



## BMG Information Sheet Number 3

### The Instruments and the Music

**Sections of this Information Sheet are being revised (Winter 2008) please contact us for more information.**

#### The Instruments

##### Banjo family

5 string Banjo or Zither-banjo tuned gCGBD or gDGBD; Plectrum Banjo tuned CGBD, DGBD or DGBE; Tenor Banjo tuned CGDA (jazz) or GDAE (Irish); Banjolin or mandolin banjo tuned GDAE; Banjuerine tuned cFCEG ; Piccolo Banjo tuned g'cgbd; Cello Banjo tuned an octave the banjo: Bass Banjo tuned CGDA. Ukulele Banjo (Banjolele) see Ukulele below; Guitar Banjo see guitar below.

##### Mandolin family

Mandolin (G, D, A, E) Octave Mandolin sometimes called Octave Mandola (octave lower than mandolin) Mandocello; Mandobass; (modern) Bouzouki, Cittern.

##### Guitars

Classical Guitar, Plectrum Guitar, Steel Strung Flat-Top (EADGBE); Hawaiian Steel Guitar (A Major high or low bass or E7th high bass); Bass Guitar (EADG 5 string with low C or high B).

##### Other Fretted

Soprano Ukulele, long scale Ukulele, Concert Ukulele tuned GCEA or ADF#B re-entrant or low bass. Tenor and Baritone Ukulele tuned DGBE re-entrant and low bass.

Balalaika/Dorma.

Other Ethnic varieties

##### Others – eg percussion/drums; piano; double-bass

**How** Individual ownership  
Owned by orchestra (capital asset)  
Through a store which rents out instruments

**Where from** Group discounts from music store  
Via the Internet (ebay)  
Second hand shops/boot sales (good for Banjo-mandolins)  
BMG Newsletter  
Grants/donations  
Ads in local free sheets or shops

Every orchestra is different. To begin with you might have an unexpected mixture of instruments. You might decide you want only one particular family of instruments.



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#### The Music

##### Which kind

- Originally composed for the type of group you have (music from different epochs, Popular music, Folk etc)
- Arrangements
- Bought
- Your own arrangements

Every orchestra is different. You might have a strong idea of what kind of music you want or more likely what kind you definitely do not want to play with your orchestra. You can start with music written specifically for your instruments (see website for publishers), or you can choose string ensemble music (borrowed from your local music library).

To build up your orchestra and be able to integrate less experienced players you might want to consider writing easier parts. Here are some suggestions on how to proceed. Before you write a part you might want to consider the following aspects.

- A Do you write a part for people who can play but never played with others before? These might need parts with fewer fast notes but with the same rhythms as the original parts, as otherwise they will not know how their part “fits” into the music.
- B Are you writing for people who are less experienced players? You might want to know which methodology they followed while learning to play their instrument. To give you an example, some mandolin players learn to play the notes on the A-string, then on the D-string, before they move on to playing tunes in D Major. Others learn by starting in C Major. These people will find different things easier to play. The same principle applies to any beginner. This means that before writing your easy part, find out what people can play. Don't assume that “This will be easy” as it might not be for someone who learned by a different method.

Successfully integrating less able players means that you are able to keep their motivation up and they learn how to play in an orchestra at the same time. You might want to consider giving this group a leader, a more experienced person who can help them find what bar they should be looking at, to explain the running order and so on. With a more experienced player at their side they will hear how their part sounds.

Making tapes of the music is often a great help, and not only for the beginners.

##### Where to get music from

- Music publishers and music shops
- Music libraries
- BMG Federation Library and recommendations



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- Internet

#### **How to pay for it**

- You need to work out what your budget is.

#### **Establishing your own library**

- How to administer it
- Where to put it (usually at the house of an orchestra member who has the space for it!)

#### **Copyright and Photocopying issues**

Remember, photocopying music is illegal. You can use photocopies for rehearsals, which has the advantage that players can write, in pencil, extra instructions on them, such as additional (or fewer) dynamics, repeats etc. When using the original score and parts from the publisher, be sure to label them as belonging to your group, and make note of which player has which original part.