SYMPHONY IN C
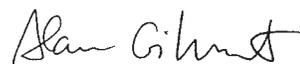
SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING ORCHESTRAL SCORES AND PARTS

1) Since conductors read a score from 3-4 feet away, it is essential to produce scores large enough to read comfortably in rehearsal and performance. If you need to print small staffs to fit the pages onto your letter-size printer, then your copies should be enlarged. It is essential that the conductor can clearly see time signatures, notes, and all other words and symbols, so plan your choice of noteheads and type sizes well.

2) Scores must be printed on both sides of the page, bound either with a plastic spiral or stapled into a book-like format.

3) Instruments need to be clearly labeled at the left margin of the score, and staves for pairs of instruments must always be clearly labeled, including indications for a2, solo, etc. Tempo markings should use metronome indications whenever possible.

4) Orchestra scores are best notated with all instruments shown in their proper transposition. In transposed scores it is important to indicate whether Clarinets are in A or B♭, whether Trumpets are in B♭ or C, and to label all other transposing instruments (including the use of Horns in bass clef). If you prefer to keep your scores in concert pitch, they must be clearly marked as such.

5) It is distracting to conduct a score when every page has a different staff setup. It is generally better to use staves with rests and a consistent staff setup than to change the setup frequently, except for passages with an uncommon amount of divided strings or a long passage with many resting instruments. *As with every other aspect of notation, good judgment is essential and should supersede rigid rules.*

6) Extracted parts for Clarinet and Trumpet need to be clearly labeled B♭ or A Clarinet, and B♭ or C Trumpet. All wind parts doubling secondary instruments need to be very clearly labeled. When a conductor moves to a new section of a piece, each player must quickly know which instrument to play without searching several pages back. If markings like con sord., pizz., div., or solo go across a page turn, it is helpful to add a parenthetical reminder at the start of the new left-side page. This will save confusion and wasted time in rehearsals if the conductor jumps to the start of that left page. Also, be sure to label any non-standard use of accidentals, especially in unmetered passages.

7) Cues for transposing instruments should be transposed appropriately. For example, if an F Horn enters on its high G, and the Violins are playing C above middle C in the previous measure, Horn players would benefit from knowing they will continue the Violins' pitch.

8) Page turns need to work in real time. A one-bar rest is often sufficient in a slow tempo, but not in a Presto. Plan ample time for each player to turn at the end of every right-side page. Music to the end of the right-side page, with rests following the turn, can make performers nervous and distracted, and this can always be avoided with a little advance planning. When you can't find an easy page turn, be industrious and creative; end a right-side page in the middle of the page, leave a blank page marked as intentionally blank, or adjust the spacing of some pages so a rest falls at the end of a right-side page. This will almost always work if you spend a little time trying. In a pinch, remember that some passages in Harp, Piano, Percussion, and most wind instruments might be playable with one hand, and that a solo string passage allows for a stand partner to turn.

9) Notation in the parts must not be too small! Percussion, Harp, and Trombone players sit at an extra distance from their stands, and strings will use 2 players on a shared part. Standard "xerox paper" may flop over, tear, or be flimsy. Heavier weight paper is better. Parts should be folded, stapled, or taped, but not comb bound. Comb bound parts don't fit well into folders or cases and are hard to turn quickly.

10) *Do not rely on any notation software for standards, and do not believe any claims made by software manufacturers. Treat your software like a tool to accomplish your own notational plans.* Music notation is a graphic language, and it is not as simple and automatic as word processing. Most software, even the most popular programs, will give you very clumsy and distracting spacings and layouts unless you take command as if you were hand-copying with a computerized set of tools. Avoid horizontally loose spreading - peripheral vision is crucial to reading music.

11) Frequent rehearsal numbers are essential for efficient rehearsal. The practice of numbering down the left margin is convenient except during long rests. For example, 5 10-bar rests with measure numbers between them is more practical than a single 50-bar rest, and a cued passage in the middle is even better; when the conductor calls a bar number to rehearse from, all players must be able to orient themselves within the resting passage immediately. While the left-margin method may be convenient to engrave, it is much more effective in rehearsal to have specific and frequent "boxed" measure numbers geared to spots where textures, themes, instrumentation, and tempos change, with the conductor and every player having all the same signposts.

12) Above all, remember that rehearsal time is usually very limited. With trouble-free parts, you'll get a rehearsal which focuses on the musical aspects of your piece. With bad turns or ambiguous markings, the rehearsal time will only focus on keeping the players together.

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