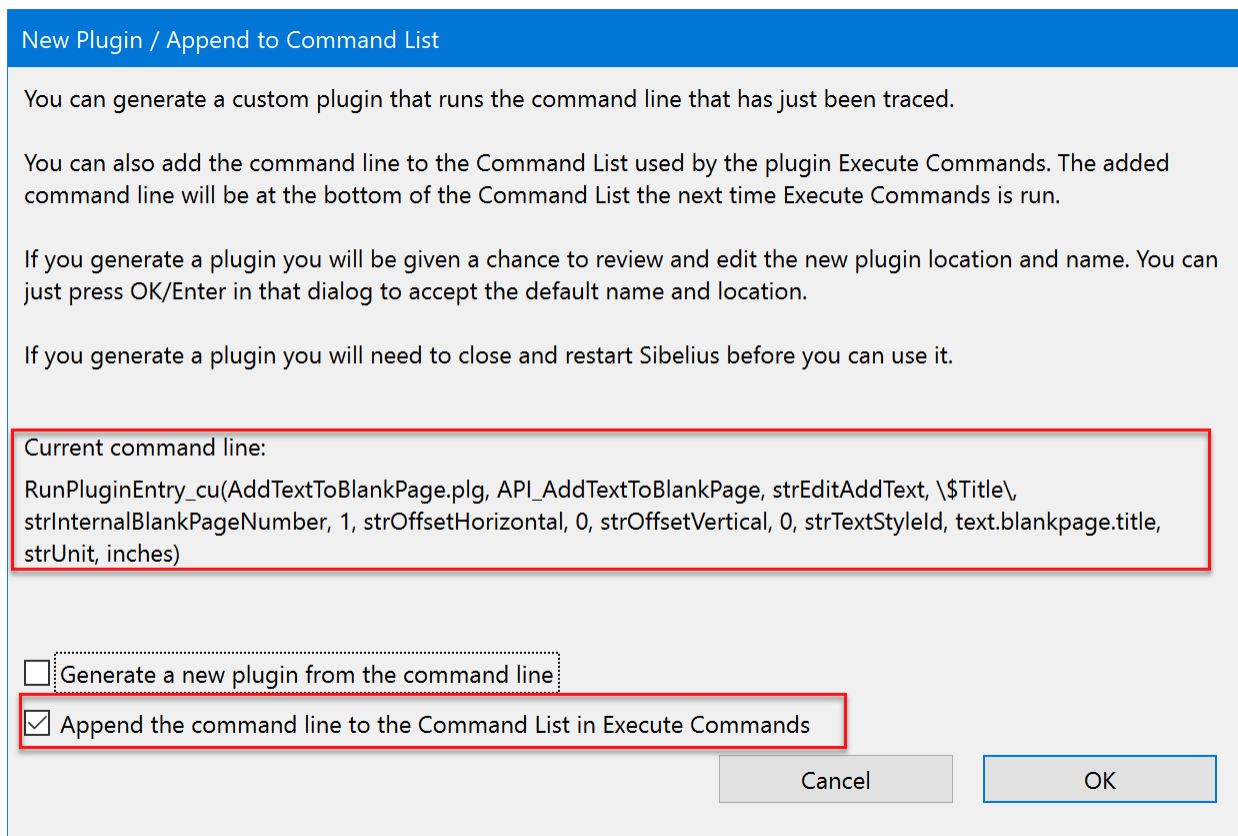
I will want these commands to be the only commands in the Command List, so before I start, I will run **Execute Commands** and make sure there is nothing in the Command List. If there had been anything in the list, I would save it if I wanted to, and then use **Remove All** to empty the list.

I will also go into the score I am testing and make sure there is text in the **Score Info** area for **Title**, **Subtitle**, **Dedication** and **Composer**, otherwise the text wildcard fields will not have any visible text on the page.

Here is the setup for creating the **Title** text. Instead of pressing OK, I press **New macro/plugin...**



If the plugin **Command Search Shortcut** had been properly installed, you will see some text being written to the plugin trace window (which you can ignore), and this dialog box:



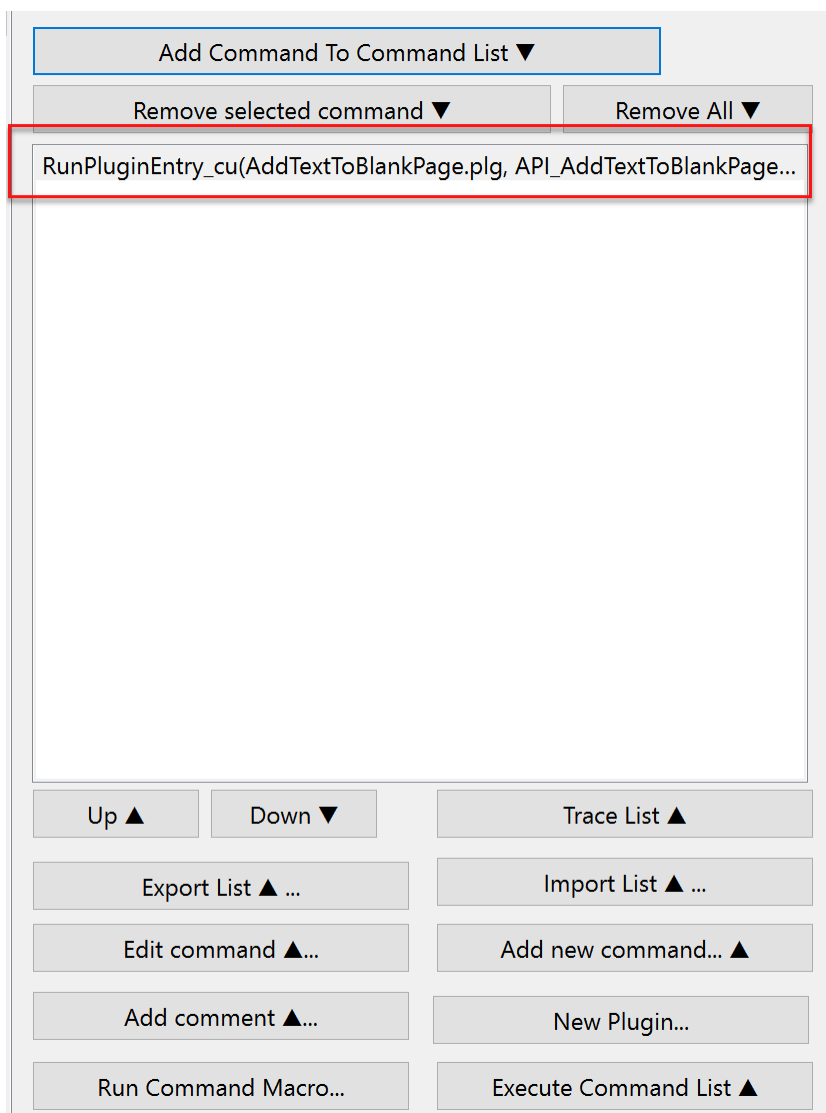
Take a deep breath and check it out...

The **Current command line**, which I also call the **RunPluginEntry_cu command line**, is the text that was written to the trace window. It is a set of instructions that will reproduce the choices you made in the **Add Text to Blank Page** dialog. It is somewhat “human readable”, and one can match up the text to the options in the dialog. There is no real need to do that unless something goes wrong, which we hope will not happen.

This command line will be inserted into the **Execute Commands** Command List and will eventually be made into a custom macro.

At this point we want to leave the **Generate a new plugin...** checkbox unchecked, and check the **Append the command line...** checkbox, then press OK.

Nothing obviously happens; we return to the same dialog. To see if it worked, press **Cancel** to close **Add Text to Blank Page**, and then run **Execute Commands**. The Command List should look like this, containing the command line we saw before. We could confirm that the command line is correct, but for now let’s just assume it is ok, and move along.



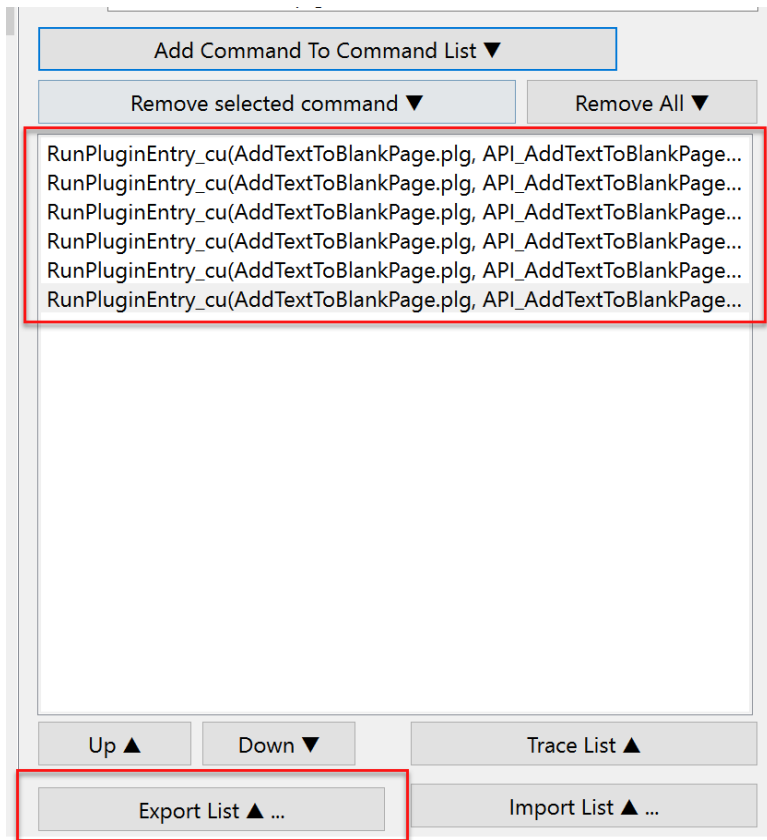
Now we will run Add Text To Blank Page until we have appended entries for all these lines of text:

- Title
- Subtitle
- Dedication

- Composer
- Some left-aligned boxed text 1 inch below the top of the page
- Some centered plain text one inch above the bottom of the page.

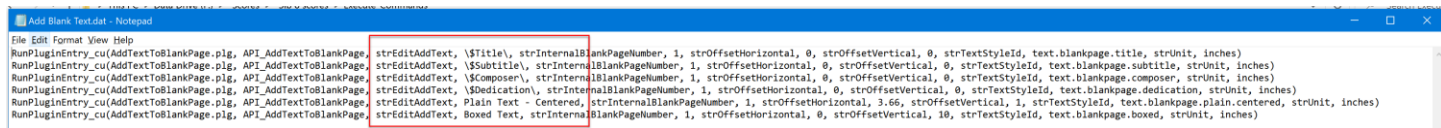
WARNING: text in edit boxes can never contain single or double quotes, and when used in **New macro/plugin**, they cannot contain commas (because **RunPluginEntry_cu** uses commas to separate its parameters). You will get a warning to change the text if you include any of these characters.

When we do this, the command list will look like this, with the command lines truncated:



We can use the **Export List...** button to write the command list to a macro text file, called **Add Blank Text.dat**. We can now open that file in a text editor and examine the command lines more closely.

Here is the file in Notepad. We can see what looks like appropriate entries.



Now we can run these commands from **Execute Commands** or **Run Command Macro** on the score we have been using.

Here is the resulting title page:

Full Score
Boxed Text

Dedicated to the one I love

Bob Zawalich

Title Page offset -2 page 1

for SATB Voices *a cappella*

Plain Text - Centered

We can now run the macro or plugin, once Sibelius has been closed and restarted, against any score that has a title page and has values in **Score Info** for our wildcards.

Note that if you run it on a score with no title pages or use text styles that are not defined in the score, the macro will report an error and stop. This macro has some restrictions concerning where it will work, but it should work on any score with a title page.

Installation

Add Text To Blank Page may be downloaded directly in Sibelius 7 and higher at **File > Plug-ins > Install Plug-ins**. Users may also install it manually by visiting the plug-in download page and following [the usual manual installation procedure](#), or by using the **Install New Plugin** plugin.