

A Conductor's Approach to Interpreting Transcriptions for Band

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Transcriptions remain an important part of the band and wind ensemble repertoire. Conductors and instrumentalists face several challenges in selecting appropriate transcriptions and performing them in a way that retains the integrity of the original composition. Learn how to meet these challenges by exploring some criteria in selecting transcriptions for performance, as well as strategies for interpreting transcriptions through the demonstration of several excerpts from *Festive Overture* by Dmitri Shostakovich and the overture to *La Forza del Destino* by Giuseppe Verdi.

➤ CRITERIA TO CONSIDER IN SELECTING TRANSCRIPTIONS

- Quality of musical content in the original work
- Technical demands and range of the original work
- Practicality of using wind and percussion instruments effectively
- Options for developing wind colors within the work
- A valid need for the transcription and possibilities for imaginative programming
- Limitations of your ensemble *vs.* instrumentation and technical demands
 - ◆ *Can we play it?*
 - ◆ *Does the transcription include special accommodations for the band for which it was written?*
- When you have a choice of several transcriptions and you're not sure which, if any, to use - *consult with colleagues*

➤ WHAT TO AVOID WHEN SELECTING TRANSCRIPTIONS

- Changes that destroy the composer's intent
- Awkward keys, transitions and omissions
- Trying to make winds perform styles and special effects unique to strings or keyboard
- Shrill woodwind writing that attempts to replicate high strings
- Poor balance due to the inherent balance differences between bands and orchestras and excessive doublings

➤ PREPARING AND INTERPRETING TRANSCRIPTIONS

- Know the original work and the historical context of it
- Know the strengths and limitations of your ensemble
- Edit the score when necessary to correct balance, articulation, style and tempo issues
- Apply proper interpretation of string bowings to wind articulation and phrasing