



No Double Reeds? No Horns? No Problem! Making the Music Fit Your Band

CLINICIAN:

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**CYPRESS CREEK HIGH SCHOOL BAND, DEMO BAND
JERRY CHOATE, DIRECTOR**

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A Basic Guide to re-scoring music to accommodate for deficiencies in instrumentation and weak and/or missing sections or soloists.

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WHEN IS IT APPROPRIATE TO RE-SCORE MUSIC?

I. Missing and/or weak section(s)

- Very few bands have ideal instrumentation. This is especially true of many small school and middle school programs.
- Double reeds and horns

II. Missing and/or weak soloists

- Choose an appropriate substitute based on the guidelines below.

III. Essential musical lines must be retained (i.e. rewritten) if the original instruments are not available.

IV. How much rewriting is too much?

- When the musical content of the piece is compromised
- Rewriting is much more acceptable in Grades I, II, and even III music than Grades IV and V.
- Rewriting is much more acceptable in small school and middle school bands than in large AAAAA programs.
- Rewriting is much more acceptable in non-varsity groups than in varsity.
- Whenever possible, select music that you can play “straight out of the box.” Many Grade I and II, and to a lesser extent, Grade III pieces can be successfully performed by bands with less than ideal instrumentation.
- Rewrite as little as possible.

IV. “Won’t the judges disapprove of me doing this?”

The answer will vary from judge to judge, but most judges – the smart ones, anyway – will understand and accept that you must do whatever you must do to enable your band to be successful. Most would probably prefer that the re-scoring be kept to a minimum, but at one time or another, they have all been in your situation and have had to rewrite something. To paraphrase Fred Allen, Director of Bands at Stephen F. Austin State University: *If one judge criticizes you, then that may be his/her personal opinion, but if all three judges criticize you, then your re-scoring has compromised the content of the music.* Again, the practice is more acceptable in Grade I music than in Grade V, in Class A and AA than in Class AAAAA, and with non-varsity than with varsity bands. And if your re-scoring is tasteful and skillful enough, the judges might not even notice.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR RE-SCORING

I. Range

- Always choose a substitute that can play the line in the same range as the original instrument
- Never change octaves

II. Color

- Whenever possible, choose substitute instruments which have a similar color as the original instrument – reed for reed, brass for brass, etc

III. Instrumental Characteristics

- Try to choose substitute instruments which have the same general musical characteristics as the original instrument
- Timbre
- Vibrato (especially important when making substitutions for solos)

Example: Flute, soprano saxophone, or alto saxophone are often more desirable substitutes for an oboe solo than clarinet because they are all “vibrato” instruments.

PERCUSSION

More often than not, it is more desirable to just omit certain percussion parts rather than attempting to make substitutions. Therefore, percussion will not specifically be discussed in this presentation. However, here are some guidelines for dealing with percussion issues:

- Prioritize the parts from most important to least important
- Always cover the basics – snare drum, bass drum, cymbals first, then timpani and as many mallet parts as possible; anything else that is rhythmical in nature
- Mallets parts can often be omitted when they double wind parts
- Make a percussion score for your players to play from, enabling them to easily move from part to part and allowing them to cover as many parts as possible
- The easier parts can often be played by wind players

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

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Alfred Publishing Co Inc
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Voodoo Dance-Elliot Del Borgo

Instrumentation Problem: no horns or tubas

Solution

- Lower bass clarinet and bassoon an octave
- Bass clarinet with low C is a definite advantage
- Use contra clarinet if possible
- Selected horn passages re-scored for clarinet and tenor saxophone

Three Folk Miniatures (movement I)-Andre Jutras

Instrumentation Problem: no trombones

Solution

- 1st trombone rewritten for 3rd trumpet and 3rd & 4th horn, replacing originals parts
- 2nd & 3rd trombone rewritten for euphonium (divisi), replacing original part

Storm Mountain Jubilee-Carl Strommen

Instrumentation Problem: no saxophones or trumpets

Solution

- Alto saxophone and trumpet parts rewritten for clarinet and oboe, at times replacing original part
- Tenor and baritone saxophone already covered in bass clarinet and bassoon

Legend of Knife River-Stephen Bulla

Instrumentation Problem: no oboes, clarinets or saxophones

Solution

- Essential oboe parts rewritten for flute or trumpet
- Clarinet parts rewritten for trumpet, horn, and/or euphonium
- Alto and tenor saxophone parts rewritten for horn and euphonium
- Baritone saxophone part already doubled in bassoon, bass clarinet, and euphonium
- Ensemble chordal passages re-scored to include all chord tones in available instruments

Variations on a Korean Folk Song (Variation II)-John Barnes Chance

Instrumentation Problem: no oboe soloist

Solution

- Clarinet
- Alto Saxophone
- Soprano Saxophone
- Trumpet with straight mute (suggested by the composer, but IMHO, least satisfactory)

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS AND OTHER UNSOLICITATED ADVICE

Become at least functional on a music notation program – Finale, Sibelius, etc. Not only are transpositions automatic with these programs, they are great time savers and of course, print music that is of publisher quality.

If at all possible, get a soprano saxophone. This versatile instrument can, in the right situation, convincingly substitute for flute, oboe, clarinet and even trumpet, and it opens up many more possibilities for ensemble music selection for S&E contest.

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