

Arranging for Guitar Ensemble

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Preliminary Considerations

- Defining the ensemble (size, instruments).
 - Standard nylon/ steel string/electric.
 - Low-D tuning.
 - Inclusion of specialty guitars—Requinto, Contrabass, Octavo, electric bass.
- Organization of parts and labor
 - Active parts.
 - Texturally supportive parts.
 - Level-appropriate parts vs. parts of equal difficulty.
- Helpful Software and Resources
 - Finale, Sibelius, MuseScore
 - Amazing Slow Downer, Audacity.
 - IMSLP (**International Music Score Library Project**).
 - Rex (The Royal Library and Copenhagen University Library Service) -----Rischel & Birket-Smith's Collection of guitar music.
- Copyright issues

Arranging Considerations

- Determining the best transposition to maximize the fullest, most resonant register.
- Using Low D tuning.
- Writing with rest stroke (predominantly) in mind.
- Octave displacements, maintaining the integrity of the melody.
- Creating textures.
 - Combinative arpeggios.
 - Fleshing out.
 - Colors—strumming, pizzicato, harmonics, ponticello, tasto, campanella, slapping, tapping, etc..
- Interpreting the music from idiom to idiom.
 - Transferring ensemble to ensemble (e.g., adapting a work for string ensemble to guitar ensemble).
 - Converting Solo to Ensemble (e.g., a work for solo cello to guitar ensemble).
 - Composing a new/creative setting of a folk tune (e.g. setting a short fiddle tune set with theme and variation technique).
 - Transcribing audio to guitar ensemble (software helpful).
 - Taking artistic license while maintaining correct style with Early, Renaissance, and folk music.
 - Composing descants and countermelodies.
- Guitars and other instruments
 - Introduces the much needed “sustain” (voice, violin, flute, etc.) into guitar ensemble texture.
 - Easy-to-add percussion instruments—cajon, shaker, kick drum, etc..
 - Opportunities for collaborations with other areas of school music program—excellent for Holiday programs.