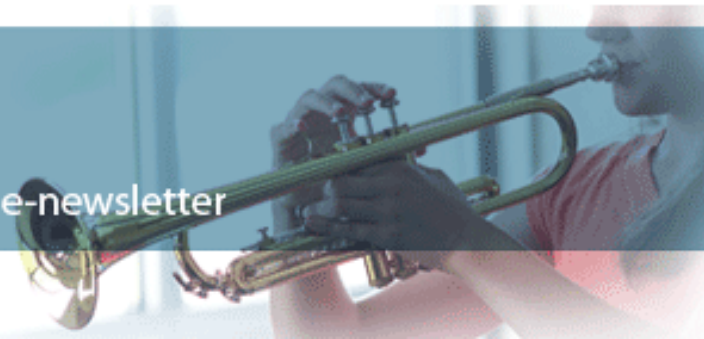


smartnotes

the smartmusic e-newsletter



- Prepare for State Band
- Creating Assignments
- Updated to SmartMusic 11?
- Tips and Tricks
- SmartMusic Files in Finale 2009
- Just Released
- Announcements
- Meet the Team

Prepare for State Band Performance Evaluation" by Robert Grifa

Preparing for state band performance evaluation is exciting. It seems like there is so much to accomplish in a short amount of time. This past school year, I used SmartMusic to help my combined 7th- and 8th-grade concert band prepare for evaluation and although there were challenges to be met, the "journey" was actually smoother than in years past.



SmartMusic has a library of concert repertoire that continues to grow. As usual, I started looking for appropriate pieces for my group. I found many of those pieces also to be in SmartMusic. Since I can hear and see all the instrument parts in SmartMusic, it was easy for me to see if the piece matched my group's strengths. Two of the three pieces I selected were in the SmartMusic Concert Band Library.

Scheduling was a challenge in the preparation. The students were in three separate classes on a block schedule and could only meet occasionally as a group after school. I made the decision to have the group perform Level 3 literature. (In Virginia, level 6 is most difficult.) My choice was partly based on knowing that the students would be using the many features that SmartMusic has to offer to help achieve a high level of performance.

The learning process was accelerated because many of the students had a SmartMusic subscription at home. Even before the band started working on the pieces, I assigned the students to listen and look at their parts. Many of them started to play the pieces on their own. Hearing their instrument in the context of SmartMusic's professional audio recording was invaluable as they worked on blend, balance, intonations, and other musical aspects. The students were able to listen to their parts, play along, record, and assess themselves. One of the pieces had very involved percussion parts. The students were able to better understand how their parts fit in by hearing the piece and were able to practice their parts at slower speeds right away by using SmartMusic's tempo control.

When preparing for the evaluation, I wanted to know how each individual student was doing. With SmartMusic Impact™, I could review all the students' progress, as they sent me recordings and assessments of their preparations. I was able to evaluate the students' performances at my leisure and respond to them with helpful comments. If a student's performance did not meet a particular standard, I was able to re-assign it. While SmartMusic's assessment feature is obviously a huge help in documenting and grading student achievement, I also found fun ways to leverage it as a motivational tool to help students reach defined goals. For example, on one of the bandroom walls, I asked students to create a display. They put up the words "Superior Is The Way To Go." Underneath, I placed three long sheets of bulletin board paper and titled each with the name of one of the pieces that the band was preparing. When students had attained the performance goal for a particular piece with SmartMusic, they then signed their names on the sheet. It reinforced

the idea of how important each student is in contributing to the success of the group.

During class, I would use the recordings in SmartMusic to have students listen for important musical elements and it was easy to isolate particular measures. I used SmartMusic to record the students during class so we could quickly evaluate our progress. Of course, both the tuner and metronome were also very helpful.

For the piece that was not in SmartMusic, I used Finale® to create exercises based on the literature and then saved them as SmartMusic files. The students could then practice them using all the features in SmartMusic including assessment!

I remember the first after-school rehearsal the students had together as a group, playing the evaluation music for the first time. I was honestly amazed at how well it went! They were actually able to play through all the pieces non-stop! There was a deeper understanding of the pieces, especially in regards to correct notes, rhythm, and ensemble.

The evaluation also included sight-reading. To help the students prepare for this, I used the many methods books and rhythm exercises that are in SmartMusic. By using an LCD projector, I was able to engage the entire class in the review sessions.

Using SmartMusic in and out of class definitely helped in preparation for band evaluation. The students were more accountable for their work because they could see and hear their progress along the way. This made for more efficient and focused use of time the students had in class and as a group. I must stress that I never compromised my teaching methods, ideas, or individual musical thoughts by using SmartMusic. On the contrary, my instruction was enhanced by using SmartMusic. How did everything turn out? After the performance on stage, the students knew they had performed well, which is a goal we all strive to achieve with our groups. And fortunately, the adjudicators agreed as the band earned a Superior rating.

[^ TOP](#)

Creating Assignments with SmartMusic Impact

Today, all SmartMusic Educator subscriptions include SmartMusic Impact and all band and orchestra titles include pre-authored, educator-approved assignments customized for each instrument part. Once you've set up your ensemble in Impact you can quickly send assignments to all of your students.

The screenshot shows the SmartMusic Impact web interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, About Us, Contact Us, Feedback, and Help. Below this is a secondary menu with links for assignments, gradebook, calendar, student records, setup, and logout. The main content area is titled "Assignments" and features a section for "Concert Band, Jazz Ensemble, and String Orchestra Titles". This section is divided into four columns, each representing a different ensemble type: Concert Band, Full Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, and String Orchestra. Each column lists seven difficulty levels: Beginning, Very Easy, Easy, Medium Easy, Medium, Medium Advanced, and Advanced. The interface is clean and organized, with a blue header and a white background.

The first step is to select the type of ensemble and level of difficulty. For our example we'll look under Concert Band for an Advanced title.

Home • About Us • Contact Us • Feedback • Help

assignments • gradebook • calendar • student records • setup • logout

smartmusic impact

Home • Assignments • SmartMusic • Ensemble Titles • Titles

Quarter 1 (7/11/2008 - 12/31/2008) Change

Ensembles

Concert Band - Advanced - Titles

View list of SmartMusic ensemble assignments. Select "+" to expand listing to view songs. Select "-" to collapse sections.

Select song or exercise for the assignment:

Song Title	Preview	Composer/Arranger	Publisher	Level
<input type="checkbox"/> March from Symphonic Metamorphosis		Hindemith/Wilson	Schott Mainz	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Occident and Orient: Grand March, Opus 25		Saint Saëns/Schiesel	Ludwig	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Overture for Winds Opus 24		Mendelssohn/Boyd	Ludwig	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Overture to "The Wasps"		Vaughan Williams/Hudson, Frank W.	TRi Music Publisher Inc.	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures at an Exhibition (I)		Mussorgsky/Boyd	Ludwig	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures at an Exhibition (II)		Mussorgsky/Boyd	Ludwig	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures at an Exhibition (III)		Mussorgsky/Boyd	Ludwig	Advanced
<input type="checkbox"/> Pictures at an Exhibition (IV)		Mussorgsky/Boyd	Ludwig	Advanced

Assign Assignment 1
Assign Assignment 2
Assign Assignment 3
Assign Perform entire piece

< Back

In the subsequent screen you can scroll through the titles and even listen to a preview. For our example we'll select Overture for Winds, Opus 24.

Underneath our selected title you can see several associated educator-approved assignments. If you simply want to send the assignment, all you need to do is hit the Assign button, but, if you prefer, you can also view the details of each assignment by clicking on the "Assignment 1" or "Assignment 2" text to the right of the Assign buttons. Doing so produces the following screen:

Home • About Us • Contact Us • Feedback • Help

assignments • gradebook • calendar • student records • setup • logout

smartmusic impact

Home • Assignments • SmartMusic • Ensemble Titles • Titles • View Part

Quarter 1 (7/11/2008 - 12/31/2008) Change

Assignments

View Assignment Details by Part

Title: Overture for Winds Opus 24
Assignment Name: Assignment 1

Eb Baritone Saxophone

From: Bar 68 | Beat 1 (1st Repeat, 2nd Time) >> Thru: Bar 85 | Beat 1 (1st Repeat, 2nd Time) • Tempo: 141

This is the first statement of the main allegro theme. Even though dynamic levels are often at *f* and *ff*, it's important that the performer remember this was originally written for a small ensemble. And even in this full band arrangement, melody is stated here primarily by flute and/or clarinet 1. Play staccatos light and detached; play dotted-eighth/sixteenth note figures with buoyancy or a "lift" between pitches.

1st Bb Trumpet

From: Bar 49 | Beat 1 >> Thru: Bar 65 | Beat 3 • Tempo: 68

The *andante* has been orchestrated to more closely resemble the original chamber ensemble instrumentation. In this setting you play trumpeting figures written in octave leaps. Play your dotted-eighth/sixteenth note figures with a buoyancy or lift between pitches. Check intonation carefully with the SmartMusic tuner. Exaggerate dynamic contrasts.

2nd Bb Trumpet

From: Bar 68 | Beat 1 (1st Repeat, 2nd Time) >> Thru: Bar 85 | Beat 1 (1st Repeat, 2nd Time) • Tempo: 141

This is the first statement of the main allegro theme. Even though dynamic levels are often at *f* and *ff*, it's important that the performer remember this was originally written for a small ensemble. And even in this full band arrangement, melody is stated here primarily by flute and/or clarinet 1. Play staccatos light and detached; play dotted-eighth/sixteenth note figures with buoyancy or a "lift" between pitches.

< Back

Here you can view assignment information for each member of your ensemble. You can

see, for example, that the baritone sax assignment works on a completely different area of the piece than does the first trumpet assignment, and so on.

The final step is to schedule the assignment. On the Schedule Assignment page you can specify your grading options, including what you want to receive back from your students, and indicate when you'd like the assignment completed. Then, if you'd like assignment sent to your entire class, simply click Entire Class.

It's that easy to send every student in your ensemble a specific assignment for a piece you plan to play at your next rehearsal. A quick look in your Impact Gradebook™ prior to the rehearsal will let you know exactly which students have already mastered this assignment, and, if you've required them, you can listen to student recordings of each assignment as well.

Try sending a pre-authored assignment today and hear the difference at your next rehearsal.

[^ TOP](#)

Have you updated to SmartMusic 11?

SmartMusic 11 is a free update for current subscribers and is required to access the latest band, orchestra, and method book titles. Current educator subscribers were sent a free update DVD in September.

Only SmartMusic 11 has:

1. More method books: *Kjos Standard of Excellence for Band, Book 3*; *Rubank, Intermediate*; *Rubank, Advanced Vol. II*; and *Essential Elements for Strings, Book 2*.
2. Support for the latest concert band titles like Zdechlik's "Chorale and Shaker Dance," Schuman's "Chester Overture for Band," Reed's "La Fiesta Mexicana," and [more](#).
3. Compatibility with accompaniments created in Finale 2009.



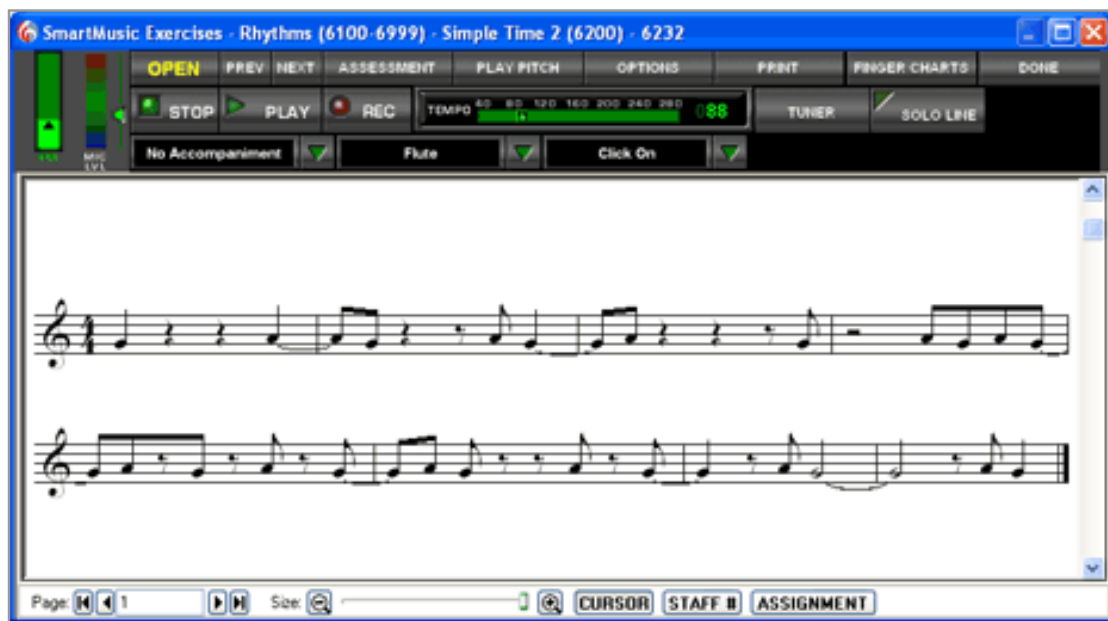
- Assessment improvements for flute, oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tuba, and more accurate assessment for fast, repeated notes.
- Easier set-up with fewer screens, an automated microphone wizard and [more](#).

[^ TOP](#)

Tips and Tricks

SmartMusic Impact Tip

Here's a tip to improve student rhythm-reading skills without turning your schedule upside down. Use Automated Weekly Rhythm Assignments, now included with SmartMusic Impact. They offer an efficient means for you to oversee your students' counting progress. Choose from five levels of difficulty, from beginning to advanced, to challenge everyone in your program. Each level contains 30 sequentially organized assignments, and SmartMusic Impact automates the scheduling, so all students automatically get new assignments to complete each week.



SmartMusic Impact makes it easy to send an automated rhythm assignment to everyone in your ensemble. To do so:

- Log in at <http://www.smartmusic.com/impact/> and click on "Assignments" at the top of the screen.
- Select SmartMusic Assessment and Recording and specify Automated Rhythm Assignments.
- Choose from five levels of difficulty for your Rhythm Assignment.
- Indicate your grading preferences and your specific ensemble, then click on "Choose Assignments/Dates."
- Edit the proposed dates, or, if the schedule looks good, simply click "Assign" and you're done.

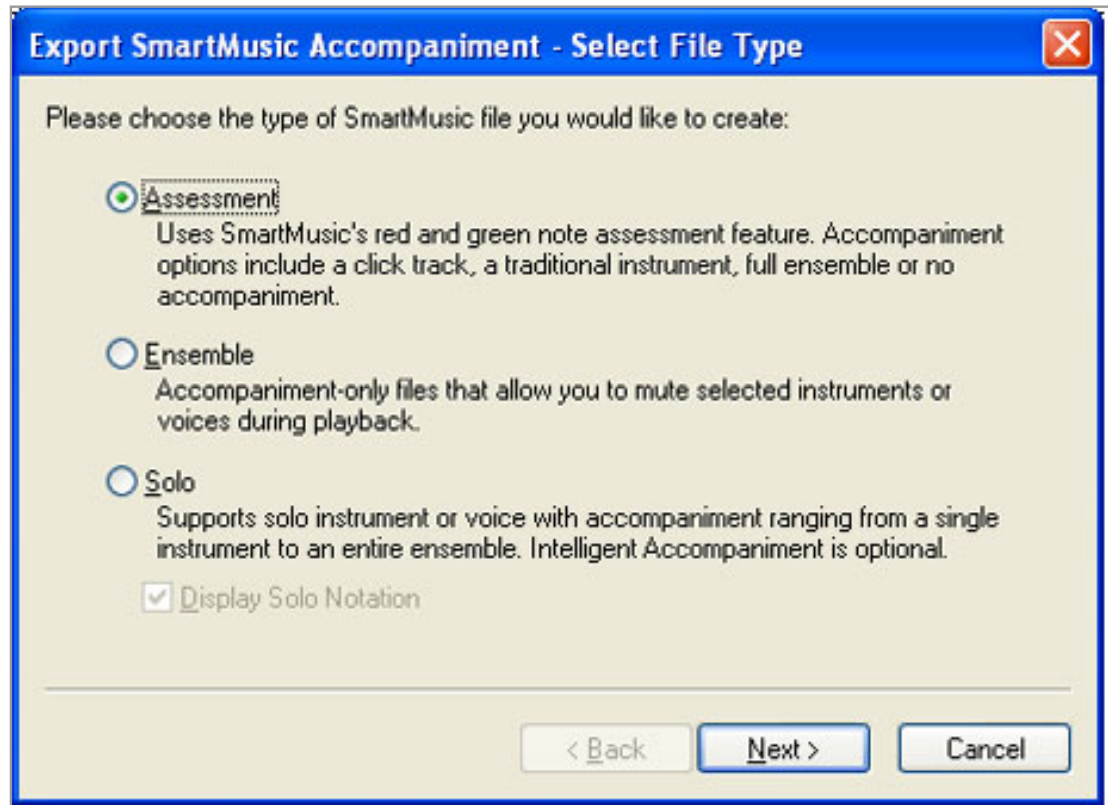
In under a minute, you've just ensured that all your students will receive a new rhythm assignment every week, for the next 14 weeks.

[^ TOP](#)

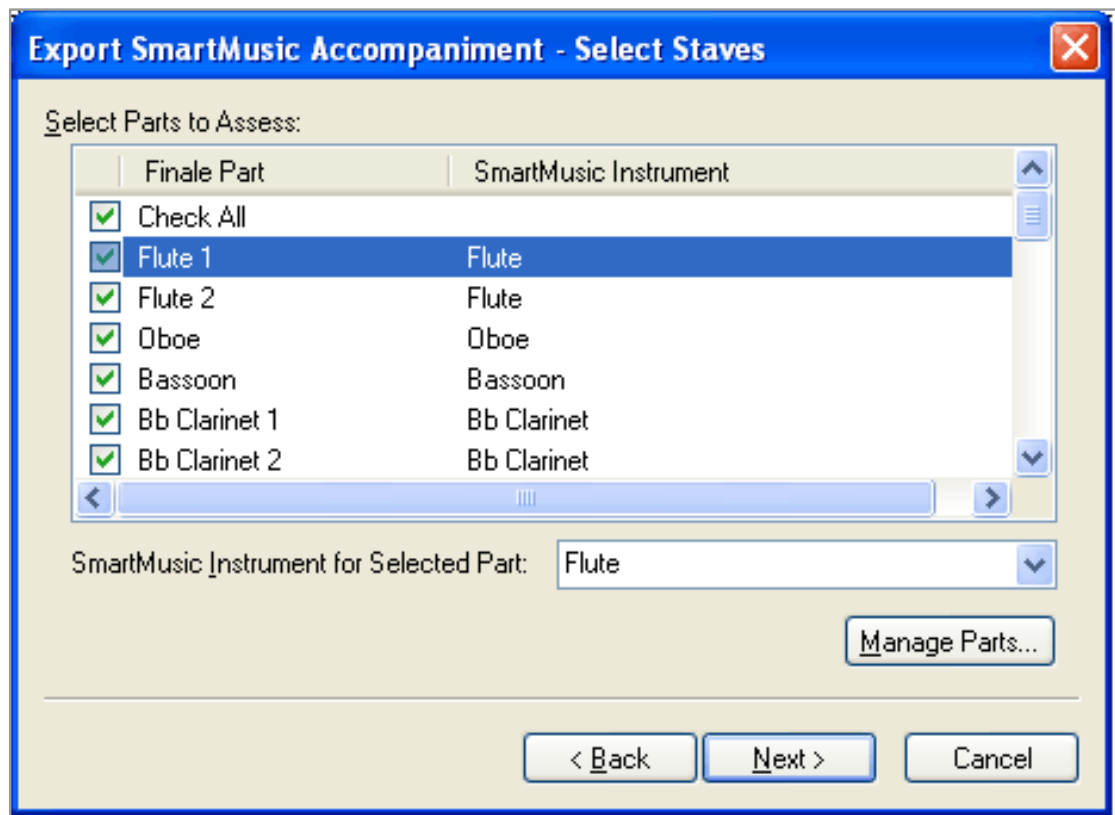
"SmartMusic Files in Finale 2009" by Scott Yoho, MakeMusic

I could tell you that creating SmartMusic files in Finale 2009 is remarkably easy, and that linked parts support represents a huge savings in time. But it's more powerful when you see it for yourself.

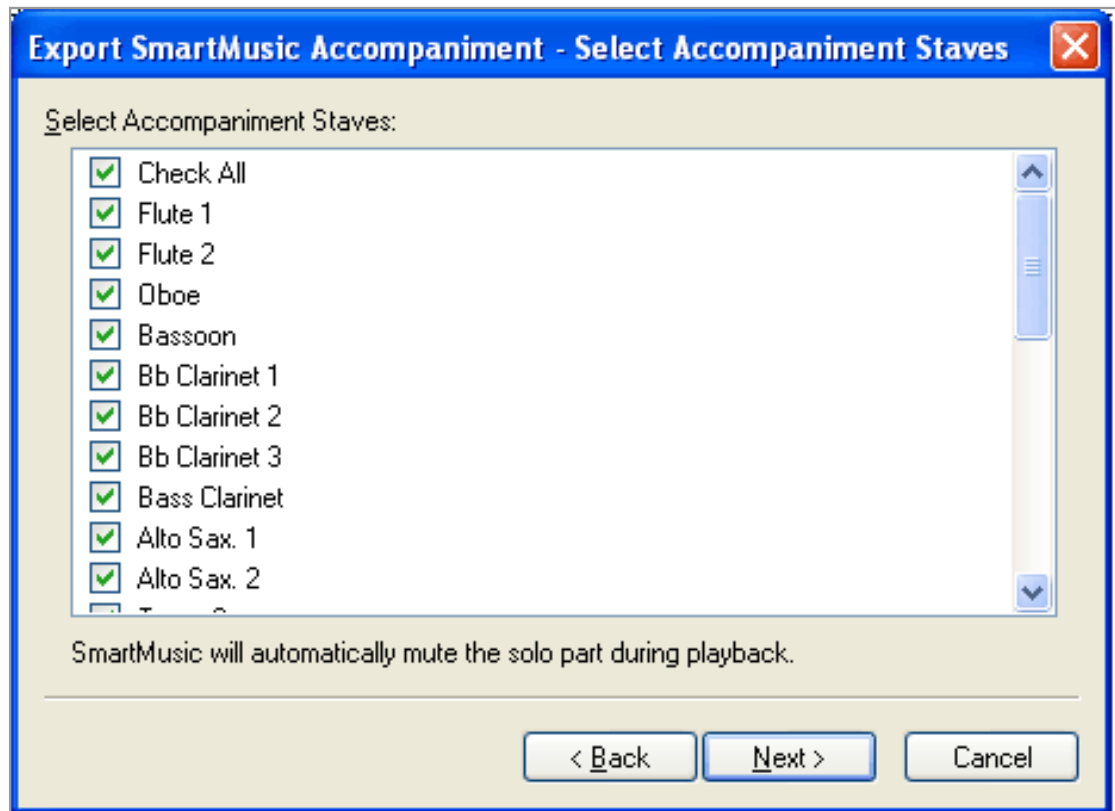
For my example I've opened a band score I've created in Finale 2009. Then, from Finale's File menu I choose Export to SmartMusic and see the following:



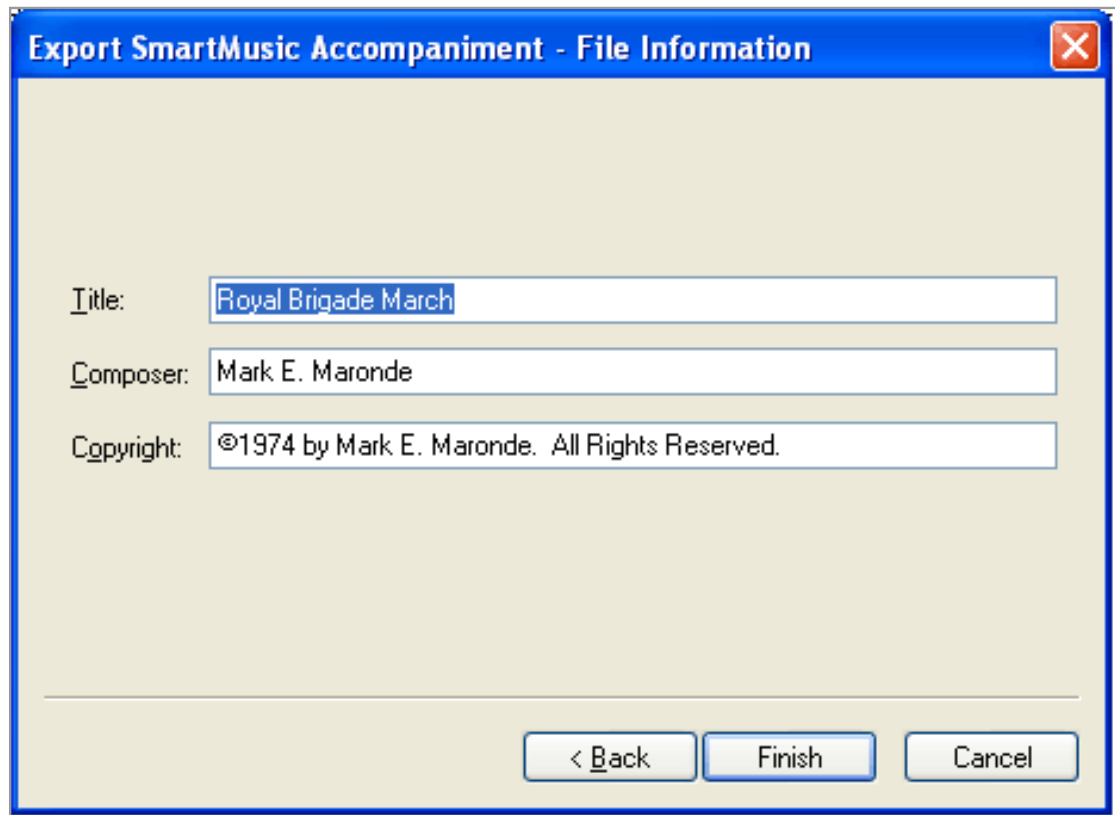
I've selected Assessment because I want my students to be able to assess their performances, then I hit Next.



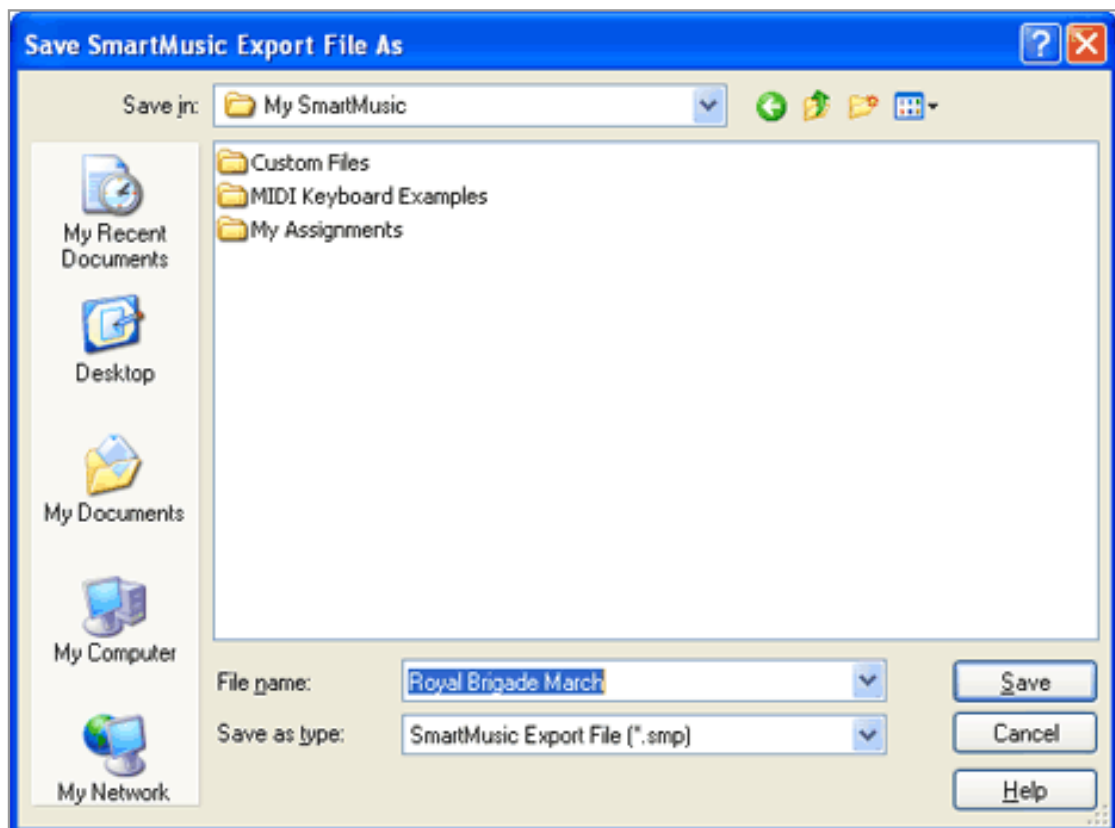
Here SmartMusic identifies the various parts in my Finale file and automatically associates appropriate SmartMusic instruments for each. Since this piece contains only standard instruments I simply hit Next again.



Here I can specify what staves I wish to hear in my accompaniment. I want to hear all staves, so I simply clicked the Check All button and hit Next again.



This screen lets me name the file and indicate the composer and copyright information. Since I entered this information in Finale's Setup Wizard when I created the file, it automatically appears here, so I don't have to type a thing – I just hit Finish.



Finally, this screen lets me choose where to save my file. My tip is to save every

SmartMusic file you create in the same place, so they're easy to find when in SmartMusic. My personal preference is to save them at: Documents>My SmartMusic.

With that we've created a SmartMusic accompaniment in Finale 2009. In previous versions of Finale, the completion of a similar process would mean that you had created one file for your flute section (for example) and now you'd have to begin again for Flute 2 or the Oboes. But not any more.

Thanks to linked parts support, you've just completed one file that will support your entire ensemble. To see the difference, I simply double-click on the resulting .smp file – this automatically launches SmartMusic 11 and opens the file.



Once I've opened the file in SmartMusic, I can click on the instrument drop-down to see all the instruments supported by this one file, created from one Finale file, in just minutes.

Another huge benefit of linked parts support occurs when you assign this file as an assignment in SmartMusic Impact. Your new assignment will occupy just one column in your Gradebook, and not a separate column for each instrument in your ensemble. This greatly simplifies viewing and navigation in the Gradebook, saving you time.

Note: Files created in Finale 2009 are supported in SmartMusic 11 which is a [free update](#) to current subscribers.

[TOP](#)

Just Released

We've just released more than 90 new concert band titles including long-standing favorites like Ives' "Variations on America," Schuman's "When Jesus Wept.," Grainger's "Children's March" and [more](#). SmartMusic 11 is required to access the newest repertoire so [download](#) your update now.

[New Videos](#) - Watch our new videos for teachers, including a SmartMusic video to share with parents and an overview of the repertoire in SmartMusic.

View or print the entire catalog of large ensemble titles sorted by difficulty level:

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

[^ TOP](#)

Announcements

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.

Upcoming Events

Come see SmartMusic at NYSSMA, Virginia MEA, North Carolina MEA, and [more](#).

[^ TOP](#)

Meet the Team

Gary Pederson has been a MakeMusic employee since 1999. Like many other employees he started as a Technical Support Representative and is currently a Quality Assurance Engineer. "The best thing about my job is solving puzzles. I get to write programs that automate the testing of SmartMusic, meanwhile contributing to music and music education."

Gary's path has been unique: He studied physics at the University of Wisconsin–River Falls after serving as an Army medic. Gary's daily commute is as unique as his career path as he rides his bike to and from work – more than 40 miles each day! He plays the clarinet and wishes he could play the piano or guitar so that he would have the ability to accompany himself. When asked what he wanted to be when he grew up he replied, "Trick question, I don't want to grow up."

Gary has played with traditional jazz bands, blues bands, community bands, and modern art music ensembles. He has usually been the arranger/engraver for these ensembles. When he discovered Finale, "I quickly gave up hand-scratched notation in favor of the undo command, one-step transpositions, and Finale's ability to notate anything."

Gary's favorite composer is Duke Ellington, "The timbres, the polytonality, jazz thru-composed in a jazz way...but really because it speaks to me and takes me away."



[^ TOP](#)

Copyright © 2007 MakeMusic Inc.
7615 Golden Triangle Drive - Eden Prairie, MN 55344
Contact us: www.smartmusic.com/support

