## Guidance on arranging for area bands (post Wider Ops level)

## Choosing the piece

1. Is it suitable for area band level? Things to take into consideration:

- Is it made up of a small number of easy riffs/tunes so that students can play a full piece without having too many different sections to learn
- Will they like it? Will they know the piece? OR is it something they can get to know and love quickly?
- Can you see it working for all the instruments in the band? Even at this early stage, think through what each instrument might do in the main sections, and talk through your ideas with a member of staff who knows that instrument well at area band level
- Can enough instruments in the band manage the main tunes/riffs?
- Does it give enough of a contrast to other pieces the area band is working on, or is it too similar? We should aim to have a mix of rock, pop, jazz, Latin American, Asian, African (and other areas of the world), film, and classical styles
- Is it worth playing? - whatever style it is, is it a good example of that style?

2. Is the music in copyright? It will be if the composer died less than 70 years ago. The law is complicated here:

## Arranging, Adapting and Moral Rights

In many cases a composer may have no objection, but sometimes a composer will not want other people to make arrangements of a work which he or she has created and the law gives him or her the right to refuse. It is particularly significant that under the new Act a teacher in a school, or elsewhere, no longer has the right to make arrangements in the course of his or her work. This Code therefore permits it in certain well-defined circumstances. In addition to the general restriction on "adaptation" of works in S. 16 of the Act, composers and authors are given a new right in S. 80 (called a Moral Right) that their work should not be subjected to derogatory treatment. "Treatment" is defined as "any addition to, deletion from or alteration to or adaptation of the work, other than an arrangement or transcription of a musical work involving no more than a change of key or register". "Derogatory" is defined as "distortion or mutilation of the work or (which) is otherwise prejudicial to the honour or reputation of the author".

The other Moral Rights granted by the Act are the right to be identified as the author and the right not to have a musical work falsely attributed. These Moral Rights belong to the composer/author and are inalienable. It is therefore advisable that where an arrangement is permitted, the arranger should take care to avoid derogatory treatment and ensure that the original composer is correctly credited.
Arrangements of copyright musical works may be made by teachers or students in the course of instruction for the purposes of an educational establishment, provided that the arrangements are not used in any public performance and/or outside the educational establishment in which they are made and provided that any copy of an arrangement has the following warning label attached to it:
This arrangement is made for the sole purpose of use within
..(educational establishment) and may not be used for any other purpose without the possibility of infringing copyright.
The original title of the work is
by $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots$. (composer).
In particular, it may not be publicly performed, recorded, reproduced or broadcast.
Extract from Music Publisher's Association Code of Fair Practice
http://www.mpaonline.org.uk/Publications/The_Code_of_Fair_Practice_in_Full.html

Basically you can rehearse arrangements legally, but not perform them in public without permission. As soon as you have identified a piece to arrange, core music staff should ask Sarah Hant to write and ask for permission from the rights holder. This can take a long time (and sometimes we get no answer) so start the process early. You don't need to wait for an answer before starting work (or we would never do anything) but bear in mind that if the rights holder says no, or if they want to charge us an exorbitant amount, your arrangement may have to be for rehearsal only. (Most rights holders are helpful but recently we’ve had one who have said flat no, one who wanted $£ 500$ and one who wanted a flat fee of $£ 90$ plus $£ 15$ per performance).
3. What support material can you use for the arrangement? Different people work in different ways, but I would suggest that you use both a recording and sheet music as a source of ideas for your arrangement - each will offer different ideas and perspectives.

For recording you can obviously download stuff from iTunes etc, but there several free streaming services that may be even more helpful, and have a wider range of tracks. Try:

- www.we7.com
- www.spotify.com

For scores, try www.sheetmusicdirect.com. You have to pay to download these, but you can look at the first page for free, and can try transposing the music into different keys, which is really helpful (see below)

Guitar tab can also be really helpful for working out what chords are going on. Just Google the name of the song with guitar TAB. Worth looking at a couple as they are not always accurate.

## Deciding what key to put the arrangement in

This is the hardest decision to make - I personally find that almost half the time I spend on an arrangement is spent on this decision. Whatever you do, don't just go with whatever key the original is in as, although that might be the right decision, there are lots of factors to take into account:

- In general, string instruments like sharp keys but wind and brass work better in flat keys. This is amazingly unhelpful. A great key for guitars, using lots of A and E chords will probably put clarinets and trumpets into a 5 sharp key signature. Nice brass keys like Eb major, will be almost impossible for post-wider-ops strings or guitars, who are reliant on open strings like EADG etc. Most area band arrangements will need to be in key signatures with an absolute maximum of 2 sharps or 2 flats, unless you are amazingly clever at writing musical part that avoid tricky notes
- Remember that whatever key you are in, trumpets, clarinets and baritones will have two extra sharps in the key signature. So an F major arrangement will be in G major, and a G major arrangement will be in A major.
- Someone has got to play the tune, so whatever key you decide on, the range of the tune will need to fit the available ranges for post-wider opportunities instruments AND have enough instruments playing the tune in a good register for them so it will carry
- Look at the suitable ranges for post-wider opportunities instruments later in this document, and build your arrangement around them. For some instruments it's fairly easy to learn a new note, but for others it's very complicated. The most significant restrictions are probably:
- Writing at least one part for violin, viola and cello for "open string and first finger". So, for violins, that restricts you to these notes (starting at G below middle C and working upwards) G A D E A B E Fsharp. You could possibly have open string and


# 'first finger back’ giving you G Ab D Eb A Bb E F - but if you do this, try to avoid having both normal first finger and first finger back in the same arrangement. <br> - Making sure brass parts aren't too high, as it takes time to build up lip muscles <br> - Avoiding flutes having to move from the $\mathrm{D}\left(\mathrm{a} 9^{\text {th }}\right.$ above middle C$)$ to notes below <br> - Avoiding going above the break (concert pitch Ab above middle C ) for most clarinet parts <br> - Avoiding flat key guitar chords - stick to easy chords like G, D E A 

You are highly unlikely to find any one key that fits all of these criteria - it's a question of trying out the main riffs/melodies in various keys and finding the best compromise. You can do this in your head, using sheetmusicdirect,com , or Sibelius - probably the best way is to put the main ideas into Sibelius, experiment with them in different keys and use the transposing instruments button to check how the transposing instruments will look.

You may well have to have some notes that don't fit the ideal situation, and that's okay, as long as there is enough for each instrument to play that is in their comfort zone.

## Making the arrangement: Top Tips

Compare the two annotated versions of "These Boots Are Made For Walking" for clarification of many of these points

1. Simplify the structure so that there is as much exact repetition as possible. This way you can fit the arrangement on as few pages as possible. This may mean rewriting middle 8 sections, or codas.
2. Build some sections into the structure that allow for flexibility. This could mean improvised sections over a repeated chord pattern played by staff, or a call and response section, or a sung section, or a section where the instruments build up a riff one group at a time. This can be particularly useful towards the end of a piece.
3. Make sure there is a good ending. This could be a big last chord (held or stabbed) or a stamp, or a shout - anything to make an impact.
4. Don't try to adapt the sheet music score or the recording too literally. Instead, identify the key musical components that make up the piece and focus on those. Accompaniment figures in piano sheet music may look unnecessarily complicated because they are designed to get the whole texture to work for two hands. You really don't need to get bogged down in trying to recreate these. Look for the simple clean lines (melodic, accompaniment or bass) that make up the essence of the piece and stick to those - if you can't find some simple clean lines, or easily adapt the piece in this way, you may be choosing the wrong piece.
5. Have clean, simple textures. Don't fill the arrangement with unnecessary clutter. It's fine to have gaps in the texture - that way the sections where everyone does play together it sounds more effective staff rhythm section. In many ways the easiest way to get effective textures (certainly in most popular music styles) is to have a staff rhythm section (bass guitar, keys/kbd/guitar, drums) to look after the basic harmonies and groove, so that you can concentrate on adding interesting parts for students
6. Try to have groups of instruments working together consistently throughout an arrangement. For example, all the brass might work together OR violin 1, trumpet 1 and flute 1 might work together. This isn't always possible, but it makes it much easier to rehearse.
7. Try to make each part memorable. In too many arrangements, one part has the tune while the others have filler parts that keep changing and are hard to remember. If you do need filler parts, try to give them some rhythmic kick, and keep the pattern they same as much as possible, so they become easy to remember.
8. Have differentiated parts. Have a first and second part for each instrument with different levels of challenge (eg trumpet 1 can perhaps go higher than trumpet 2; guitar 2 might have more exact repetition of an easy riff than guitar 1)
9. Make sure there are plenty of rehearsal figures, and write them as numbers [1] rather than letters [A]. That makes it easier to use hand signs to let students know where they are in the piece. You will need to tell Sibelius to do this: go to the House Style menu; Engraving Rules; Rehearsal Marks.
10. Use singing, rhythmic shouting or stamping to get through any particularly tricky bits in the tune - this is really useful if th piece has some good easy bits but one really tricky section
11. Simplify the tune to make as much exact repetition as possible. Many songs have slightly different rhythmic or melodic versions of the tune for each separate phrase or verse (to match the changing words). Make it simpler for students to learn by picking the most straightforward version and sticking to it as much as possible. This doesn't mean that it can't be syncopated, but that you shouldn't have too many versions for students to learn.
12. Don't drown out the tune. It's easy to make this mistake if you are trying to provide lots of easy parts but, if you can only get flutes to play the tune, they won't be heard over massed brass and strings playing accompanying parts. Sibelius can be misleading here, as a flute sound can be as loud as a trumpet in a synthesised version but it wouldn't be in real life

You may need to pick a different piece to arrange if you can't get a sizeable number of instruments who can play the main tune (or an acceptable and recognisable version of it).
13. Break up complex riffs. Many pieces have great riffs that are too complicated for a single instrument to play, but become perfectly possible if you split it up between different instruments.
14. Have a clear bass line.... and don't clutter it up by having too many other parts too close to it harmonically (which is tempting to do if you are trying to write low parts for trombones, for example). In general, it might work best if staff members provide the bass line (ideally on bass guitar or tuba or keys) leaving students free to play more melodic parts on top. However, student tubas, or sometimes cellos, might happily play the bass line at times.

An exception is pieces where there is an important bass riff, which you might put trombones, tubas and cellos on.
15. When you have finished the arrangement, look through each part separately and see if it makes sense. Check that each part doesn't have too many different patterns to learn, and it has at least one really good bit that the student will enjoy playing. If a part does change from one pattern to another, have some rest in between to give students time to regroup.

## Layout of parts

It's worth giving some thought to how the parts look, to make it as accessible as possible for students:

- Write in some note letter names, but not all the time. Consider writing letter names in at the first appearance of a new musical idea, but then expect students to recognise the pattern when it comes back. Sibelius has a 'plug-in' that can help with this (Plug-Ins menu: Text; Add Note Names) but there are some things to check:
- Highlight the section you want to add notes names to first, or else Sibelius will plaster the notes right across the score
- Sibelius, very unhelpfully, puts in every note including writing out tied notes twice, which need changing
- You need to put add note names direct in to transposed parts, or else it won't transpose the letter names
- For strings, string fingering may be more useful than letter names, and brass may benefit from adding a few valve fingerings. Both of these can be found in the Plug-Ins menu, but use them sparingly to avoid the parts looking cluttered
- Use Sibelius commands to makes the part look as simple and uncluttered as possible. Keep phrases together on one line so the musical phrasing/structure is visually clear. Look at the Layout menu, especially the Break and Format sections. See the appendix below for an example.
- Check if Sibelius has written dynamics on top of notes, and move them if necessary


## Finally

Check your arrangement with at least one brass, wind, string and guitar member of the music service staff before trying it out. When you've done this, ask IB to glance over it too, especially if it is to be used for public performance.

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## Appendix 1: Layout

Two examples of layout. The second example shows the structure and the repeated patterns much more clearly



25
Call
Response, with boots
$0^{0}$

## Appendix 2: Instrument Ranges - Area Band level

## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Clarinet

Most clarinets will start with the notes that use their left (top) hand as follows:

| In B flat (this is what clarinet sees) | In C (this is how it sounds) |
| :--- | :--- |

In addition, the following accidentals are very useful. Some pupils will have come across some of these already, but if not they are quite easy to introduce, especially F\# and G\#:


It's probably easiest to work down from middle C next:


Be aware however that small hands can start to find it hard to reach all these holes/keys!

It's possible for clarinets to get down to bottom E, although beyond the G written above, things get fiddly so best to avoid at this stage.

## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Flute

By the end of Wider Ops, most flutes
will have the following range:


Once pupils have learnt top D, the rest of the upper register is the same fingering as the lower register:

with the possible addition of:


The bottom notes on the flute are pretty difficult and can be inaudible in a large ensemble, so avoid the bottom C and D:

## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Recorder

Descant recorders (most common) and treble recorders (slightly larger) are both in C but the fingerings are very different, so they tend to learn different notes at the start:

| Descant | Treble |
| :---: | :---: |
|  | $6 \cdot \cdots \cdot \cdot$ |

Its then probably easier for recorders to go lower rather than higher:

| Descant | Treble |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |

Try to avoid some of the tricky accidentals:


## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Guitar

During Wider Ops pupils will learn a mixture of single notes and chords.
Open strings for guitars are as follows:


This can also be written out in TAB (the 6 horizontal lines represent the 6 strings, and the numbers relate to the finger held down on that string):


The chords pupils are most likely to learn during Wider Ops are:


Chord symbols are often notated in the following way (this time the guitar strings are represented by the vertical lines):
A minor


E


A


D


NB pupils may well be playing simplified versions of these chords.

For single notes stick to this range:


## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Saxophone

Different saxophones are in different keys:
Soprano (smallest, often straight)= B Flat

Alto (most common)
Tenor (larger than alto)
Baritone (biggest)
= E Flat
= B Flat
= E Flat

Most saxes will start with the notes that use their left (top) hand as follows:

| Saxophone | In C (this is how it would sound on <br> alto sax) |
| :--- | :--- |

In addition, the following accidentals are very useful. Pupils may have come across some of these already:

| Sax | In C (alto sax) |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |

It's not too bad to go lower than G but it can sound a bit 'honky'! ie its likely to sound loud and out of control

| In B flat | In C |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |

Its relatively easy for saxes to play up the octave, they just need their register key. However, try to write in either the higher or lower octave, rather than across both, e.g:


## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Strings

Open strings (no fingers - these are the notes they tune to
Violin:


Viola:


Cello:

$1^{\text {st }}$ Fingers
(don't count thumbs, so $1^{\text {st }}$ finger = index finger)
0 = open string
$1=1^{\text {st }}$ finger
Violin


Viola


Cello

$2^{\text {nd }}$ and $3^{\text {rd }}$ Fingers (normal position - violin and viola only)

- Try and stick to consecutive notes and repetitive patterns, and avoid string crossing (i.e. keep everything on one string)

Violin


Viola

$3^{\text {rd }}$ and $4^{\text {th }}$ Fingers (normal position - cello only)
Cello


Flats and Naturals - Violins and Violas
To play flats and naturals (any notes not in the scales above), violin and viola players need to change their hand shape and play with " $11^{\text {st }}$ or $2^{\text {nd }}$ finger back".

If you need to use flats and naturals, its advisable to use these for the whole piece, rather than occasional accidentals, as its difficult to keep shifting hand shapes accurately.
$2^{\text {nd }}$ finger back can be used with normal $1^{\text {st }}$ finger, but $1^{\text {st }}$ finger back means $2^{\text {nd }}$ finger will automatically shift too (normally this isn't a problem as the key signature would require this too).
$2^{\text {nd }}$ finger back is probably easier than $1^{\text {st }}$ finger back.

Violin - 2nd finger back


Violin - $1^{\text {st }}$ and $2^{\text {nd }}$ fingers back


Viola - $2^{\text {nd }}$ finger back


Viola - $1^{\text {st }}$ and $2^{\text {nd }}$ fingers back


Flats and Naturals - Cello
The normal pattern for cellos is 0-1-3-4. So instead of " $2^{\text {nd }}$ finger back" cellos just use their $2^{\text {nd }}$ finger instead of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ :


This is relatively easy (easier than for violins and violas), as the hand position doesn't change at all.

At Area Band level, if you need to use $1^{\text {st }}$ finger back, this means only the following notes are really available because the stretch for the other note is too much:


- Don't try and use a mixture of the 2 above examples, as its difficult to shift hand positions accurately


## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Trombone

Most trombones learning in the city (all those who have done Wider Ops) are in C, and read bass clef.

There are a few trombones that have been learning in a brass band tradition, which means they are in Bb and read treble clef.

For most arrangements, use the C trombone in treble clef, but be aware that you may need to produce parts in Bb occasionally.

At the end of Wider Ops, most trombones will have this range:


In addition, the following accidentals are useful. Pupils may have come across some of these already:


NB: $7^{\text {th }}$ position is beyond the reach of most primary school pupils' arms so avoid this $B$ natural:

or C\#:


Some pupils may be able to play extend their range slightly further:


## Arranging for Beginner Bands - Trumpet/Baritone

At the end of Wider Ops, most trumpets and baritones will have the following range of notes:


In addition, the following accidentals are very useful. Pupils may have come across some of these already:

| In Bb | In C |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |

Some pupils may be able to reach higher than (trumpet) G, but this is moving up to the next harmonic, so requires stronger embouchure:

| In Bb | In C |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |

Be careful not to use notes in this range too often.

French Horns are in F.
At the end of Wider Ops, most pupils have the following range:

| $\operatorname{In} \mathrm{F}$ (this is what horns see) | $\ln \mathrm{C}$ (this is how it sounds) |
| :--- | :--- |

In addition, the following accidentals are useful:

| In F | In C |
| :---: | :---: |
|  | $\underbrace{}_{\#=b=40}$ |

Later in the year most pupils will be able to extend their range to:

| In F | In C |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |

Arranging for Beginner Bands - Tuba
Tubas doing Wider Ops are in C.
At the end of Wider Ops, most will be able to play within this range:


In addition, the following accidentals are useful. Pupils may have come across some of these already:


