

FSU Studio Orchestra 2021-2022

Arrangement Guidelines, Deadlines, Suggestions, and Tips!

Guidelines and Deadlines

1. The total length of all your arrangements combined must be **10 minutes or less**.
 - a. This means you can write one 10-minute arrangement, or three 3-minute arrangements, or a 7-minute arrangement and a 3-minute one, etc. You **do not** have to use all 10 minutes if you don't want to.

2. Please consult the **List of Arrangements** to make sure the arrangement you would like to do hasn't already been claimed. It's first come, first serve!
 - a. Arrangements can be inspired by any form of media (films, video games, TV, books, comics, etc.)
 - b. Check the **Ideas for Arrangements**, provided by you and the performers, for ideas. You **do not** have to choose something from this list.

3. Once you have decided what you'd like to arrange, please send **Hunter Robertson** an email (hr18c@my.fsu.edu) with your idea.
 - a. If possible, please include your planned instrumentation (e.g. full orchestra, string orchestra, chamber ensemble, etc.) and the arrangement's approximate length. This is not required, but greatly appreciated.
 - i. If you want your arrangement to include an instrument not listed on our **Instrumentation** document, please let Hunter know; we will have to see if we can provide that instrument.
 - b. Once you have emailed your idea, Hunter will add it to the List of Arrangements, and you will have officially claimed that arrangement.
 - i. Depending on what people want to arrange, it's possible we could have two arrangements under the same general theme; for example, two medleys of music from different *Zelda* games. This will be at Nate and Hunter's discretion to make sure we have a good mix of arrangements.

4. The deadline to submit your arrangement is **Friday, April 22**. Because of the quick turnaround for our conductors and performers, this deadline is **firm**.

5. Send your arrangement in **.pdf format** to Hunter. Send one file of the full score, and individual files for each part.
 - a. Don't worry about uploading the files to the Drive. Just send them to Hunter, and

he and the Assistant Librarian will get everything organized and uploaded. b. For the sake of our conductors and performers (and saving time in rehearsals), please make sure the score and each part is **clean and legible**.

c. If you have some sort of audio file of the arrangement (MIDI file, etc.), **please include it!** You should be able to export the audio from any notation software.

Suggestions and Tips

1. **Start early and plan ahead!** Because we want to give our conductors and performers (which also includes many of you!) time to look over the music before our first rehearsal, the April 22 deadline is **firm**. As stated above, this gives you at least 32 days (approximately one month) to write your arrangement(s). If you're not sure how to plan your process, here is a **suggested timeline**. Obviously, you don't have to follow this; everyone works differently! But if you're totally lost, this is a good starting point.

a. **Step 1:** Outline your arrangement, decide on your instrumentation, listen to the music (a *lot*), and research.

i. Outline your arrangement. If you're writing a medley, decide which pieces it will include, and the order of those pieces. Decide approximately how long each part of the arrangement will be.

ii. Choose your instrumentation based on the original instrumentation and the instrumentation we have available.

iii. While listening to the music, pay attention to the instruments used and the orchestration; think about how yours will mimic or differ from it.

iv. Look up your piece or theme. Have other people written arrangements of this music? Is some sheet music already available for you to work from? (For example, if you're writing an arrangement based on any music from Nintendo, ninsheetmusic.org has a huge database of piano arrangements of Nintendo music.) Find a recording or recordings that you'll reference as you write your arrangement.

v. If you have time, start arranging! Start as early as possible.

b. **Step 2:** Write!

i. This might be where you do the bulk of your arranging.

ii. Transcribe anything you can't find sheet music for. You can do this as you arrange, or write it out beforehand and then orchestrate it.

iii. Listen! Use those well-trained ears to pick out as much detail as possible from the original music. It might help to take it apart: listen for and write

down the melody, then countermelodies, then harmony, then dynamics, etc. You might want to write for the winds first, then the strings, and so on. Find a method that works for you.

- iv. Show your musical imagination. Arrangements that stick close to the original music are fun to play and listen to, because listeners instantly recognize their favorite tunes—but don't be afraid to put your own spin on it. If you're listening to the music and come up with a countermelody or transition or change in rhythm that you think would sound good, try it out! This is an opportunity to be creative.

c. Step 3: Edit and polish.

- i. Fill in any spots that aren't totally complete.
- ii. Clean up transitions, double-check weird-sounding harmonies, make sure the parts you've written are playable, etc. If you're not sure something you've written is feasible, reach out to someone who plays that instrument and ask them to look over it. (When in doubt, send it to Hunter!)
- iii. This would be a good time to share your work with a friend; have them listen and look over it for anything you might have missed.
- iv. Listen to your arrangement from beginning to end. Note any places where you might want to tweak something, and then make those edits.
- v. Make sure the score and parts are clean, clear, and legible, and that they match each other. This prevents confusion and saves time in rehearsals.

e. April 22: Deadline to submit your arrangement!

2. If you're confused or overwhelmed or just want someone to look over your arrangement, **ask for help!**

- a. Feel free to reach out to Hunter with any questions you might have about your arrangement. He can help you outline, find sheet music, orchestrate, edit, whatever, through email or Zoom. Again, his email is hr18c@my.fsu.edu.
- b. Reach out to your fellow arrangers! They can provide helpful advice, listen to your arrangement, and/or offer creative suggestions.

3. Have fun!