



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
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**Adaptable Music in the Wake of the  
Pandemic**

**CLINICIANS:**

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## Creating Adaptable Music in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Frank Ticheli - Jennifer Jolley - Steven Bryant

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#### **Adaptable Band - Types**

We view “adaptable” as an umbrella term encompassing a variety of compositions intended for ensembles faced with limited, fluctuating, or unpredictable personnel. Types of adaptable music include: flex, full-flex, modular/cellular, and improvisatory.

**Flex.** Pieces where instruments are assigned to specific voice parts based on range/registration. Flex pieces have been in existence for many years. They are very suitable for smaller bands where certain instruments are not represented; however, they do require that a minimum of one musician be available for each part in order to be fully realized. So, for instance, if there is no bass range player in the room, then the bass part isn’t performed. Flex pieces are abundant and include those published by Hal Leonard in their FlexBand series, as well as Bravo Music and its Japanese parent company, Brain Music. Examples of recent flex pieces include John Mackey’s *Let Me Be Frank With You* and Michael Daugherty’s setting of Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land” for young players, entitled, *This Land Sings*.

**Full-flex.** Pieces offering maximum flexibility in which any voice is playable by any instrument making a fully-realized performance possible with any combination of four or more instruments. These pieces are useful in situations where, for example, only flutes are present for rehearsal on one day, trombones on another day, and a mix of instruments on still another day. The conductor can also experiment with part assignments, for example, giving a tuba player Part 1, and a flute play, part 4, thus placing the melody in the tuba. This might prove to be a fun experiment; the tuba player would enjoy being able to play the melody virtually the entire time. The full-flex approach was created in direct response to the need for radically adaptable pieces in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent examples include my arrangements of *Joy* and *Simple Gifts: Four Shaker Songs*, Bryan Balmages’ *Colliding Visions*, and Steven Bryant’s *Dusk*.

**Modular/cellular.** Pieces relying on motivic cells in which one cell may be repeated at will before going on to another cell. A groundbreaking example of this type of music is Terry Riley’s *In C*. Composed in 1964, Riley’s piece may be played by ensembles of virtually any size and makeup. Performers are empowered to choose dynamic levels, the order in which individual cells are played, the number of times they are repeated, etc. Recent modular/cellular pieces include Jennifer Jolley’s *Sounds from the Gray Goo Sars-CoV-2*, Alex Shapiro’s electroacoustic *Passages*, and my *In C Dorian* (inspired by Terry Riley’s piece and dedicated to him).

**Improvisatory.** Adaptable works based primarily in improvisation. This could entail jazz chords, verbal directions, alternative notation, and any number of additional ways to provide a framework for improvisation. Omar Thomas's piece for young musicians, *Sharp 9*, is a recent example, a 12-bar blues in B-flat that serves as an introduction to blues improvisation while also introducing young ears to rich jazz harmony.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPOSERS/ARRANGERS

### Steps for making adaptable band arrangement of an existing score - Ticheli method

*Before reading these guidelines, it is suggested that you familiarize yourself with the accompanying score template and score sample*

1. Make a four-staff short score of the entire existing composition, including all pitches and doublings, preserving everything in its correct octave.
2. From the above short score, thin the texture (e.g., remove doublings, remove less necessary chord notes, etc.) on each of the four staves as needed so that only a single line exists on each staff. (Thus, a thinned out, skeletal version.) Everything is still in its original octave for now, so there's still a low bass line, etc.
3. Next, copy the four lines into four B-flat Treble staves. Then, change octaves of lines as needed (e.g., transposing the bass line up an octave, etc.) so that all four staves lie within a range from written middle C up to top line written F (concert Bb up to concert E-flat).
4. Once the B-flat Treble staves are set, it becomes a relatively easy task to complete the remainder of the score by copy/pasting the four parts into the other sets, as follows:
  - **E-flat treble parts** (Alto and Bari Sax) - simple copy/paste of all four parts from the B-flat Treble staves into the E-flat Treble staves; no adjustments necessary
  - **C bass clef parts** (Trombone, Euphonium, Bassoon) - copy/paste the B-flat Treble parts into the C bass clef parts, and then transpose down an octave, (perfect ranges for trombones, euphoniums, bassoons); no other adjustments necessary. *Tuba parts would all be an octave lower.*
  - **C Treble parts** (Flute/Oboe) – copy/paste the B-flat Treble parts to C Treble parts and transpose up an octave; may have to make octave doublings of certain lines so oboes don't go too low or too high.
  - **F treble parts** (Horns) – Copy/paste the B-flat Treble parts to F treble parts and transpose down an octave, just as done with C bass clef parts, but this time, some horn passages fall too low (down to low concert B-flat, low written F), not great notes for young horns. This will require octave adjustments that can be tricky to do while maintaining voice leading and integrity of line. The horns pose the most challenges when using this method to make an adaptable score.
5. All percussion parts may be transferred directly from the original score, or condensed and simplified, at the discretion of the arranger.

## **Note to Conductor on how to use this adaptable score**

The main goal of this adaptable score is to allow meaningful and satisfying musical experiences for ensembles of any size or makeup, ranging from as few as four players.

### **For example, the ensemble could consist of:**

*One flute, one clarinet, one alto saxophone, one trumpet, one trombone*

### **Or...**

*Trombones only*

### **Or...**

*Three clarinets, one trumpet and one horn, and two percussionists*

## **A few pointers about the “Parts”**

- Part 1 is identical in all five groups, Part 2 is identical in all five groups, and so on.
- The melody or upper line is usually found in Part 1, but often in Part 2 for variety's sake.
- Part 4 tends to contain the “bass line.” This means that a tuba bass line from the original score may be found in Part 4 of Flute/Oboe, transposed up two, or even three octaves to fit the register of those instruments.
- The four tuba parts are notated an octave lower than the Bsn./Low Brass parts
- The conductor could experiment with part assignments, for example, giving a tuba player Part 1, and a flute player Part 4, thus placing the melody in the tuba, and the bass line in the flute. Thus, the tuba player would enjoy being able to play the melody while the flute plays the “bass line.”

Created in response to the need for adaptable instrumentation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic

# ADAPTABLE SCORE TEMPLATE - Ticheli

All parts scored in compressed ranges extending approximately from concert B-flat up an 11th to concert E-flat  
Sometimes, to maintain integrity of a line, these range limits are extended

It is recommended that scores be formatted for 8.5x11 to facilitate printing PDF copies

**C Treble Clef (Fl. and Ob.)** In general, these parts sound an octave higher than the B $\flat$  treble parts. Octave adjustments may have to be made occasionally so that, for example, the oboes do not play too low or too high in their range.

Oboe often *8vb*, when line extends beyond high C

Fl. & Ob.

**B $\flat$  Treble Clef (Cls, Bass Cl, Ten. Sax, Tpts.)** At times, trumpets and tenor sax may tacet, freeing up the clarinets to play much lower or higher than this recommended range

B $\flat$  Cl. Bs. Cl.  
Ten. Sax, B $\flat$  Tpt.

**E $\flat$  Treble Clef (Alto &n Bari. Saxes)** In general, these parts sound in unison with the B $\flat$  treble parts.

Alto Sax  
Bari. Sax

**F Treble Clef (Horns)** Horns present special challenges, requiring the need to make octave adjustments here and there while still maintaining integrity of line.

Horns

**C Bass Clef (Bsns, Low Brass)** In general, these parts sound an octave below B $\flat$  treble parts. Four separate tuba parts will need to be extracted and transposed an octave below these parts.

Tuba *8vb*

Bsn. &  
Low Brass

**Percussion** Percussion parts may be transcribed literally from the original version or reduced to fit within this given format

Timpani

Percussion 1 (Mallets)

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

# SIMPLE GIFTS

## FOUR SHAKER SONGS

for band with flexible instrumentation

FRANK TICHELI

### II. Dance (score excerpt, beginning to bar 32)

$\text{♩} = c. 108$

1  
2  
3  
4

Fl. & Ob.

*mf*

*mp*

1  
2  
3  
4

B♭ Cl. Bs. Cl.  
& B♭ Tpt.

*mf*

*mp*

1  
2  
3  
4

Alto Sax  
Bari. Sax

*mf*

*mp*

1  
2  
3  
4

Horns

*mf*

*mp*

1  
2  
3  
4

Bsn. &  
Low Brass

*mf*

*mp*

1  
2  
3  
4

Timpani

Percussion 1  
(Mallets)

Percussion 2

Percussion 3

Fl. & Ob.

1 *mf*

2 *mp*

3 *mf mp*

4 *mp*

Trumpets play lower octave

B♭ Cl. Bs. Cl. & B♭ Tpt.

1 *mf*

2 *mp*

3 *mp*

4 *mf mp*

Alto Sax Bari. Sax

1 *mf*

2 *mp*

3 *mp*

4 *mf mp*

Horns

1 *mf*

2 *mp*

3 *mf mp*

4 *mp*

Bsn. & Low Brass

1 *mf*

2 *mp*

3 *mp*

4 *mf mp*

Timp.

1 -

2 -

3 -

4 -

Perc. 1 (Mallets)

XYLO. *mf*

Perc. 2

SN. DR. *p* lightly

Perc. 3

-



This musical score page contains measures 17 through 22. It is divided into several sections:

- Fl. & Ob. (Flute and Oboe):** Four staves. Measures 17-18 are marked *mp*. Measures 19-22 are marked *f*.
- B♭ Cl. Bs. Cl. & B♭ Tpt. (Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, and Baritone Trombone):** Four staves. Measures 17-18 are marked *mp*. Measures 19-22 are marked *f*.
- Alto Sax Bari. Sax (Alto Saxophone and Baritone Saxophone):** Four staves. Measures 17-18 are marked *mp*. Measures 19-22 are marked *f*.
- Horns:** Four staves. Measures 17-18 are marked *mp*. Measures 19-22 are marked *f*.
- Bsn. & Low Brass (Bassoon and Low Brass):** Four staves. Measures 17-18 are marked *mp*. Measures 19-22 are marked *f*.
- Timp. (Timpani):** One staff. Measures 17-21 are silent. Measure 22 is marked *mf*.
- Perc. 1 (Mallets):** One staff. Measures 17-22 are silent.
- Perc. 2:** One staff. Measures 17-22 are silent. Marked *pp* at the beginning.
- Perc. 3:** One staff. Measures 17-22 are silent.

25

1 *f* etc...

2 *f*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

Fl. & Ob.

1 *f* etc...

2 *f*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

B♭ Cl. Bs. Cl. & B♭ Tpt.

1 *f* etc...

2 *f*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

Alto Sax  
Bari. Sax

1 *f* etc...

2 *f*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

Horns

1 *f* etc...

2 *f*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

Bsn. & Low Brass

1 *f* etc...

2 *f*

3 *mf*

4 *mf*

Timp.

Perc. 1 (Mallets) GLOCK.

Perc. 2 SMALL TOM (muffled) *mf*

Perc. 3

## **Frank Ticheli – In C Dorian**

Composed in the wake of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, this piece sprang from a need to create music for musicians during a time when full ensembles could not meet altogether in a closed space—a piece that could be played by any combination of instruments and in any number.

An important catalyst for my piece is the 1960's musical movement known as Indeterminacy, and in particular, Terry Riley's groundbreaking work, *In C*. Marked by great flexibility in terms of duration, dynamics, instrumentation, and many other parameters, *In C* serves as a wonderful source of inspiration for anyone seeking pathways to create adaptable music. It is to Mr. Riley that I have dedicated the present piece.

### **Performance Notes**

- The piece is intended for any combination of instruments of any size ensemble from 3 players to as many as a performance space can accommodate.
- The dynamic level begins softly and gradually builds in volume over the entire course of the piece, culminating in a joyous climax. Players should pace this process so that the growth is barely noticeable over time.
- After completing the desired number of repeats of a given line, a player may continue on to the next line without a pause, or the player may rest for one or two bars (or more) before proceeding to the next line.
- A player may choose to skip a line every now and then, to play lines out of order, or to skip lines entirely, at their discretion.
- The piece may be played with or without a conductor; in the latter case, a woodblock or found percussion instrument could be played in a metronomic way to help players maintain the constant 4/4 pulse.
- The piece could end soon after the first player reaches the final line, or it could go on until everyone reaches the final line, or somewhere in between. The conductor (or a selected player), upon making this determination, should provide a definitive cut-off so that all the players end dramatically on beat 4 of the pulse.
- In the end, this piece is a vehicle for performers to make creative decisions within the overall structural format provided. With that in mind, it is possible that ideas for approaching this piece may extend beyond what is suggested above.

Written in homage to composer Terry Riley

# In C-Dorian

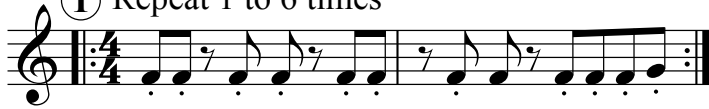
For 3 to 300 Instruments

Instruments in B $\flat$

Frank Ticheli

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 108$

① Repeat 1 to 6 times



*pp* growing, slowly in volume for entire duration of piece

② Continue process of repeating each line from 1 to 6x (unless otherwise indicated) before moving on to the next line.



③



④



⑤ Play no more than 2x



*cantabile*

⑥



⑦



⑧



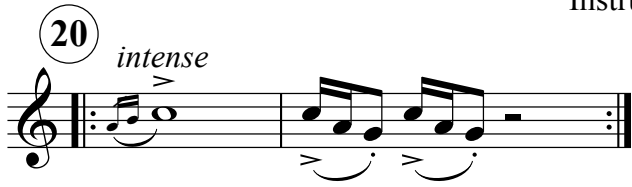
⑨




After completing page 1, rest as long as needed for page-turn.



20 *intense*



21 *intense*



22 *with great energy to end of piece*



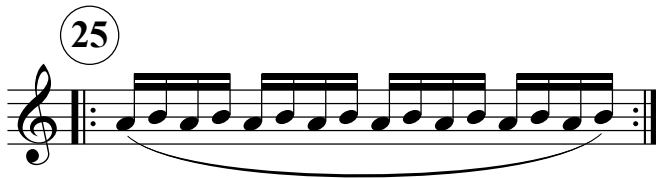
23



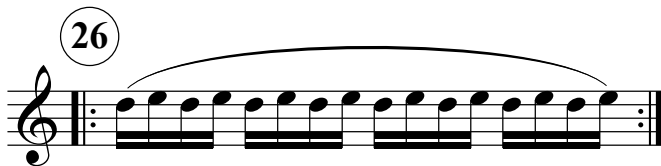
24



25



26



27 Play either pitch



*fff*

28 Continue playing either pitch loudly and jubilantly until cut-off.

