

# GCSE Music 2016

## Performing Component

### Selected Ensemble Arrangements

#### Introduction

These ensemble arrangements are provided to assist teachers with choosing compliant ensembles for students who are having difficulty choosing compliant pieces for themselves. The arrangements are intended for ensembles of three or four students; each provides scope for further arrangement and development by teachers and/or students; alternatively, they can be used as examples upon which to model new arrangements. Some are more difficult than others, but it is for teachers to judge whether the arrangements are suitable for individual students.

The twelve arrangements are intended to cover a broad spectrum of musical styles and genres, loosely correlating with the Areas of Study (some could certainly be linked with more than one). Most of the pieces are relatively well-known, but not necessarily instantly recognisable to all students, who should be encouraged to find and listen to examples of different performances and/or recordings of the pieces, so that they can make choices about how to present them. Each arrangement is accompanied by some contextual notes, reflecting the specification's emphasis on the effect of audience, time, place and context. Furthermore, each provides sufficient material and opportunity to enable students to comply with the minimum time requirement (their ensemble performance must be at least one minute long, but could need to be as much as three minutes in order to meet the overall minimum of four minutes for the Performing component).

Dynamics, articulation and phrasing choices have been left to students (and/or teachers) to decide upon, and the scores should be annotated according to the choices made. All the pieces have an additional, empty staff, allowing for an extra part to be added; percussion and other additions could also be made.

## Planxty Irwin

This beautiful piece is by the blind Irish harpist, singer and composer, Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738); it is very well-known in folk circles, but O'Carolan was undoubtedly influenced by the "classical" instrumental music of his time and the piece can therefore be linked to both Instrumental Music 1700-1820 and Fusions. There was originally a set of words (in Irish Gaelic) to be sung to the tune so it could just as equally come under Vocal Music. O'Carolan was known to travel as an itinerant musician, staying at the houses of wealthy and influential people throughout Ireland and providing entertainment for them, their families and friends. He frequently wrote pieces in honour of his hosts, using the title "planxty", a word which appears to be unique to O'Carolan: the approximate meaning seems to be, "To the health of..." or perhaps, "In honour of...". *Planxty Irwin's* full title is sometimes given as *Planxty Colonel John Irwin*. There are numerous different arrangements freely available via YouTube and other online resources. This arrangement follows the "standard" AABB format commonly found in British and Irish instrumental music and, played at the suggested tempo the piece takes about 1m 30s to play through. The piece could be played twice or even three times through, however, offering an opportunity for students to take a different part each time. The chords suggested will form the basis of a guitar or keyboard part which could be played using any technique which is felt to work. The chords can be simplified (for example, using the chord of D instead of Bm) if required. Either of the two added lines (harmony and bass) could be omitted to turn the piece into a duet. Dynamics should be decided upon by students (or their teacher) and added to the score.

## March from Judas Maccabaeus

This well-known march (popular with military bands and wedding organists) was composed by the great Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1759) in 1747 for an oratorio based on the Book of Maccabees (one of the Apocrypha – the books that were not included in the 1611 Authorised or King James Version of the Bible). The original piece was composed for the orchestra and this arrangement does nothing more than to present the melody with a harmony and bass line. There is plenty of scope for further arrangement, adding additional parts (particularly percussion). At the suggested tempo the piece takes just over a minute to play – but with repeats and a bit of part-swapping it could certainly be extended.

## The Prince of Denmark's March

Jeremiah Clarke (1674-1707) wrote this lovely piece for keyboard (harpsichord, probably) in around 1700, a few years before taking his own life following a failed love affair. His great tune achieved fame (and remains popular) as *The Trumpet Voluntary* (and was for many years attributed to Henry Purcell). The piece is now very popular at weddings. This arrangement takes the melody and bass line of Clarke's keyboard arrangement, with the harmony part being formed from the inner parts. As a harpsichord piece, lots of ornamentation would be expected and so there is plenty of opportunity to add trills, turns, mordants and so on. At the suggested speed, the piece takes around 1m 20s, but repeats are quite acceptable and there is plenty of scope for swapping parts around.

## The Easy Winners

Scott Joplin shot to fame in the 1970s in the wake of a film called *The Sting*, which included some of his music in the film score. Sadly for Joplin, he knew nothing of his sudden worldwide popularity, having died in quite tragic circumstances in 1917. Scott Joplin was a composer in the American “ragtime” style (a forerunner of jazz) but, despite his background as the child of a former slave family in the “Deep South” of the United States (he was born in 1868), he had received lessons in classical piano and composition and his music is quite complex. The title of this piece apparently refers to gamblers at a horse race and its light-hearted, bouncy feel makes it very popular with ragtime and jazz audiences (and with filmgoers – this was one of the pieces used in *The Sting*). This arrangement is tricky, but very rewarding: the bass line is considerably easier than the two upper parts and therefore the arrangement is quite useful for ensembles of mixed ability. One again, the melody and bass are from Joplin’s original piano score, and the inner part has been constructed from the chords that appear in both hands of the original. Regrettably, no actual audio recordings exist of Joplin, but he did make some piano rolls and based on his piano roll version of *The Easy Winners*, the tempo suggested here is actually a little fast – but at the suggested speed the piece takes around 2m.

## The Unquiet Grave

This haunting song appears in many versions, this one collected by Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) who went around the British Isles (and parts of North America) collecting old songs from mostly old singers. The story is open to interpretation, but it appears that the grieving young man is warned by the ghost of his departed lover that kissing her corpse will not be a safe thing to do. The top line is the original tune collected by Sharp; the countermelody (note the vocal tenor clef) and bass parts have been added. The full lyrics collected by Cecil Sharp are as follows:

Cold blows the wind tonight true love  
And gently drops the rain  
I never had but one sweetheart  
In greenwood she is lain.

I'll do as much for my sweetheart  
As any young man may  
I'll sit and mourn all on her grave  
For a twelvemonth and a day

When the twelvemonth and one day were past  
The ghost began to speak,  
“Why sittest thou here all on my grave  
And will not let me sleep?”

“There is one thing that I crave sweetheart,  
One thing is all I crave,  
And that is a kiss from thy pale cold lips,  
And I will go from my grave.”

“My lips are cold as clay sweetheart,

My breath smells heavy and strong,  
If you were to kiss my pale cold lips,  
Your time would not be long."

"When shall we meet again, sweetheart,  
When shall we meet again?"  
"When the oaken leaves fall from the trees,  
And green springs up again."

The conversation between the young man and the ghost provides all sorts of opportunities for vocal ensembles to swap lines around, so it makes sense for all the singers to learn all three lines; the following arrangement is just a suggestion:

Verse 1 – melody alone  
Verse 2 – melody and countermelody  
Verse 3 – all three parts  
Verse 4 – male voices only (two or three parts)  
Verse 5 – female voices only (two or three parts)  
Verse 6 – all three parts  
Repeat verse 1 – female voice singing melody with other parts humming

At the suggested tempo, the arrangement above takes just over 2m 30s to sing through. Try it with a simple hand drum beat.

## **El Condor Pasa**

This piece achieved fame twice within the space of a few years, firstly in 1963 as an instrumental by a group called Los Incas and subsequently when American duo Simon & Garfunkel added lyrics in 1970. Since then, it has become the unofficial "second national anthem" of Peru and there are over 4000 known versions of the melody (and over 300 different sets of lyrics, in a variety of languages including English, French, Italian, Hebrew, Czech, Mandarin, Cantonese, Dutch and Russian. In fact, the piece dates to 1913 when it was written for a full orchestra by a Peruvian composer called Daniel Alomia Robles (1871-1942); he based the work on traditional pentatonic melodies from the Andes. This arrangement is loosely based on the Los Incas/Simon & Garfunkel version, and offers plenty of scope for arrangement by students and/or teachers. At the suggested tempo, the piece takes a little over two minutes to play. There are numerous examples of this piece available online, and it provides endless scope for arrangement and rearrangement, especially with the option of adding singers. Paul Simon's lyrics are as follows:

I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail.  
Yes I would.  
If I could,  
I surely would.

I'd rather be a hammer than a nail.  
Yes I would.

If I could,  
I surely would.

Away, I'd rather sail away  
Like a swan that's here and gone,  
A man gets tied up to the ground,  
He gives the world its saddest sound,  
Its saddest sound.

I'd rather be a forest than a street.  
Yes I would.  
If I could,  
I surely would.

I'd rather feel the earth beneath my feet.  
Yes I would.  
If I could,  
I surely would.

## Guantanamera

Probably the best known song from Cuba, this world-famous song has been a hit several times and there are numerous versions, both vocal and instrumental, available online. The song was composed by Jose Fernandez Diaz using words from poems by Jose Marti, but it was popularised by the American singer Pete Seeger and made famous by a vocal group called The Sandpipers. Instrumentally, the possibilities for arrangement are virtually endless, but it is suggested that there is plenty of room for percussion. The best-known Cuban lyrics are shown below:

Estrabillo (Chorus):

*Guantanamera, guajira Guantanamera,  
Guantanamera, guajira Guantanamera.*

Verso (verse) 1:

Yo soy un hombre sincero, de donde crece la palma  
Yo soy un hombre sincero, de donde crece la palma  
Y antes de morir yo quiero, cantar mis versos del alma  
(Estrabillo)

Verso 2:

Cultivo una rosa blanca, en julio como en enero  
Cultiva una rosa blanca, en julio como en enero  
Para el amigo sincero, que me da su mano franca  
(Estrabillo)

Verso 3:

Mi verso es de un verde claro, y de un carmin encendido  
Mi verso es de un verde claro, y de un carmin encendido  
Mi verso es un clervo herido, qui busca en al monte amparo  
(Estrabillo x2)

Listen carefully to some of the different vocal versions to get the word-fit for verses 2 and 3.

The tempo shown, the three verses and three or four choruses take the piece to just under three minutes. There are other sets of lyrics, in Spanish, English and other languages (all easily found on the internet) and, of course, the tune lends itself to a number of football chants: "One Dele Alli, there's only one Dele Alli/ One Dele Alli..." and so on.

## Lillibulero/Grimstock

*Lillibulero* has been popular since at least as long ago as the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and there is much speculation about its origins. Some say it was composed by Henry Purcell, others that it is an Irish dance tune and there is even a suggestion that it emanated from the French composer Lully.

*Lillibulero* is the signature tune of the BBC World Service as well as the regimental march of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the tune has been the vehicle for a number of different lyrics (all easily discoverable). Whilst the tune offers many possibilities for arrangement, it was felt that it is a little short and might become too repetitive, so it is paired here with an English dance tune from the collection of Henry Playford, *Grimstock* – a glance at the opening figure of each tune will show why the two go so well together as a traditional dance set. Played as written, at around 140bpm, the two pieces together last just over a minute, but in most British dance traditions it would be usual to play the first tune, with repeats, three or four times before moving on to the second and playing that three or four times (again with repeats), easily giving scope for three minutes of playing with variations in texture, dynamics and so on.

## Alla Turca

This is an arrangement, for three instruments, of a short excerpt (the first two sections) from the famous third movement of Mozart's *Piano Sonata No. 11 in A major*, derived from the piano score. The original piece dates from around 1783. The suggested tempo marking is rather slower than usual, to ensure that the piece, played with the marked repeats, reaches the required minimum time of one minute; at this tempo greater emphasis should be placed on expression, but it could be played faster with additional repeats and some textural variation. Alternatively, teachers (or students) could go back to the original and extend the arrangement by adding further sections from the movement.

## Air from Orchestral Suite No. 3

Bach's *Orchestral Suite No. 3* was written some time before 1730 and the second movement produced one of his best-loved melodies: the famous *Air*, known more commonly by the name "Air on the G String" (which derives from a late nineteenth-century arrangement of the air by August Wilhelmj). This arrangement uses only the first section of the piece, repeated once. Played, with the repeat, at the slow end of the suggested tempo this arrangement takes well over a minute and there is plenty of opportunity for expressive interpretation and textural arrangement. Once again, teachers (or students) could extend the arrangement by adding another section of the piece.

## Oh When The Saints Go Marching In

Originally a hymn, this song achieved widespread popularity as a gospel song and then became one of the best-known jazz “standards”, recorded most famously by Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra in 1938. Some of the most popular lyrics are printed below, but there are numerous other versions available – like *Guantanamera*, the song is very popular with football crowds – and endless instrumental possibilities.

Oh, when the saints go marching in  
Oh, when the saints go marching in  
Oh Lord I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the drums begin to bang  
Oh, when the drums begin to bang  
I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the stars fall from the sky  
Oh, when the stars fall from the sky  
I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the moon turns red with blood  
Oh, when the moon turns red with blood  
I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call  
Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call  
I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the horsemen begin to ride  
Oh, when the horsemen begin to ride  
I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the fire begins to blaze  
Oh, when the fire begins to blaze  
I want to be in that number  
When the saints go marching in

The piece is very short – played once through at the suggested tempo it will last only around twenty seconds – but there are sufficient verses available to take it well over one minute if it is performed as a song, and plenty of opportunities for instrumental arrangement, especially if it is used as the basis for improvisation as it would be in the jazz idiom.

## Rheged

This little-known but beautiful Welsh traditional tune offers enormous scope for arrangement. Playing the piece once through, with repeats, at the suggested tempo takes just over one minute but there is plenty of opportunity for textural variation and the piece can certainly be played through two or three times to create a longer performance; alternatively, it could be added to *Planxy Irwin*, with each piece being played once or twice through.