# Unit 3:        Arranging Music

**Unit code:**           **K/600/6890**

**QCF Level 3:**         **BTEC National**

**Credit value:**        **10**

**Guided learning hours:  60**

## ● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to develop some of the underpinning knowledge and skills required in order to arrange music in a variety of contexts.

## ● Unit introduction

This unit gives learners the opportunity to develop their arranging skills. In the music industry, skilled arrangers are valued for their ability to create a commercially viable product.

One of the best methods of learning how to arrange music is to study the arrangements of others. By doing so, learners will develop awareness of effective arranging techniques that can enhance their compositions. In this unit, learners will explore a variety of arranging techniques and study musical arrangements for various functions. The skills of an arranger involve a strong awareness of the fundamental elements of music, particularly harmony, dynamics, timbre and texture. Skilful manipulation of these elements will enable the arranger to create music that will hold the attention of the listener. For example, a simple change in dynamics might transform an 'average' composition into a hit recording.

Arrangers will learn to write music for various instruments/voices by exploring their ranges and capabilities. They can then apply this knowledge in the form of notation that is most appropriate for the style of piece. Learners will explore and experiment with different musical textures created by combining different instruments/voices.

As technology develops, studio engineers and producers are often required to have arranging skills; these skills may not simply involve adding new instruments and voices to compositions but may involve manipulation of performances in the studio environment. This unit gives learners the opportunity to arrange music using music technology and studio applications.

On completion of the unit, learners will have produced a portfolio of arrangements for different functions, using a variety of arranging techniques.

## ● Learning outcomes

**On completion of this unit a learner should:**

1      Know arranging techniques through the study of musical arrangements of others

2      Be able to arrange music for different groups and resources

3      Be able to manipulate elements of music to produce musical arrangements

4      Be able to create scores and parts of arrangements for different instruments/voices.

# Unit content

### 1   Know arranging techniques through the study of musical arrangements of others

*Arranging techniques*: use of rhythm, pitch, harmony, dynamics and timbre to create various textures; use of instrumental/vocal groupings; use of counterpoint and melodic embellishment; 'reductions' of existing materials for large combinations to small-sized ensembles; 'expansions' of solo items for ensembles; use of technology

*Study of arrangements of others*: musical analysis of transcriptions; performances and recordings of arrangements used for various functions

### 2   Be able to arrange music for different groups and resources

*Different functions*: eg orchestral, chamber, ensemble, jazz quartet, big band, pop band, barber shop quartet, choirs, backing tracks, jingles, commercials, film and TV soundtracks, background/ambient music, accompaniments for performers; 'reductions' of existing materials for large combinations to small-sized ensembles, 'expansions' of solo items for ensembles, studio remixes

### 3   Be able to manipulate elements of music to produce musical arrangements

*Manipulating*: eg transposition, transformations (inversion, retrograde, retrograde inversion), cut and paste techniques, additive and subtractive processes, diminution and augmentation (rhythmic and pitch), displacement

*Elements of music*: eg rhythm, pitch, harmony, dynamics, timbre, creation of various textures

### 4   Be able to create scores and parts of arrangements for different instruments/voices

*Production of a conductor's score and individual parts*: handwritten or computer generated; fully notated score; lead sheet; chord chart; short score; separate instrumental and vocal parts

*Different instruments/voices*: eg rhythm section, brass, woodwind, strings, percussion, voices (soprano, alto, tenor, bass, lead vocals, backing vocals); synthesised and sampled instruments and sounds; instrumental/vocal ranges and capabilities ranges of instruments; doublings; chordings; playing techniques and effects (eg muting); different articulations

# Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

| Assessment and grading criteria | | |
|---|---|---|
| To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to: | To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to: | To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to: |
| **P1** identify a range of arranging techniques used by other arrangers [CT] | **M1** describe a range of arranging techniques used by other arrangers | **D1** explain a range of arranging techniques used by other arrangers |
| **P2** produce contrasting musical arrangements for different instrumental/vocal combinations, competently with few errors [CT] | **M2** produce contrasting musical arrangements for different instrumental/vocal combinations, competently and accurately | **D2** produce contrasting musical arrangements for different instrumental/vocal combinations which are accurate, effective and imaginative |
| **P3** manipulate elements of music to produce arrangements appropriate for the intended style and function competently, with minor errors that do not detract from the overall effect [CT] | **M3** manipulate elements of music to produce musical arrangements appropriate for the intended style and function competently and accurately | **D3** manipulate elements of music to produce musical arrangements appropriate for the intended style and function accurately and with artistic flair |
| **P4** notate music for different instruments/voices through the production of appropriate scores competently, with few errors. [CT] | **M4** notate music for different instruments/voices through the production of appropriate scores competently and accurately. | **D4** notate music for different instruments/voices through the production of appropriate scores, showing a comprehensive awareness of the process. |

**PLTS**: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

| Key | IE – independent enquirers | RL – reflective learners | SM – self-managers |
|---|---|---|---|
| | CT – creative thinkers | TW – team workers | EP – effective participators |

# Essential guidance for tutors

## Delivery

For this unit, learners should have access to the relevant instruments, recording/playback equipment, computer hardware and software that will enable them to initiate, develop and store their arranging ideas. Assessment will be through learners' portfolios of evidence.

Delivery of this unit should be both practical and theoretical. Imaginative and creative methods should be employed to deliver the content. To benefit fully from this unit, frequent and varied listening is essential. Learners should be introduced to a wide range of music from different styles; exercises in arranging techniques could be based on these different styles. Music technology could be incorporated as both a creative tool and for recording; in this way, learners will develop skills in handling the music technology equipment.

For learning outcome 1, it is expected that tutors and learners will provide listening materials and notated examples to study. The reference to 'arrangements of others' is not intended to infer that 'others' must be 'famous' arrangers. This material might well be provided by the tutor. It might be helpful for learners to rehearse and perform transcriptions and/or transcribe existing arrangements themselves to gain insight into arranging techniques. By studying the arrangements of others, learners will gain an understanding of various arranging techniques. They can then combine these techniques with their own knowledge and creativity to produce arrangements in different styles for various functions (learning outcome 2).

Learners should be encouraged to consider all the elements of music in their arrangements to create interesting musical products that are appropriate for the intended style and function (learning outcome 3). This will include knowledge of the timbres and ranges of different instruments and the textures created by different instrumental groupings.

The delivery of learning outcomes 2 and 3 can involve studio production techniques, such as the creation of remixes, as well as more traditional arranging techniques. Studio remixes could be created by taking rhythmic, melodic and instrumental/vocal riffs, motifs and ideas from the original track(s) and combining them to make a new distinctive version of the chosen track(s). Learners could try electronically manipulated remixes of classical music and also use remix ideas in their instrumental arrangements.

The arrangements created by learners may involve changes to any or all of the musical elements of a stimulus. These can range from the transcription of notes for different instruments or the creation of significantly different material from the original. Choice of instruments will depend on what is appropriate for the task, the availability of performers, and knowledge of and familiarity with particular instruments. Learners may choose to work within a similar medium or to move away from the original whilst preserving some of its intentions. It should be remembered that arrangement is about enhancing the original music or 'shedding new light' on it.

Delivery of learning outcome 4 should focus on the ranges and capabilities of different instruments/voices and how music is notated for them. The arrangements created by learners should be performed whenever possible.

## Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

| Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment |
|---|
| Introduction to unit. |
| *LO1 Know arranging techniques through the study of musical arrangements of others.* |
| Types of arranging techniques. |
| Study of arrangements of other arrangers. |
| **Assignment 1: Arranging Techniques – P1, M1, D1** |
| *LO2 Be able to arrange music for different groups and resources.* |
| Understanding advantages and weaknesses of different instrumental combinations and associated issues for the arranger. |
| **Assignment 2: Arranging to a Brief – P2, M2, D2** |
| *Be able to manipulate elements of music to produce musical arrangements.* |
| Class activities – methods of manipulating musical material. |
| **LO3 Assignment 3: Manipulating Elements of Music – P3, M3, D3** |
| *Be able to create scores and parts of arrangements for different instruments/voices.* |
| Presentation methods and types of score. |
| **LO4 Assignment 4: Producing Scores – P4, M4, D4** |

## Assessment

Evidence for this unit will be generated through the development of a portfolio. This will include recordings and scores. For learning outcome 1, learners will need to study at least two previously existing arrangements designed for different functions. This could lead to group discussions and verbal assessments, written commentaries or presentations. To satisfy P1, learners should be able to identify techniques used by other arrangers in given examples. For M1, learners should describe what these techniques are, and for D1, they should explain these techniques.

The evidence required for learning outcome 2, will be generated by the production of a portfolio of contrasting arrangements. It is up to tutors to decide if they will provide the stimulus for these arrangements, or if they will allow learners to select their own. In both cases, care should be taken to ensure that the stimulus material is suitable for making into an interesting musical arrangement. There is no need for the learner to produce long arrangements. Each arrangement should consist of a different instrumentation and be designed for a different function. All arrangements will need to be stored as audio recordings for evidence. For P2, learners' arrangements should be competent, but they may have some errors, eg inappropriate instrumental ranges, overlong phrases for brass or woodwind players without opportunities to breathe. For M2, their submissions should be accurate and for D2, the work should be accurate, effective (fit-for-purpose) and showing some imagination.

For learning outcome 3, learners should produce arrangements that will demonstrate approaches to the manipulation of musical elements as found in unit content. Evidence for this learning outcome can form part of the arrangements produced for grading criterion 2. For a pass, the ways in which the musical elements have been manipulated may not be entirely accurate, but they should be appropriate for the overall style and function of the arrangement. For M3, the evidence should be accurate and for D3, the outcomes should demonstrate accuracy and artistic flair.

Learning outcome 4 requires the learner to produce scores, notated in line with the the conventions of the musical style, for different combinations of instruments/voices. The scores can be handwritten or computer-generated. The scores may be of the same arrangements submitted in response to grading criterion 2. Wherever possible, the arrangements should be performed. P4 requires that the learner produce scores which are competent, but may have some errors. For M4, the evidence should be accurate and for D4, the learner must show a '…comprehensive awareness of the process'. This means that all elements of the scores are presented accurately, within the appropriate context.

**Programme of suggested assignments**

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

| Criteria covered | Assignment title | Scenario | Assessment method |
|---|---|---|---|
| P1, M1, D1 | Arranging Techniques | You are applying for a position as an arranger with a major advertising agency, where you will be required to apply a range of techniques. In order to prepare for this type of work, you need to develop and expand your knowledge of arranging techniques. | Portfolio of evidence comprising:<br>• MIDI/audio recordings<br>• printouts of computer generated material (where appropriate)<br>• handwritten arranging ideas (staff, TAB, graphic, etc)<br>• written analytical exercises. |
| P2, M2, D2 | Arranging to a Brief | In response to a position as an arranger for a major advertising agency, you have been asked to submit two arrangements of your choice. They should be in contrasting styles and for different groups of instruments. | • MIDI/audio recordings.<br>• Printouts of computer generated material (where appropriate).<br>• Handwritten musical ideas (staff, TAB, graphic, etc). |
| P3, M3, D3 | Manipulating Elements of Music | You have been commissioned to arrange four given melodies to fit the following specifications: Two should be 10 seconds long, one should be 20 seconds and one should be 30 seconds. One should be dramatic, one should be romantic, one should sound happy and up-beat and one should sound sad. | Portfolio of evidence comprising:<br>• MIDI/audio recordings<br>• print-outs of computer generated material (where appropriate)<br>• handwritten musical ideas (staff, TAB, graphic, etc). |
| P4, M4, D4 | Producing Scores | You need to produce scores and parts for the two arrangements you are submitting to the advertising agency (see P2, M2, D2). | • Printouts of computer generated material (where appropriate).<br>• Handwritten musical ideas (staff, TAB, graphic, etc). |

## Links to other BTEC units

This unit forms part of the BTEC Music and Music Technology sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Music and Music Technology suite:

| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---|---|---|
| | | Composing Music |
| | | Music Theory and Harmony |

## Essential resources

Learners will need access to a library of audio recordings of existing arrangements and scores of existing arrangements.

Learners will also need computers with access to appropriate music creation and notation software in order to create and develop their arrangements.

## Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

| Skill | When learners are … |
|---|---|
| Creative thinkers | exploring instrumental colour, voicings and textures<br><br>producing contrasting arrangements<br><br>manipulating musical elements<br><br>producing musical scores. |

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

| Skill | When learners are … |
|---|---|
| Independent enquirers | exploring sounds through listening and analysis |
| Creative thinkers | suggesting instrumental combinations and groupings |
| Reflective learners | considering own work and suggesting improvements and embellishments |
| Team workers | working with musicians and experimenting with ensembles |
| Self-managers | completing scores and parts to deadlines |
| Effective participators | organising and establishing ensembles for reviewing arrangements and compositions. |

## Functional Skills – Level 2

| Skill | When learners are … |
|---|---|
| **ICT – Use ICT systems** | |
| Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs | generating musical ideas or producing scores through the use of music software |
| Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval | generating musical ideas or producing scores through the use of music software |
| **ICT – Develop, present and communicate information** | |
| Bring together information to suit content and purpose | generating musical ideas or producing scores through the use of music software |
| Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience | generating musical ideas or producing scores through the use of music software. |