

Teaching Tip: Providing Your Students With SmartMusic Practice and Assessment Files



Subject Area: Marching Band

Grade Range: Middle School through College

Materials Needed: Finale 2005 or later, SmartMusic 8.5 or later

Goal: Students are able to play their music before the camp or fall practices begin.

Many directors use custom scores for their wind and percussion scores. With a Finale score, you can use version 2005 or later to create custom SmartMusic files.

Note: Finale 2005 or later can convert scores created in Encore, Rhadody, MidiScan, Score and SmartScore. Sibelius scores can be saved as an XML file and imported into Finale 2006. The Sibelius 4 user would have to use the Dolet 3 plug-in. The Sibelius 2.1 or 3.1 user would use the Dolet 1 plug-in. Both products are available through the Recordare Online Store at www.store.recordare.com.

Step 1: Create the SmartMusic On-Screen Files one by one, arrangement by arrangement.

You must choose one of three types of SmartMusic Solo Files.

- A. Solo Accompaniment Not On Screen. Easiest to make. Directions are under the Finale Quickstart Video "Creating a SmartMusic Accompaniment.
- B. Solo Accompaniment On Screen. Allows student to see the part on-screen. Directions in Appendix.
- C. Solo with Assessment On Screen. Take advantage of all the advantages assessment feature.

Step 2: Distribute the files to students.

Suggested ways include:

- Burning them to a CD and mass copying the CD for each part.
- You may save them to a website such as the one for your school, department, or program. The files should be located in such a way that the files are easily accessed by students.
- Send them by email, grouping your address book groups by like voice part (example: email clarinet 1 parts to all first clarinet players from one email).

Step 3: Have the students practice with the files by opening them in SmartMusic. If the student has an activated copy of SmartMusic on the computer, after saving the file to the computer, click on the file and it will open in SmartMusic. Students can then use all of the features to practice, including variable tempos, the tuner, the recording feature, and assessment (with Assessment On Screen files only).

Step 4: Assessment.

You have many options with assessment:

1. Who assesses? Director, other staff, student leader.
2. How is assessment communicated? Email, copied to CD or other means.
3. What criteria and result is used? Certain assessment percentage could qualify the student for a spot on the field, certain grade, reward, etc.

The bottom line is that now we have technology that will facilitate and encourage excellence in individual performance that it all can happen before the student arrives for the first practice. With properly learned parts, with the elimination of wrong notes and wrong rhythms, the focus of the marching rehearsal can be on ensemble music performance and learning the visual program.

Appendix: Steps to creating SmartMusic Solo Files

1. SM Solo with Accompaniment – NOTATION NOT ON SCREEN

1. Open your SCORE
2. Go to **FILE Menu/SAVE SPECIAL/SAVE AS SMARTMUSIC ACCOMPANIMENT**
(Options Window opens)
3. In OPTIONS Window:
 - a. Choose SOLO WITH ACCOMPANIMENT
 - b. Solo Staff: Select INSTRUMENT
 - c. Corresponding Instrument: Select INSTRUMENT
 - d. Accompaniment: Highlight ALL THE OTHER INSTRUMENTS IN THE SCORE
 - e. Click OK, NAME your file (Title Instrument Solo NOT ON SCREEN) and SAVE in same folder
4. Open your newly created SmartMusic File

2. SM Solo with Accompaniment – SOLO NOTATION ON SCREEN

(Note: Steps 1 through 3d are the same as Project One)

1. Open your SCORE
2. Go to **FILE Menu/SAVE SPECIAL/SAVE AS SMARTMUSIC ACCOMPANIMENT**
(Options window opens)
3. In OPTIONS Window:
 - a. Choose SOLO WITH ACCOMPANIMENT
 - b. Solo Staff: Select INSTRUMENT
 - c. Corresponding Instrument: Select INSTRUMENT
 - d. Accompaniment: Highlight ALL THE OTHER INSTRUMENTS IN THE SCORE

- e. Under **SELECT FILE FOR DISPLAY** IN SMARTMUSIC (onscreen):
 - Click **SELECT** Button
 - Select *NAME INSTRUMENT* Solo (File name shows up under **SELECT** Button)
- f. Click **OK**.
4. NAME your file (TITLE INSTRUMENT Solo ON SCREEN) and **SAVE** in same folder
5. Open your newly created SmartMusic File

3. SM Solo with ASSESSMENT ON SCREEN

1. Open Finale **LAUNCH WINDOW**
2. Click **SMARTMUSIC WIZARD** Button
3. Select 3rd **OPTION: “Create or Open a Finale File or Exercise That Can Be ASSESSED and Graded by SmartMusic”**
 - a. Click **NEXT**
4. Assessment Wizard Window opens (Page 1):
 - a. Select **OPEN AN EXISTING DOCUMENT**
 - b. Under **SOLO INSTRUMENT**, select **INSTRUMENT**
 - c. Click **NEXT**
 - d. Open *TITLE INSTRUMENT SOLO* (Assess. Wizard Page 4 appears)
 - e. Click **FINISH** (**INSTRUMENT** part opens)

NOTE: If there is a problem with your assessment file, Finale will tell you what won't assess. Correct the notes and try again.
5. Go to **FILE Menu/SAVE SPECIAL/SAVE AS SMARTMUSIC ACCOMPANIMENT:**
 - a. Click **SELECT ACCOMPANIMENT FILE** Button
 - b. Select *PARTS TO BE IN THE ACCOMPANIMENT* (file name appears under button)
 - c. Click **SAVE**
 - d. NAME (Title Instrument Solo ASSESSMT) and **SAVE** File
6. Open your newly created SmartMusic Assessment file