

Teaching Tips: Using the SmartMusic Record Feature and Student CD Projects



Subject Area: All music education areas
Grade Range: 6-12

Materials Needed: SmartMusic, PA system, SmartMusic microphone or other microphone, computer with CD burning capability.

1. Record an individual section playing or singing their part without the entire ensemble. Re-play SmartMusic's Preview for students to listen for intonation or rhythmic inconsistencies. Ask students to analyze ways to correct and improve the isolated portion of the music. (Other sections could be rehearsing their parts with SmartMusic Ensemble files in practice rooms, etc. during this "sectional".) Record different sections on subsequent days. (For example: Saxophones record on Wednesday, Trombones on Friday, etc.) Students could also "critique" their own section's recording in a practice room, while other students are recording and working with the instructor. Directors will experience a quick improvement in the ensemble's performing proficiency by using the student's "ears" and critical thinking skills.
2. Record an entire session of a large ensemble with a guest clinician rehearsing them. The instructor can re-play the event for his/her own purposes, as well as being able to play the session for other classes. SAVE the recording, if desired for the benefit of future students, as well.
3. Use SmartMusic's digital recorder to enter students for consideration into state, regional, and national honor groups, and scholarships, as well. Follow the order of the audition steps and SAVE as .WAV file.
4. To record a CD of your large ensemble and comply with every aspect of the copyright law, consider submitting a recording of the group to a company that will contact all of the publishers of pieces performed for permission. One reputable company is: www.soundwaves.org Contact Dan Canalos for more information. The company will "do all the work" for the instructor and create a LEGAL, edited and equalized audio recording at a very reasonable price. Just record your ensemble with SmartMusic and submit the digital file plus selection titles, composers/publishers to the company. (Contact Ron Sikes at rsikes@jeffco.edu for first hand information from a director who has created a CD in this manner.)
5. Student CD projects are great motivators and good PR for the school music program. The CD could be an end of the year project, a Mother's Day surprise, etc. Younger students could all record several songs from their method books using SmartMusic and the accompaniment. Middle school

and high school students may choose from the thousands of solos and accompaniments* on SmartMusic. Directors may assign the recording as a required assessment, but allow the CD to be optional. (With the method books, SmartMusic can assess the students for the instructor!) Costs and materials required: Blank CD's, paper CD envelopes, and CD labels. Teachers who have completed this project have stated that the cost is about \$2 per student. Some school budgets may be able to afford this cost, but many will not. Some instructors have asked parents to pay for the cost, while others have used funds from booster clubs or fundraisers. The label could be general with the school name, ensemble, and year; or designed by students. (*CD Stomper* is one of many products that will create CD labels.)

***As for the copyright legalities, the school's yearly subscription fee pays the royalties to the publishers of ALL of the music on SmartMusic. If in doubt, contact the publisher. The CD should NOT BE SOLD for your group to earn money.**