

Repertoire

There are SO MANY pieces you can choose from and, depending on where you're looking, *grade levels are not always a reliable indicator of difficulty*. Different publishers use different methods, and even the Florida Orchestra Association speaks in both number-based "grade levels" as well as letter-based orchestra classifications (most applicable during MPA season).

So what should you look for when programming for your orchestra?

The most common mistake new-to-strings teachers make in programming is forgetting to consider the technical demands of the pieces they choose. Of course, the pieces need to be musically worthwhile and engaging, which can be evaluated based on listening and looking at rhythmic demands. HOWEVER, the string technique required to play some of these pieces may be much more demanding than it would initially appear.

Read below for some technique items to look out for.

Things to Consider



Left Hand Technique

Key signatures / Finger patterns
Vibrato needed?



Shifting & Positions

Does it move out of 1st position?
Extensions in the cellos?



Right Hand Technique

Bow control
Bow facility



Artistry

Can the students...
sustain the long notes?
clearly articulate the rapid notes?
properly perform accents?
perform in the correct style?

Repertoire Lists

Below you will find descriptions and music lists for each of the 5 classification levels of orchestras in FOA. Each section will have two buttons specific for that level.

The first button opens the MPA list provided by FOA. The FOA lists are updated annually through the FOA website. The lists on this page are current as of 2017. For a more updated list, please visit <http://myfoa.org/mpamusic>.

The other button you'll see brings you to a resource created in 2012 by Lisa Hopko and Michael Simpson of Orange County Public Schools in Central Florida. Together they compiled a list of suggested standard repertoire for the orchestra programs in OCPS.

These lists are by no means exhaustive--there are tons of wonderful pieces for orchestras and many great new works published each year. Music reading sessions at conferences often give directors the opportunity to experience and discover these new pieces for themselves. However, as you're trying to get a few pieces together to get started with, I hope these documents can provide a bit of guidance.

But first... Terminology

Jargon... isn't it great? Here are some terms used on this page that may need defining if you're from out of town.

FOA

Florida Orchestra Association

MPA

Music Performance Assessment (sometimes called "Festival")

OCPS

Orange County Public Schools, FL

The "S" in AS, BS, CS, DS, and ES

S stands for String Orchestra

The "F" in AF, BF, CF, and DF

F stands for Full Orchestra

A, B, C, D, and E

Indicate level of difficulty - A is harder than E

ES - Grade 1

Suitable for late first year to second year players, on average. Characterized by first position, simple rhythms, and basic forms. Caution: some mature music is hidden in ES music due to "simple rhythms," but actually requires demanding string techniques. Watch out for these mis-graded pieces. They may be excellent selections for your more proficient players!

Classification Rubric

- Key of D and G major (no key changes)
- Mainly homophonic/ limited polyphony
- Similar cello and bass lines if not doubled
- 1st position only (1st and 3rd for basses) and no high 3 and extended position (cello/bass). Limited or no use of chromatics.
- Limited use of hooked and slurred bowing. Can have accents.
- One violin part or viola doubling 2nd. Simplistic part writing (4-part writing)
- Basic rhythmic patterns (eighths, quarters, halves, dotted half and whole)
- Simple or duple meter only
- Simple repeats and simple form. Can allow for road signs
- Loud vs. soft dynamics

DS - Grade 2

Solid pieces for students with two to three years' experience. Good for intermediate to advanced middle school groups and beginning high school groups.

Classification Rubric

- Keys of D, G, A, F and C (minimal key changes) and relative minors.
- Includes elements of previous class
- Minimal meter change. 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/8, and 2/2
- Mostly 1st position. Bases mostly 1st and 3rd. Limited use of chromatics. Some independent part writing
- Add eighth notes, sixteenth notes, simple dotted rhythms, some syncopation, triplets. Limited use of polyphony
- Slurs, staccato, spiccato, hooked bowing, tremolo, accents. Uses varied articulation and bow techniques. Some ties
- DC/ DS al fine / al coda
- f, mf, mp, p and crescendo and decrescendo

CS - Grade 3

Typical for early high school students with two to three years' experience.

FOA CS MPA Music List

OCPS Suggested Titles - CS (2012)

Classification Rubric

- Includes elements of previous class
- 3 sharps and 2 flats major and minor and some key changes
- Allow for more mixed meter
- Allow for more syncopation and more complex rhythms
- More polyphony and independent part writing
- Allow for extended positions and shifting. Violins – up to 3rd position, Violas up to 3rd positions. Cellos up to 4th position. Bases up to 5th position
- Allow for any type of bowing
- Multiple road-signs, and allow for more complex forms
- Full dynamic range

BS - Grade 4-5

Typical for advanced high school students with four or more years of experience.

FOA BS MPA Music List

OCPS Suggested Titles - BS (2012)

Classification Rubric

- Includes elements of previous class
- 4 sharps, 4 flats, relative minors, and multiple key changes
- Any meter or meter change
- Violins up to 5th position. Violas up to 3rd position, Cellos 5th position, and Bases 5th
- Full ranges of dynamics
- Tempo changes

AS - Grade 6+

For the most advanced high school students. Full symphonies and standard classical works are often found here.

FOA AS MPA Music List

OCPS Suggested Titles - AS (2012)

Classification Rubric

- All keys and changes
 - All meters and changes
 - Allow for stylistic changes
 - All positions
 - Concerns for guidelines regarding symphonies and overtures
- Must be within time limit
- Must be a substantial representation of the work. (i.e., no 16 measure movements as a single work)
- Any original symphonic movement(s) or overture that is representative of standard orchestral repertoire. (i.e., Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart)
- If in doubt, call for clarification
- This will replace symphony and overtures entries on the FOA required music list

Full Orchestra

FOA DF MPA Music List

OCPS Suggested Titles - DF & CF

FOA CF MPA Music List

OCPS Suggested Titles - BF

FOA BF MPA Music List

OCPS Suggested Titles - AF

FOA AF MPA Music List

Solo & Ensemble

Solo & Ensemble for FOA does **not** need to be chosen from any list, but FOA has published the following to provide some guidance for those in search of some repertoire. This list was published in 2005. It is by no means an exhaustive, but it is a great place to start!

Solo Repertoire

Ensemble Rep - Same Instrument

Ensemble Rep - Mixed Instruments

Published Summer 2017
Updated as life allows



Questions? [Email me](#) & I'll try to help!