

ARRANGING 101

WHAT IS “ARRANGING”?

- Arranging comes **after composing** and **before orchestrating**
- Takes the elements of a composition and put them in a **specific setting** for a **specific combination** of voices or instruments.

THE TASKS OF THE ARRANGER

- Choosing harmonic progressions
- Setting the rhythmic treatments
- “Voicing” chords
- Composing new lines
- Putting it all down on paper

FOR WHOM ARE YOU ARRANGING?

- Important to **know whom you are targeting** with your work.
- The limitations of professional musicians are different than your church choir and praise band.
- Print publishers have “real world” limitations, as well – since they are selling to volunteer musical organizations.

BASIC TOOLS

1. Understanding of keys, note names, musical terms, etc.
2. Knowledge of the ranges & capabilities instrument and voices.
3. Harmonic knowledge: chords & chord relationships; chord substitutions & chord extensions; chord names & spellings.
4. Rhythmic knowledge: understanding of vocal scansion; grasp of rhythms that are appropriate (even “cool”) in certain musical styles; awareness of “groove” – especially in pop music styles.
5. Melody/Counterpoint knowledge
6. Mastery of how to write all of the above down accurately.

YOUR TWO BEST TEACHERS

- 1. Your Ears (coupled with study)**
- 2. Experience**

TIPS TO KEEP YOU IMPROVING

1. Focus on the song.
2. Write for whom you know.
3. Keep it sing-able. Use extremes rarely.
4. Start small.
5. Strive to make every part interesting.
6. Mix it up. Use variety in the arrangement.
7. Educate yourself

PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Professional arrangers must be versatile. Professional arrangers meet deadlines.
- Arranging is generally considered “work for hire” (except when working with PD material).
- When arranging PD material, the arranger is considered the Composer (royalty-wise).
- Arranger’s print royalties come from the composer’s share.
- Arranger receives no royalties from the sale of recordings, or broadcast revenue (except for PD material).
- In the print music world, the arranger is the equivalent of the “artist” – and often better known than the composer. WHY?