

# MBCI Concert Band - Special Term Assignments

## Booklet 3 - Music Arranging Options

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All Concert Band members complete one Special Term Assignment each term worth 20% of your Term Grade. Term One's assignment was your chamber music project. In Term Two, you have over a dozen options to choose from. These were listed in the Course Outline and Band Members Handbook you received in September. What follows are details and specifications for the Performance Options (#1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13). The Term Two assignment is due Friday, February 26. You are asked to choose one option for Term Two and submit details in writing for my approval. The Term Two choice will be due by Wednesday, January 20, Day 1, with the assignment itself due by Friday, February 26. The Term Three assignment will be assessed through your participation in *Music Tour 2016*.

### Option #6 - Hymn Transcription for Full Concert Band

Transcribe or arrange a hymn, chorus, or sacred song for full concert band. We will photocopy quality work, distribute parts, and read them through, possibly using them in performances or church visitations where congregational accompaniment is needed. Our band library has over 150 transcriptions from previous years. Check with me before proceeding - your music may have already been transcribed.

The following notes are reprinted from a presentation I once prepared for a seminar at Canadian Mennonite University. A number of people have told me that they continue to use this information every time they arrange music in their church and school setting.

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How to Arrange Worship Music for Band Instruments  
Andrew Klassen (Canadian Mennonite University)  
Church Music Seminar 11, Friday, January 20, 1995

#### Arranging Is A Valuable Skill

If you do some investigating, you will find a wide assortment of musical gifts in your church congregation, many of these being in the form of woodwind or brass players. Younger players will usually be a part of their band program in school. Older players may have an instrument lying around at home, and theoretically still know how to play, but since graduation, have had few performance opportunities. To make use of this wealth, you can put together a group either to perform on their own as a special number, or as an accompaniment to congregational singing. Often the main challenge in using band instruments in a worship setting is finding suitable music. One solution is to write out some instrumental parts yourself. This way, music can be quickly adapted to suit the needs of the occasion.

#### Arranging is Easy

Armed with some basic facts and procedures it's quite possible to come up with your own hymn arrangement, tailored to whatever musicians you have in your congregation. This booklet will help you score anything from a single instrument line, to full ensemble music which is written correctly, easy to play, and sounds good! At MBCI, many students have successfully scored music for full band using the steps outlined below.

#### Points To Consider

Most traditional hymns and some contemporary choruses are written in four part harmony. Almost any combination of band instruments will work relatively well if SATB voice parts are distributed somewhat equally between the forces at hand, and scored in an appropriate range for each instrument.

Here are some points to consider before proceeding to write parts:

1. *What voice part should each instrument play?*

If using only one instrument, soprano is the usual choice, even if sounding in a different register than the original. If writing for larger ensembles, the Scoring Chart (Chart #2) below gives one possible SATB distribution which will always work. Altering this basic formula will produce varying results, each with its own distinct sound.

2. *If you have more than one of a certain instrument, should they play different parts?*

Certain instruments work well with divided parts while others do not. To get a clear sound overall, the highest and lowest instruments should generally not play in close harmony, but double either the soprano or bass respectively in octaves. The Scoring Chart (Chart #2) shows the typical number of voice parts for each instrument, as well as what part they should play.

3. *What register is best for each instrument? Should they play in a different octave from the original?*

If all instruments are written in the same register as the original, many parts will be uncomfortably high or low, and the overall sound muddy and unbalanced. The Scoring Chart (Chart #2) below shows the typical register that each instrument plays in.

4. *Which instruments “transpose”? How do we write out the notes so they sound at the desired pitch?*

Without a doubt this is the most confusing aspect of arranging, and the source of most errors when writing out parts. The Scoring Chart (Chart #2) shows the specific rule for each instrument. If an instrument sounds lower by a certain interval, you must write the part higher by that same interval, for it to come out right. Figuring out the new key signature uses the same reasoning.

5. *What clef does each instrument read in?*

Wind instruments in their normal range use either treble or bass clef. All transposing instruments use the treble clef, even bass instruments such as the baritone saxophone. Check the Scoring Chart (Chart #2) for the appropriate choice.

6. *What is a comfortable range for the average player?*

In writing worship music parts for younger woodwind and particularly young brass players, it is wise to stay within the bounds of comfortable ranges. Unlike keyboard players who can produce a homogenous sound with equal effort throughout their entire range, wind players are susceptible to a multitude of factors which affect ability to play in extreme ranges with consistency. The Scoring Chart (Chart #2) shows a safe conservative range for each instrument, (not unlike the average vocal range). The left hand column shows the range as it would sound, and the right hand column (with appropriate clef) shows how it would be written, if for a transposing instrument.

1. Most band instruments sound their best playing in key signatures between one sharp and five flats. Music which goes beyond these bounds should ideally be rewritten a semitone lower or higher to make it simpler to play. For example, *Joy To The World* which is often found in D major will be much easier to play if first rewritten as E flat major. Parts can then be transposed from there.
2. Most hymn and chorus books are published without dynamic markings, articulations, breath marks, or other stylistic considerations. Wind players will automatically tongue any notes which are not marked with a slur, creating a choppy effect which may not reflect the text of the song. A general rule of thumb is mark slurs over any notes which are part of the same word in the text. Adding these kinds of details will greatly enhance the level of performance.
3. Most congregational singing tends to sound somewhat vertical, with all four voices singing the same words in the same rhythm at the same time. When scoring choral music for instruments, the problem of text is removed. In the lower three voice parts, repeated notes can (and should) be combined to make longer note values. This will help smooth out the sound of the arrangement, without losing the identifying rhythmic character of the melody.
4. If scoring for a full ensemble, many parts need not be written out separately, since they end up being exactly the same notes as some other instrument in the same clef and register. A close examination of the Scoring Chart (Chart #2) will reveal a number of examples of this, and will help save a lot of time.
5. Write neatly, and mark measure numbers on each part. Singers are used to having each other's music above and below their own to compare to, whereas instrumentalists usually see only their own part. After your first encounter with a group of instrumental players, you will be glad you took the time to give every possible detail to them right on their music, rather than having to do it verbally in rehearsal.

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#### Assignment Specifications:

Hand in a photocopy of the original music, carefully numbering each measure, and identifying the key you intend the band to sound in. This may be a different one than the original.

Fill out and hand in Chart #3 to indicate which instruments plays what voice parts, and the keys they must play in.

Using pencil, (or a music software program), copy out separate parts for each instrument, numbering the measures. The size of these sheets should be a regular 8 1/2 X 11 with at least a quarter inch margin all around. Identify the instrument, instrument part (1, 2, 3), and voice part being written for (SATB) in the left hand corner, the title in the center, and the composer(s) and arranger (you) in the right hand corner of each page. In cases where two different instruments play the same notes all the way through, you do not need to recopy a separate part. In this case indicate in the corner each instrument the part is meant for. This will save a lot of time. Add thoughtful dynamics, breath marks, articulations, and a style or tempo indication.

Neatness and clarity is of the utmost importance and will make the difference between a successful transcription or not. Noteheads should be accurate, and stems should be straight up and down, approximately one octave tall. A player sightreading the part should easily understand all markings and any non-standard notation should be avoided.

Notes which are successively repeated because of the words of the text should be combined to form longer note

values in all voice parts, except the soprano, where it is usually wise to maintain the original rhythmic divisions. Cutting down on needless repetition of notes will make things smoother.

\*As an extra, feel free to add descants, or change the harmonization if you have some ideas you'd like to try out.

### Chart #1 - Suggested Scoring for Full Concert Band

This distributes the four voice parts in a balanced way which will provide clarity to the texture.

INSTRUMENT	PART	VOICE(S)	OCTAVE REGISTRATION
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(woodwind scoring)

piccolo	1	S	up 2 octaves
flute	2	SA	up 1 octave
oboe	1 or 2	A or SA	A up 1 octave, or SA original
bassoon	1	B or T	original
Eb clarinet	1	S	up 1 octave
clarinet	2	AT	up 1 octave
bass clarinet	1	B	original, or down 1 octave
alto sax.	2	SA	original
tenor sax.	1	T	original
baritone sax.	1	B	original

(brass scoring)

trumpet	2	SA	original
horn	3	ATS	AT original, S down 1 octave
trombone	2	TB	original
euphonium	1	T or S	T original, or S down 1 octave
tuba	1	B	down 1 octave

### Chart #2 – Scoring Chart

(Ask me for this chart directly)



## Option #7 - Small Ensemble Transcription

Transcribe or arrange a sacred choral work for small ensemble. This involves rewriting the individual lines or voice parts so they can be played by suitable instruments in their correct keys and ranges. We will photocopy quality work, distribute parts, and read them through, possibly using them in performances or church visitations. Our band library has a few dozen transcriptions from previous years. Check with me before proceeding - your music may have already been transcribed.

\*Read the information contained in Option #6 - Hymn Transcription for Full Concert Band - much of it applies here as well, in particular Chart #2 - Scoring Chart.

### After Finding Suitable Music:

Decide what kind of an instrumental ensemble you would like to score for. Technical considerations include the number of players needed to cover the original lines, the suitability of the instruments to the demands of the chosen music (particularly ranges and transposed keys they must play in), and the degree of balance and blend within the group. (See Chart #4 for some possible combinations of instruments).

### Specifications:

The music you choose must have at least four different voice parts written for at least four players, and the length of the music should result in about a page or more of notation for each instrument.

Hand in a photocopied score of the original music. On this photocopy, carefully number each measure, and identify the key you intend the new arrangement to sound in. (You can alter this from the original.) Then trace each separate voice or line throughout the piece with a different color highlighting pen, so that someone reading the score would clearly understand the notes played by each instrument being used. Label the instruments being used for each line at the beginning.

Fill out and hand in Chart #5. This chart indicates which instruments are being used, the keys they must play in to sound in the correct concert pitch key, and what voice or line they play. Indicate this on the chart by means of a legend in the second column showing the colors used for each voice part.

Using pencil, copy out separate parts for each instrument, numbering the measures. The size of these sheets should be a regular 8½ x 11 with at least a quarter inch margin all around. Identify the instrument in the left hand corner, the title in the center, and the composer(s) and arranger (you) in the right hand corner of each page. Add thoughtful dynamics, breath marks, articulations, and style or tempo indications.

Neatness and clarity is of the utmost importance and will make the difference between a successful transcription or not. Noteheads should be accurate, and stems should be straight up and down, approximately one octave tall. If the music takes up more room than one page, only continue on the flip side if there are sufficient measures of rest to accomplish a page turn at the tempo of the piece. If there is not, use a separate piece of paper. Avoid crowding your notes to fit onto one page if the part cannot be read clearly. A player sightreading the part should easily understand all markings. Non-standard notation should be avoided.

If you are doing an instrumental transcription of a vocal work, some notation will have to be changed to conform to conventional instrumental practice. One of the most obvious of these differences is that in vocal music, notes using flags are not beamed together unless slurred under one syllable of text. When rewritten for an instrument, any player would expect these notes to be properly beamed according to the basic beat of the time signature in each measure, not written with individual flags.

Also, notes in vocal music which are successively repeated due to the words of the text should be combined to form longer note values. Cutting down on needless repetition of notes will make for a smoother arrangement.

\*As an extra, feel free to change details, harmonizations, etc. if you have some ideas you'd like to try out.

## Chart #4 - Some Possible Small Ensemble Combinations

### Some Possible Small Ensemble Combinations

flute quartets:	-four flutes -piccolo, three flutes
clarinet quartets:	-four clarinets -three clarinets, bass clarinet -Eb clarinet, two clarinets, bass clarinet
saxophone quartets:	-two altos, tenor, baritone -soprano, alto, tenor, baritone -four altos -two altos, two tenors
any quartet or quintet combination of the above, adding oboe, bassoon, horn, piano, or organ.	
brass quintets:	-two trumpets, horn, trombone, tuba -as above, replacing either trombone or tuba with euphonium
brass quartets:	-as above, leaving out an instrument -two trumpets, two trombones -two trumpets, two euphoniums -four trumpets -four horns -two trombones, euphonium, tuba -two horns, euphonium, tuba
any combination of the above with organ or piano.	
percussion ensembles:	-bells, vibes, xylophone, marimba, chimes, timpani -plus non-pitched percussion
dixie combo:	-clarinet, tenor sax, trumpet, trombone, tuba - plus piano, drum set
jazz combo	-2 or 3 'horns' plus piano/guitar, bass guitar, drums
jazz band	-two alto sax, two tenor sax, bari sax, -four trumpets, four trombones -piano/guitar, bass guitar, drums, auxiliary percussion

## Chart #5 - Scoring and Keys

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Sounding Key = \_\_\_\_

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Voice (Colour)</b>	<b>Transposed Key</b>

### Option #14 - Submit Your Own Idea

If you have an idea for a Special Term Assignment involving music, but does not fit Options 1-12, write it up and submit it for my consideration.

To be acceptable, demonstrate in some way how completing the assignment would contribute or relate to the goals of this course, as well as suggest a way in which the assignment might be evaluated for a mark. Be creative!