

smartnotes

the smartmusic e-newsletter



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New Videos for Teachers and Parents

[Watch the NEW SmartMusic teacher video](#)

Educators continue to report that SmartMusic motivates students to practice more frequently, longer and more effectively. The result is students are more confident and have fun making music. With the introduction of large ensembles and turn-key part assignments for each title, educators can now more easily provide individualized instruction for concert repertoire, while easily documenting the progress of each student. Of course, "seeing is believing". [Watch](#) the new SmartMusic teacher video now.

[Watch NEW Videos to Help Explain SmartMusic to Parents](#)

In order to help you better explain and present SmartMusic to parents, we've created a short four minute video just for them. You could project it at parent nights, and send them a note with the web address and have them check it out for themselves. [Watch](#) the video now.

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What's New in SmartMusic 11

The newest version of SmartMusic is now available and it is absolutely free for current subscribers. We have focused on simplifying the setup and improving assessments so teachers can have greater confidence that assessment scores are accurate and fair for students. SmartMusic 11 also supports accompaniments made in Finale 2009.

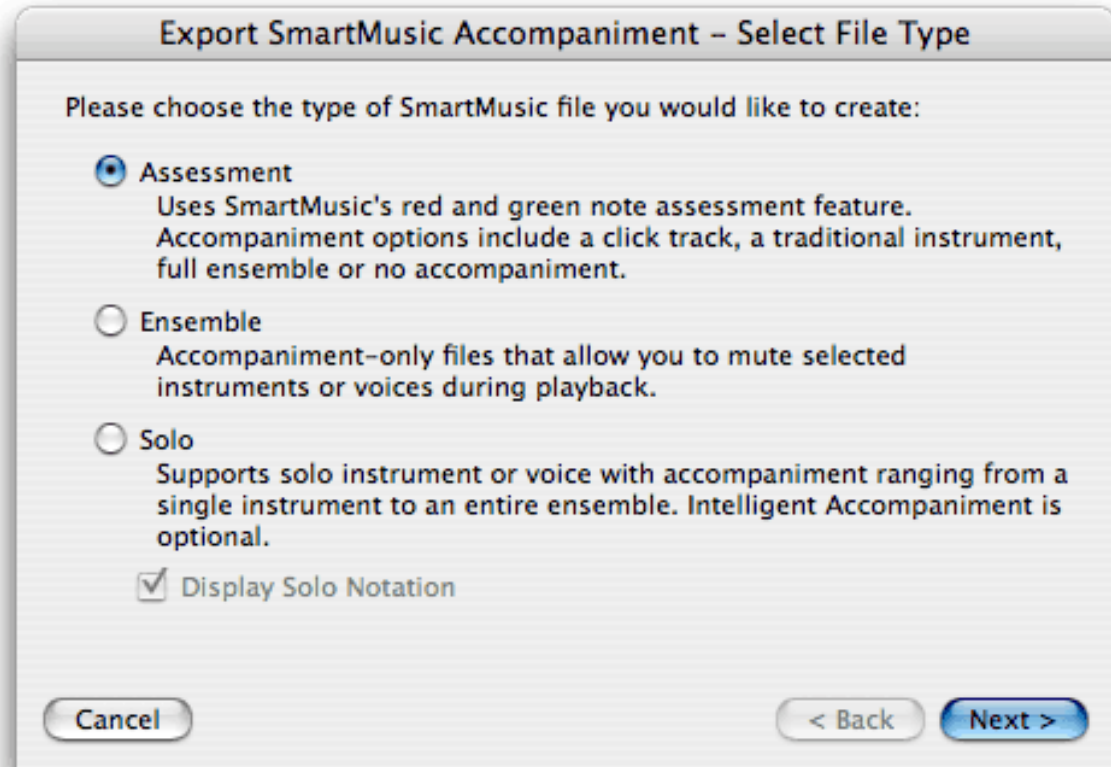
Getting started has been simplified. There are fewer screens to navigate and it's easy for anyone to see how they're progressing through the process. Microphone set-up has been automated, and provides users easy-to-follow instructions if the microphone requires adjustment.

You'll find assessment to be improved for nearly all band and orchestral instruments and dramatically improved for flute, tuba, bassoon, and bass clarinet.

SmartMusic 11 supports files made in Finale 2009. Thanks to Finale 2009's support for linked parts in SmartMusic accompaniments, educators can now create one SmartMusic file that includes all instrument parts. As a result, teachers can assign one accompaniment to the whole class – in one single, easy step. Students simply select the part they are playing to complete the assignment. This is a huge time-saver for anyone creating their own SmartMusic assessment files! What's more, assignments for the entire class now fit in a single column in the Impact Gradebook™.

In addition, the creation of all SmartMusic accompaniments in Finale has never been easier. Simply open your score in Finale 2009; export as a SmartMusic accompaniment from

Finale's file menu, and specify the type of accompaniment you'd like. By the way, Finale 2009 supports repeats and a greater variety of other notated items that were previously unavailable. All of this means you spend less time creating and editing files, and more time teaching music.



The SmartMusic repertoire is continually expanding and now offers more than 1,200 band and orchestra titles (all with pre-authored assignments), new jazz titles recorded by Wynton Marsalis, more state scales, and several new methods like Standard of Excellence, Book 3, and [more](#).

We've improved the process of getting the updated repertoire to you. Updating is faster, your status and progress are clearly apparent, and you can use SmartMusic during the update process. Plus, additional support for a great number of features (like mid-measure repeats, repeats preceded by pickup measures, non-initial pickup measures, and much more) allows more band, orchestra, and method titles that were excluded from previous versions of SmartMusic.

These are far from the only improvements to be found in SmartMusic 11:

- Page scrolling is now more intuitive, making it easier to play music from the screen, especially in music with complicated repeats.
- Assessment is turned on the first time through the repeat, so students are now able to get instant feedback on their practice.
- It's also much easier to select start locations for practice. Simply double-click on the location where you wish to start and SmartMusic automatically follows your instructions.
- There's a new count-off feature that easily informs students of tempo and when to play.
- Exercises now start in more appropriate octaves, so that you can give exercise assignments with confidence.

- Your assignment instructions are now prominently displayed when students open an assignment.
- Students are required to listen to their recordings before submitting them, ensuring that they receive the benefits of self-review.

Best of all, these improvements and more are available free to all current SmartMusic subscribers. [Download your update](#) or visit www.smartmusic.com to order SmartMusic 11 today.

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New Band and Orchestra Titles

The SmartMusic band and orchestra library has grown dramatically over the summer months with over 250 new releases including Jenkins' "American Overture for Band," Frescobaldi's "Toccatà," and Arnold's "Prelude Siciliano and Rondo." Upcoming new releases this Fall include long standing concert band classics like Ives' "Variations on America," Reed's "La Fiesta Mexicana," and Schumann's "When Jesus Wept." We've also added Standard of Excellence, Book 3; Rubank Intermediate; Rubank Advanced Book 2; and Essential Elements, Book 2 for Strings.

Interested in seeing or sharing an overview of the five types of content included with a SmartMusic subscription? [Watch](#) or share our new repertoire video.

By the way, you can now preview the audio recording of any of these titles by searching the large ensemble library in SmartMusic Impact!

Important Notice: Starting immediately, all new SmartMusic titles will require SmartMusic 11. Please be sure you and your students [update to SmartMusic 11](#). Remember, SmartMusic 11 is free to all current subscribers.



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What's New in SmartMusic Impact™

Automated Weekly Rhythm Assignments, the ability to export gradebook information, and printable gradebook reports are just a few of the new features of SmartMusic Impact

Automated Weekly Rhythm Assignments

What if you could help all of your students develop their rhythm-reading skills – each week – without any additional private lessons? With automated weekly rhythm assignments you can! Choose from easy- to advanced-level rhythm assignments to challenge your students. Assignments contain five levels of difficulty, each containing 30 sequentially organized assignments. New assignments can be automatically scheduled to appear each week for students to complete. By spending a few minutes today you can rest assured that each student's rhythm skills will improve each week – and you'll have documented proof of their progress.

SmartMusic Impact has always been a great resource for gathering student grades, recordings, and other information, but until now your only option for getting this info out of Impact was to read it. Today, thanks to a new export feature and the ability to create printable Gradebook Reports, Impact makes it easy for you to communicate with students,

parents, and other grade book software packages.

Printable Gradebook Reports

Just as Gradebook Export makes it easy for you to share your Gradebook data as electronic files, printable Gradebook reports help you create customized printouts for your students. Use the Reports link on the Gradebook page to create printable class reports and individual student progress reports. Class reports can be customized to show student names, IDs, or both. Student progress reports are perfect for sending home to parents, either for mid-term or final grade reporting.

Gradebook Export

Impact now supports the export of student and parent contact information – as well as assignment and grading data – directly from the Gradebook page. You can choose from comma separated (.csv), tab delimited (.txt), and Excel (.xls) file formats, allowing you share Impact Gradebook data with other software – including other grade book applications.

The latest version of Impact also has two improvements made to how grades are calculated, based on feedback from you and your fellow educators.

Past-due assignments

Today's Impact also provides a way to eliminate past-due assignments from a student's assignment list. The "past-due" date is internally set when the assignment is created and can be adjusted on the Gradebook page. Students are notified of the change(s) in their assignment list with an announcement that appears when they log in. Previously, all past-due assignments remained in a student's assignment list until the school year ended.

Change in Grade Calculation

Until now, once a student submitted a recording assignment, their score for the recording was a "0" until your scored it. Correspondingly, the overall student grade was lowered until the recording was scored. Today, unscored recordings are not included in the student's total grade to date. This means that student's overall grade to date is never negatively influenced by your schedule. The same improvement also addresses any other student assignments that await your grading.

Nothing to Download

The best part about all of these SmartMusic Impact improvements is that you don't have to do anything to get them – there's nothing to download. Because Impact is web-based, there are no software updates to download. We update the software so you don't have to. Each time you log into Impact you can rest assured that you're using the very best and latest version.

For more details visit <http://www.smartmusic.com/impact>

If you haven't set up your Impact classes yet, you can [preview Impact](#).

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Encourage Meaningful Practice Year-Round" by Band Director Tom Kuhn

I am Tom Kuhn, Director of Bands for Terrell Independent School District in Terrell, Texas, and this is my SmartMusic story.



SmartMusic is a magnificent tool for educators to use in student preparation for concerts, regional, and state level solo competitions. In addition, with a little creativeness, the applications of SmartMusic can be limitless! I have to tell you, SmartMusic is much more than solo repertoire and can lead to meaningful year round practice.

In Texas, the school year of a band music program revolves around four major musical venues: marching band, all-region/all-state auditions, solo and ensemble, and concert/sight-reading. All four contribute valuable dividends to the success of a band program, but not all students feel the same way about these different activities. Some students enjoy marching band more than concert band, or love solos and ensembles but won't spend any time on those difficult etudes from the Arban's book in preparation for all-state auditions. All of these venues are important to the success of my program, so I was challenged with finding a way to get my students actively engaged for the entire year. Here is how I tackled that challenge.

Part of our band fee includes a subscription to SmartMusic, so every student has access to it. If they don't have a computer at home, we have six stations that they can use at the band hall. During the summer, I notate our marching show music using Finale® and convert it into an assessable SmartMusic file. Now, instead of spending hours and hours of listening to every kid play their music, I upload their part to SmartMusic Impact™ and they can play it off whenever they want. Once they get the grade that they want, they can send the grade and the recording back to my Impact Gradebook where it is waiting for me to check at my leisure. Also, the students perform the assignment with the accompaniment, so they MUST count the rests, they MUST play in perfect tempo, and they MUST listen for tuning. All of these things count in their final grade. You also have the option to set due dates, reminder e-mails, tempo adjustments, or re-assign it to the student. For further improvements, you can tweak the assignment to not show the music on-screen (for memorization). This has freed up much of my time to do the other things that never gets done (like spraying dots on the field). What did this do for our marching music? More students played more notes on the field more confidently and musically because of the constant repetition they had at home and not just in the band hall. And not just repetition, but positive repetition because it was always played exactly the way it was on the score.

We did the same thing with concert season – all of our music that we performed for contest and spring concert was written in Finale and converted to SmartMusic assessment files, then uploaded to the students through Impact. The results? The most musical and exciting concert performance I have had in years! We were able to play Janáček, Dvořák, Shostakovich, and Orff - to name a few.

For all-region/all-state auditions, we had each etude for each instrument written out and converted to SmartMusic accompaniment files. This allowed students to listen to the music at slower tempos, loop sections that were the most challenging, and focus on the more technical aspects of the etudes. I found that more students were attempting to work on the music and were becoming much more successful in their preparation. In turn, this translated to our band playing more technical music in concert season.

I created our own rhythmic exercises that focused on the weaknesses of our band. Using Finale, I turned them into SmartMusic assessment files in the keys that we needed to work on. This helped strengthen their sight-reading skills.

Of course, during solo and ensemble season, students selected their solos based on what was available through SmartMusic that correlated to the state list. I had my students submit recordings of their solos to me periodically so that we could monitor their progress. We had more students participate at the state solo and ensemble contest, and they brought home more medals than ever before.

With SmartMusic, I was able to create a year-round curriculum. There was never a time when my students did not have something to work on in SmartMusic. It kept them focused and practicing, and they were practicing things that had a direct impact on the success of our program.

It's nice to have recognition for doing well – we all want to see our students receive accolades for what they do. But what is even more exciting to me is when my students become passionate about music – **their expectations are raised** – and they enjoy playing

their instruments. To me, that is why I teach music, and SmartMusic has been a key tool in helping me and my students attain that.

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Just Released

More than 250 new band and orchestra titles were released over the summer. Don't forget to update to SmartMusic 11 so that you can access these new titles. View or print the entire catalog of large ensemble titles sorted by difficulty level:

- [Concert Band](#)
- [Jazz Ensemble](#)
- [Full Orchestra](#)
- [String Orchestra](#)

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Announcements

[Have you updated to SmartMusic 11?](#)

SmartMusic 11 includes new repertoire, improved assessment, an easier set-up process, and compatibility with accompaniments created in Finale® 2009. Updates are free to current subscribers so click [here](#) to download yours now.

Student Subscriptions

NEW – Students can buy a \$30 subscription directly from www.smartmusic.com without a code. We know that simplifying the purchase process will make it easier for your students to get started with SmartMusic.

SmartMusic for your entire district

Interested in locking in lower pricing for you and your students over the next two years? Contact us at smartbuy@makemusic.com for more information on volume pricing – now available for a minimum of 100 subscriptions.

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Welcome Back to School Tips

Each summer, many school districts fix or replace computers by cleaning or imaging machines so educators often deactivate their SmartMusic subscription in order to use it on another machine over the summer. Just follow these steps to re-activate your subscription when you get back to school.

1. Install SmartMusic (or open the program if it was not removed).
2. While connected to the Internet, click Activate and enter your e-mail address and password for SmartMusic.
3. Choose the correct subscription for the computer you're activating, and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the activation process.

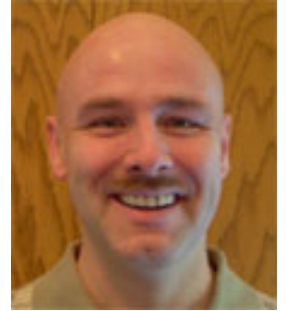
Or if you need assistance with this process, contact our [SmartMusic Technical Support](#) team online or call us at (866) 240-4041, Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 AM to 9:00 PM

CST.

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Meet the Team

Jeff Wood has been a MakeMusic clinician for several years and joined our company full time last September as the Education Solutions Representative. "The best thing about my job is helping music educators discover SmartMusic® and Finale® solutions that will make them better teachers." He enjoys his interaction with customers and "working with all of the talented and creative people here at MakeMusic."



Having been a musician for most of his life, Jeff is an experienced public school band director, private teacher, and owner of the Music Box Lesson Studio. He has extensive experience as a SmartMusic and Finale clinician. In addition, he works regularly a professional trombonist, singer, arranger, and director.

Jeff loves having the "world's largest accompaniment library right on my computer" and says that, "SmartMusic is my most valuable musical resource as a music educator." His students love to use SmartMusic and to record themselves playing their favorite songs. "Through SmartMusic, my students and I explore the wonderful world of music by seeing, hearing, and playing along with great music!" Jeff believes SmartMusic provides an interactive learning environment that makes learning fun for his students. "SmartMusic has really helped my students have a positive, meaningful, music experience every day."

Jeff and his students use Finale to compose their own melodies and accompaniments, eventually saving their songs as SmartMusic accompaniments. Then the students can practice and perform their original songs using SmartMusic and Jeff keeps track of their assignments and recordings with SmartMusic Impact™.

Jeff Wood is a creative musician, trombonist, and experienced music teacher with a passionate commitment to his family, music, and learning.

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