

DOING “WITHIN” WHEN YOU’RE DOING “WITHOUT”!
Practical Scoring Solutions for Small Bands
William Owens (ASCAP), Presenter

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In today’s diverse and fast-paced school environment, many of our nation’s band programs have fallen victim to a myriad of circumstances. Competing extra-curricular activities, students who work, scheduling conflicts, philosophy of administration, and lack of control/quality with feeder programs are just a few of the obstacles band directors face on a daily basis. Needless to say, these factors have certainly impacted the ability of our bands to correctly portray music as intended by a given composer.

As a result (nationwide) of the aforementioned, band programs of small size/modest proficiency are no longer the exception – *they’re the rule!* Adverse situations notwithstanding, the school band director is nonetheless obligated to work with the available resources and provide students with the best learning experience possible. This workshop offers practical and easy-to-apply strategies to help you and your students make great music in any situation.

TAKE AN HONEST ACCOUNT OF YOUR SITUATION

1. Accurately (and honestly) assess the strengths and weaknesses of your ensemble.
2. Purpose to find music that will best fit your ensemble’s needs and abilities
3. *THE NEEDS OF THE MANY OUTWEIGH THE NEEDS OF THE FEW!*
4. *Choose your battles wisely!* Select performance situations that will best accommodate and enrich your students.
5. *Watch how you program!* BE SMART! Do not overextend – play what you can handle!
6. **BE EXCITED** about the music you select!

A FEW BASIC RULES FOR RESCORING

1. When substituting, use instruments in the same tessitura (practical range) as the original
2. Score the substitute instrument “pitch for pitch” as much as possible
3. Stay as original and minimal as possible – rewrite as little as you can get away with!
4. NEVER alter or compromise the original musical material
5. Utilize quality music writing software (i.e. Sibelius, Finale)

IDEAS FOR “COLOR” INSTRUMENT SUBSTITUTIONS

1. OBOE: Alto Sax, Soprano Sax, Flute (muted Trumpet)
2. BASSOON: Baritone Sax, Euphonium, Tenor Sax, Bass Clarinet
3. F HORN: Alto Sax, Trumpet, Trombone (consider range), Euphonium (consider range)
4. TROMBONE: Alto Sax (range consideration), Tenor Sax, Euphonium (treble clef if necessary – trumpet switchover)
5. TUBA: Bass Clarinet (consider range), *Contra Alto**/Bass Clarinet (if available), Baritone Sax (consider range), Keyboard

IN EXTREME CASES....

1. FLUTE: Oboe, Clarinet, Alto/Soprano Sax (limited ranges)
2. CLARINET: Soprano/Alto/Tenor Sax
3. SAXOPHONE: Clarinet, Large Clarinet
4. TRUMPET: Clarinet, Alto/Tenor Sax
5. EUPHONIUM: Trombone, Tenor Sax, Clarinet, Large Clarinet

LET'S NOT FORGET PERCUSSION!

It's very difficult to "substitute" for missing percussion parts as the timbre of each instrument is so unique. In my estimation, these are the best courses of action:

1. Take care to not program works with extensive percussion parts – keep it as basic as possible!
2. Cover the basics (snare drum, bass drum, cymbals)
3. Regarding auxiliary percussion, it's often better to simply go without. In cases when an auxiliary part is absolutely necessary, consider having a wind player play the part (from within the ensemble, if possible). Substitute or supplement Timpani rolls with Bass Drum rolls.

OVERLOADED IN A PARTICULAR SECTION? PUT IT TO GOOD USE!

1. Clarinet and Alto Sax can supplement Trumpet or F Horn
2. Euphonium/Baritone can very nicely supplement Trombone
3. Percussion: consider "doubling up" on certain instruments
4. Be creative as to how use "overabundances" to enhance your ensemble

In closing, while you may have LOTS of rewriting ahead of you, it will be time VERY WELL SPENT! And it can actually be a lot of fun! Best wishes for a successful, productive school year and remember...**BIG THINGS**...often come in...*small packages!*

A FEW FAQ'S (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q: How will adjudicators view these "rewrites"?

A: Remember primarily that adjudicators (for the most part) are band directors just as you are, many of which who've employed similar strategies for their ensembles. While there certainly are exceptions, judges for the most part will recognize and look favorably on your efforts (if well executed).

Q: Could rewriting parts be construed as illegal?

A: Quite simply, no. What you must however avoid at ALL costs, is altering the core material itself; i.e. changing melodic or harmonic content or embellishing the music in any way that compromises the composer's original intent.

Q: I have an Alto Clarinet player (imagine that)! What parts are best?

A: Here's a wonderful opportunity to have this wonderful (albeit obsolete) instrument help "fill in a few gaps" within your ensemble! Rather than simply "hand out an alto or baritone sax and be done with it", give some serious thought on how it can actually enhance your band sound (create "hybrid" parts). Make this consideration exclusively for each piece you play; it's time very well spent!

Q: How practical/useful are these "Flex-Band" arrangements?

A: VERY! "Flex-Band" arrangements are a wonderful and wise alternative, as they're generally scored in 4 parts (SATB).

Q: Any suggestions for older, traditional marches that largely scores F Horn on the upbeats?

A: **YES!** There are actually several options – please consider these:

1. Traditional marches for the large part scores the F Horn "upbeat" patterns beginning at the TRIO section
2. Split the difference! Split into phrases and pass among other sections (trombone, saxophone)
3. If possible, omit completely! I've found that you actually don't miss the upbeat pattern in some marches – the SNARE DRUM carries it quite well!

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Richard Crain

President, the Midwest Clinic

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