

Hymn Arranging For Youth Two Quick Ways

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Method One

- Use Finale or Sibelius software suggested. Notion software has many great features but the Methods in this document have not been tried in Notion however they may work well in Notion.
- Concert Pitch is the pitch that actually sounds.
- The sample score on the last page is in key of C for the Concert Pitch.
- Select the key to use. If you use a key different from the one in the hymn book, give the Organist a copy of the transposed hymn.
- Wind players can easily have key signatures with many sharps if the hymn has sharps. (Listen to the group for missed sharps or flats in the key signature of their parts. Bass clef wind instruments may miss naturals if the notes they nearly always play flat are now natural because of the key signature.) Strings like sharp keys and winds like flat keys. Select a happy medium. If the hymn is in the key of A, Ab might be a better choice of key, etc. If changing the key of the hymn to a new key, it must be close to the same pitch as the original or the congregational singing will go out of range.
- After selecting your key, then, set up the score in your computer software for desired instruments, key signature, meter, (and pickups if any).

- Write the hymn melody into the Violin I part or Oboe part which are “C” instruments. Then copy the melody to all instruments (except Double Bass, Tuba, Contra Bassoon, Bass Trombone, and Bass Clarinet) and your software should transpose the music appropriately for each instrument’s key signature. Finally, use your software to transpose the notes of each instrument to the appropriate playing octave for that instrument. The instruments just given in the parenthesis should be given the bass line of the hymn. Then copy the hymn bass line to all of these bass instruments and, if needed, your software should transpose the music appropriately for each instrument’s key signature. Finally for these bass instruments, use your software to transpose the notes of each instrument to the appropriate playing octave for that instrument.
- Use the software’s Help Files and make up a procedure when needed.
- Save your score.
- Print your score.
- Proofreading will save rehearsal time later. A quick general proofread is to play your score and see if it sounds correct.
- Then, extract instruments parts which your software may do during the Printing phase of your software. Visually check each instrument’s printed part to see if it came out like you wanted it.
- If you have too many instruments to fit on a score page in your software, copy the strings part into a new score and add additional instruments there by copying and transposing from your strings parts. In other words, you will have two scores to cover all of the instruments.
- Some hymn books are mainly pop type of music and these ideas may not work very well for this music.
- These comments do not include comments on good instrument performing, arranging for full concert Band, or arranging for Orchestra including chord voicing issues.
- Music under Copyright may need permission to write off parts and definitely to make what would be legally an arrangement.
- The backbone of these quick arrangements is using the Organ or Piano to cover the sound of missing parts in the hymn 4 part harmony. Using the Organ will make your group sound better because of the sustained sound of the Organ.

- A 4 verse hymn then could be done something like this: verse 1- all, verse 2 – woodwinds and strings, verse 3 – brass and percussion, verse 4 – all.
- This simple arrangement will sound like a caroling sing-along.
- Make beautiful music!

- **INSTRUMENTS**

- See last page for a chart.
- Note ranges are very general and will depend somewhat on the individual player. A few youth may be able to excellently play the whole practical range of the instrument.
- These Instruments comments apply to Method One and Method Two as appropriate.
- In general, if you write one of the SATB hymn parts for an instrument that plays in that range, you will not have a range problem for the player.
- If the actual sound of a transposing instrument is LOWER than the written note, then to sound a certain actual note you need to write the note and key signature HIGHER than the actual sound.
- The Piccolo is a C instrument. Use sparingly. Adds a blaze to the Flute part. You may (but unlikely) run across a Piccolo in Db which would sound an octave and a half step higher than written.
- In a few cases you may want a 2nd Flute part to add a high alto part.
- In very few cases you may want a 2nd Oboe part.
- You may want a 3rd Clarinet part but not likely.
- Bassoons may have 2 parts but not likely for our purposes.
- Cornet is the same as Trumpet for these quick arrangements.
- You may have a 3rd Trumpet part for things like fanfares.
- For our purposes one Horn part is enough. Horns can have 4 parts in orchestras. On one staff would be Horn I and Horn II. A second staff would have Horn III and Horn IV. But the high notes of a 4 note chord are played by Horn I and III and the low notes of a 4 note chord are played by Horn II and IV.
- Notice that the Baritone part is usually written in bass clef and sounds as written. However, some Baritone players (usually former trumpet players) read from the treble clef and their part sounds an octave and one whole step lower than written.

- Give the Euphonium a bass clef Baritone part or possibly a treble clef Baritone.
- The hymn bass line would be written an octave lower for the Tuba.
- Strings sound richer with the Double Bass and Cello playing in octaves - - even richer if the Bassoon doubles the Cello.
- Double the melody an octave higher in the Violin I part (put “Div.” in the part) so that the melody in octaves can be played on the last verse of a hymn or elsewhere for a richer string sound.
- Percussion players may be able to make up a part for you. If it gets too jiving or like a drum set, the hymn will sound like a contemporary service rather than a traditional service. Drums too loud is usually the biggest complaint of listeners.
- Timpani use two or more drums with one note tuned on each drum. These notes can be changed in a piece if the player has significantly sufficient time to make the change in tuning to get the new note. Timpani do not use key signatures: write the flats or sharps beside each note as you need these.
- Special Instruments may show up. They are most often in C and play at pitch. Give them the melody in Concert key.
- For a Harp: give a Piano part and let them make up a part that suits the player. However, playing a Piano part without changes does not usually work for a Harpist because it does not lay under the hands of the Harpist the same way it does for someone playing the Piano. You could give the Harp the melody or the melody in octaves with a higher octave. Rolled chords at the beginning of each measure with something for variety to break the pattern. Gliss with many instruments cannot always be heard: have the Harpist get a variety of guitar picks to use when a gliss is called for so – saves the finger.
- English Horn is similar to the Oboe with a unique reed sound. It sounds a fifth lower than written so write it a fifth higher than the Concert Sound. It plays a written range similar to the Oboe.
- Contra Bassoon is played similar to the Bassoon only sounding an octave lower the written. Do not use unless there is a special need. Let them play Bassoon.

- You may have a Soprano Sax or a Baritone Sax. All saxes are in treble clef and transposing of the instrument gets the right actual sound (see the Alto and Tenor saxes in the chart on the last page). All Saxes play in the same range but the actual pitch comes from the transposing fact of the instrument. The Soprano Sax is the same as the Tenor Sax except the actual sound is an octave higher. Baritone Sax is the same as the Alto Sax but the actual sound is an octave lower than the Alto Sax.
- Eb Clarinets, Alto Clarinets, and Bass Clarinets are like Saxes in that they are all play in the treble clef, in the same range, but they are transposing instruments to get the right actual sound. The Bass Clarinet sounds an octave lower than the regular clarinet. When the Eb Clarinet plays a written C, it sounds the Eb above that C. The Eb Clarinet should generally avoid high notes with youth. The Alto Clarinet sounds the Eb below the written played C.
- Give melodic Percussion instruments the melody or the melody an octave higher.
- For a unique instrument like the guitar, talk to the player. The guitar may work by giving the chord symbols (C, F, G7, etc.) alone. Also, see Guitar slashes and tablature in your software Help Files.
- You may get a Harmonica or a Psaltery. Consider them in C and they play at pitch. Give them the melody in Concert key.

Method Two

- Method Two is just like Method One except you do all 4 voices of the SATB hymn. This Method Two will make your group sound much bigger than Method One.
- Soprano Part (suggestions): Piccolo on the last verse, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet 1, Trumpet 1, Violin I.
- Alto Part: Clarinet 2, Trumpet 2, Violin II.
- Tenor Part: Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Horn, Trombone, Viola, Bassoon, Baritones.
- Bass Part: Bass Trombone, Baritones, Tuba, Cello, Double Bass, Bass Clarinet, Contra Bassoon, Bassoon.

- Each SATB part should balance in sound with all of the other parts.
- If you end up missing an SATB part, let the Organ cover that missing part. But make changes in some parts to be sure that the last chord of each phrase has the third of the chord sounding in balance and make sure that the last chord of the verse has all three notes of the triad sounding in balance.
- High Flute or high Brass parts can overpower your group because they cannot be played softly and make these notes to sound.
- In four part arrangements do not double the melody an octave lower.
- Music under Copyright may need permission to write off parts and definitely to make what would be legally an arrangement.
- Hymns not under Copyright: be creative!
- Again, make beautiful music!

Instruments

	WRITTEN "C" Actual Sound	Comfortable Range (as written in their part)	Advanced Range (as written in their part)
Piccolo			
Flute			
Oboe			
Clarinet in B♭ 1			
Clarinet in B♭ 2			
Alto Sax			
Tenor Sax			
Bassoon			
Horn in F			
Trumpet in B♭ 1			
Trumpet in B♭ 2			
Trombone			
Bass Trombone			
Baritone (T.C.)			
Baritone (B.C.)			
Tuba			
Timpani			
Percussion			
Violin I			
Violin II			
Viola			
Cello			
Double Bass			