

Guidelines Open Score composing

General information

Open Score: what does it mean?

*all information below is based on the Open Score Guidelines and Requirements as issued by CoMA UK

Flexible scoring

CoMA ensembles vary in size, instrumentation and instrumental skills of the (mostly amateur) musicians. So we ask composers to write **flexible scores** which are designed to be performed by different numbers and combinations of instruments. You may specify your preferred instrumentation, but pieces must be playable using many different combinations of instruments. Besides that pieces must be playable by musicians of different levels (from relatively beginner up to advanced). Parts can be divided into different levels if you wish.

Options for and examples of flexible scoring

1. *Four part score (with or without optional parts)*

Flexible scores should consist of four parts. Mostly a number of different instruments will play from each part.

You may also include parts for keyboard and percussion or provide them as 'optional' parts as not every ensemble has a pianist and/or percussionist at hand. Vocal parts may be added as well, preferably as 'optional' parts.

The following is a typical division of parts:

Part 1 upper range:

--- e.g., violin, flute, oboe, clarinet

Part 2 upper middle range:

--- e.g., violin, oboe, clarinet, viola, alto saxophone, trumpet

Part 3 lower middle range:

--- e.g., viola, tenor saxophone, French horn, tenor horn, bassoon, trombone, guitar

Part 4 lower range:

--- e.g., cello, double bass, bassoon, trombone, euphonium, tuba, bass guitar

keyboard (piano or electronic keyboard) – normally one player only

percussion – normally one player only

Examples:

Donnacha Dennehy – *A Fatal Optimist* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/a-fatal-optimist/>

Gabriel Jackson – *Melancholy Procession* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/melancholy-processional/>

Michael Nyman – *In C Interlude* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/in-c-interlude/>

Howard Skempton – *Sirens for Orchestra* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/sirens-for-orchestra/>

2. *Playing from the score*

In this case there may be no separate parts. All instruments can play from the score but if that goes over several pages, it is better to provide parts. It is up to the composer whether he/she wants instruments to play from a score in concert pitch C without transposing or whether transposed scores are needed. Some works give the players full freedom to play their own notes or a choice of notes.

Examples:

Paul Burnell – *4 Minutes, 4 Daydreams* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/four-minutes-four-daydreams/>

Jonathan Harvey – *Climbing Frame* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/climbing-frame/>

Philip Venables – *Dutch Courage* <http://www.coma.org/catalogue/dutch-courage/>

There are separate parts for the Venables.

3. *Graphic scores*

Graphic scores should be accompanied with clear instructions for the players, many of them not having (a lot of) experience in playing from graphic scores.

4. *Use of tapes and/or videos*

This is allowed as long as the necessary equipment needed is very simple, i.e. a laptop/smartphone connected with a simple speaker/beamer.

Example:

Joanna Bailie – *Hildegardstrasse/Bundesalle*

<http://www.coma.org/catalogue/hildegardstrasse-bundesalle/>

More scores of a large number of CoMA works (and some recordings) are available online at <http://www.coma.org/library>

Guidelines for Score and Part preparation

Score preparation

Please ensure that your score covers the following points:

- The score should have a title, and if appropriate a short descriptive programme note.
- The title of the piece should be written on each page!
- Any special performance instructions that apply to the whole piece should be clearly mentioned at the beginning of the score.
- For 'Open Score' pieces (flexible scoring), the score should show all parts 'in C', i.e., not transposed.
- Bar numbers must be shown in all pieces. In longer pieces, rehearsal letters should also be used.
- The initial tempo and all tempo changes must be clearly marked.
- Metronome marks should be used where possible.
- Order of staves (in case of more parts)
 - If there are any solo instruments, their parts should appear at the top of the score.
 - Then place the ensemble parts in order of tessitura – Parts 1,2,3,4, etc.
 - The Keyboard part(s), if any, should be placed below the ensemble parts.
 - The Percussion part(s), if any, should be placed at the bottom of the score.
- For keyboard, the part can be a stand-alone part or a supporting part, e.g. combining part 1 and 2 in the right hand and part 3 and 4 in the left hand.
- Percussion: note that in CoMA ensembles, percussion is usually played by a non-specialist. And often there is only one percussionist available.
- For percussion, list the instruments/timbres and the number of percussionists required on the score.
- The percussion instruments available vary between ensembles, so please suggest alternatives.
- For untuned percussion, specifying a generic timbre rather than a specific instrument is flexible and useful -- e.g., drum, wood or metal.
- Tuned percussion instruments (if available) may be assigned to one of the four basic ensemble parts.
- Ensure the score is printed large enough to be easily legible, e.g., if using Sibelius, use not less than staff size 6.6 in the score.
- Score should be made available in PDF format.

Part preparation

In case your composition has been elected for the final or selected for a workshop on the festival day, you should provide parts in all transpositions for the CoMA ensembles.

Please ensure that your part preparation covers the following points:

- Any special performance instructions that apply to the whole piece should appear in the parts if appropriate.
- Please try to avoid difficult page turns in the parts wherever possible.
- Bar numbers must be shown in all pieces. In longer pieces, rehearsal letters should also be used.
- The initial tempo and all tempo changes must be clearly marked.
- Metronome marks should be used where possible.
- Use only one staff per part unless the part contains complicated divisi passages.
- The parts should be clearly labelled with the title of the piece, part number, transposition and clef – e.g., ‘Part 1 in C Treble’; ‘Part 2 in Bb Treble’; etc. on each page.
- Some parts may need extra clarification. For example, if you provide two versions of Part 3, one for clarinet and one for tenor sax, the transpositions are different by an octave. The clarinet part should be ‘Part 3 in Bb Treble (Clr)’; the sax part should be ‘Part 3 in Bb Treble (Sax)’.
- Where the piece is for specific instrumentation, including transposing instruments, appropriate parts are required.
- Try to use clefs for each part which are appropriate to the tessitura of the music – e.g., alto clef may be used for part 3.
- For percussion, list the instruments/timbres and the number of percussionists required at the beginning of the part.
- For untuned percussion, specifying a generic timbre rather than a specific instrument is flexible and useful – e.g., drum, wood or metal.
- Tuned percussion instruments (if available) may be assigned to one of the four basic ensemble parts.
- For percussion, lay out the part either in instrumental groupings (tuned and untuned), or on one continuous line, but do not use multiple separate parts. Show instrument changes clearly. Be consistent about the use of specific staff lines/space for specific sounds.
- Parts should be made available in PDF format.
- If you use Sibelius or other music notation software, it would be useful (but not essential) to have a copy of the source file available, so that CoMA can more easily generate any additional parts or transpositions that may be necessary.

Allocation of instruments to parts

The following table gives a rough guide to how the most common instruments may be assigned to different parts in the ensemble. In most cases, one part can serve for several instruments. E.g., **Part 1 in C Treble Clef** could be given to Flute, Oboe and Violin. **Part 4 in C Bass Clef** could be given to cello, bassoon, trombone and double bass, but bear in mind that in this case the double bass will sound an octave lower than written.

Part No.	Clef	Transposition	Instrument
Part 1			
1.1	Treble	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flute • Oboe • Violin • Alto (treble) recorder • Tenorrecorder
1.2	Treble	Bb, tone higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet in Bb • Soprano Saxophone • Trumpet
1.3	Treble	Eb, minor 3rd lower than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eb Clarinet • (Cornet/trumpet in Eb)
1.4	Treble	C, octave lower than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piccolo • Glockenspiel • Xylophone • Soprano (descant) recorder
1.5	Treble	A, minor 3rd higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet in A
Part 2			
2.1	Treble	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flute • Oboe • Violin • Alto (treble) recorder • Tenorrecorder • Bass recorder
2.2	Treble	Bb, tone higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet in Bb • Soprano Saxophone • Trumpet
2.3	Treble	Eb, major 6th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alto Saxophone • Tenor Horn • Alto clarinet
2.4	Alto	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viola
2.5	Treble	F, perfect 5th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horn in F • Cor Anglais
2.6	Treble	C, octave higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guitar

Part 3			
3.1	Alto	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viola
3.2	Bass/tenor	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassoon • Trombone • Cello
3.3	Bass	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euphonium/baritone/trombone (bass clef)
3.4	Treble	Bb, major 9th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bass clarinet • Tenor Saxophone • Euphonium/baritone/trombone (treble clef)
3.5	Treble	Bb, tone higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarinet in Bb • Trumpet
3.6	Treble	F, perfect 5th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horn in F • Cor Anglais
3.7	Treble	C, octave higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guitar
Part 4			
4.1	Bass/tenor	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassoon • Trombone • Cello
4.2	Bass	Concert pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euphonium/baritone/trombone (bass clef) • Tuba
4.3	Treble	Eb, major 13th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baritone Saxophone • Eb tuba (treble clef) • Contra alto clarinet
4.4	Treble	Bb, major 9th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bass clarinet • Tenor Saxophone • Euphonium/baritone/trombone (treble clef)
4.5	Treble	Bb, major 16th higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrabass clarinet • BBb tuba (treble clef) • Bass saxophone
4.6	Bass	C, octave higher than sounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double Bass • Contrabassoon