

“No day is ever wasted if it contains music.”  
*I made that one up myself!*

Did you ever change a rhythm or a chord change in a tune that you are rehearsing with your group?? Did you ever say to yourself ‘Why did he (she) do that?’ Did you ever say to yourself, ‘That was really cool, how did they do that?’ Did you ever think (out loud of course!), ‘How did that get published? I can do better (or at least as good) as they did’ Then you are an arranger. You are half way there.  
An arranger is a composer that doesn’t get the big bucks, but are just as important.

***But I don’t know how.***

Quit whining, of course you do, you just never knew it or put it to use. You do it every day, modifying a chart, writing a hand bell part, and simplifying a pesky run that the bass section is having a problem with.  
Even changing an articulation or a bowing. It’s all part of it.

***What do you need to know to get started?***

1. Desire
2. A decent understanding of basic theory (did I say a bad word!!) Know the rules of doubling, parallel voicings, contrary motion and of course, voice leading
3. A knowledge of chord changes (what do those symbols mean exactly?) Is this a diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord actually a minor 7 with a flat 5<sup>th</sup>?
4. Patience
5. Knowledge of transpositions and **practical** ranges of instruments and the players
6. Sense of humor
7. It is very important to have the instruments and their unique sounds in your head. I usually write with specific players in mind, I once heard that Duke Ellington also did that
8. Doubling of instruments, colors, blend, balance and texture are really important aspects of music. I think this is the most fun part of arranging
9. More patience
10. Open mind
11. Knowing how to write and toss, write and toss, write and toss

***Equipment needed:***

- A desk with lots of room, (I like to spread out), decent chair, good lighting and of course a container to throw your used pages into- **please recycle**.
- A piano or keyboard or (whatever instrument you are comfortable with) that you are planning to use. Sometimes it’s better not to use one and create in your head, try it.

***To pencil and paper or not to pencil and paper, that is the question!***

Yes and a very good one. I started with pencil and paper a million years ago and I have tried several different ways, and I have gotten back to my old ways. My advice is to try all different ways and find the one you like best. Consistency in how you work will make the process easier. The more comfortable you are, the faster you will be able to write and get that project finished up. I like having the whole sheet in front of me. That way, I can see the vertical AND the horizontal of the score and a Pink Pearl eraser works really, really fast. I use Papermate Sharpwriter (#2) mechanical pencils. They copy really well on the copy machine and I hate taking time out to sharpen pencils. Here again this is a personal preference.

Always have plenty of manuscript paper on hand. Find the type you need (single part, quartet, full score, whatever) and have plenty available. I toss a lot out when I have false starts. I make my own manuscript paper. Finale and Sibelius can help you with that. It is just a work score. As you get more proficient in your skill, you will work with specific type(s) depending on your project. I prefer using quartet or quintet paper when I do most of my charts, but sometimes it just doesn't work out. It all depends on the size of the group. Once again consistency is the key.

“Never begin working out the layout of a composition before the whole thing has taken a definite form as an outline either on paper or in your head.”

*J. Brahms*

***First things first***

- Are you doing an arrangement, a transcription or an orchestration? You need to make that decision first.
- Number your measures

**-Transcription** may also mean rewriting a piece of music, either solo or [ensemble](#), for another instrument or other instruments than which it was originally intended. Transcription in this sense is sometimes called [arrangement](#), although strictly speaking transcriptions are faithful adaptations, whereas arrangements change significant aspects of the original piece.

from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Who/what instrumentation are you writing for? Your options and colors with instrument doublings will change with different key signatures. You may have to transpose the chart.

**DO IT NOW!**

**What are you writing for? (purpose of chart)**

- Simplify- Younger group to play a classical standard (Bach, Beethoven, etc.)
- More complex- Simple melody and chords or writing for a larger, more experienced group
- Dynamics
- Color (orchestration)
- Harmony

- Phrasing (highs and lows emotionally)

## Arrangement

“ Arranging is composing without the royalties.”

*J. LaBarbera*

-In [music](#), an **arrangement** is a musical reconceptualization of a previously composed work. It may differ from the original work by means of re-harmonization, melodic paraphrasing, orchestration, or development of the formal structure. Arranging differs from [orchestration](#) in that the latter process is limited to the assignment of notes to instruments for [performance](#) by an [orchestra](#), [concert band](#), or other [musical ensemble](#). Arranging "involves adding compositional techniques, such as new thematic material for introductions, transitions, or [modulations](#), and endings.... Arranging is the art of giving an existing melody musical variety".

from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*Once again*

Who/what instrumentation are you writing for? Your options and colors with instrument doublings will change with different key signatures. You may have to transpose the chart.

### DO IT NOW!

First thing I do is number the measures on the original (sheet music, piano music –whatever) and mark some preliminary ideas while I go. Who will be playing what, when, where and with whom.

### What are you writing for? (purpose of chart)

- Simplify- Younger group to play a classical standard (Bach, Beethoven, etc.)
- More complex- Simple melody and chords or writing for a larger, more experienced group
- Different style- Swing version of Mozart, bossa version of Bach, etc.

Have a working idea on the layout of the chart before you even begin. Will it have repeats, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> endings, DS, whatever, **MARK THEM.**

If you are repeating a section with another instrument(s) or counter line mark them as tacet 1<sup>st</sup> time, or whatever. The more you mark, the less confusing everything will be later on.

### **DO NOT TRUST YOUR MEMORY.**

Then, I take the music that I am going to arrange (sheet music, piano music –whatever) and number the measures. It is very important thing to know where you left off after you get interrupted several times.

What exactly are you writing for? A string quartet is way different than a string orchestra. Concert band is a lot different than a brass quintet and so on. Is this arrangement a vocal with accompaniment? As I am numbering my measures I am already getting ideas of who

will be playing (or singing) where and when and with whom. I mark suggestions on the chart as I go along.

After that is finished, I get out the trusty blank staff paper and begin writing in the melody and chord changes and putting in the basic rehearsal numbers, double bars, repeats, etc. I always write the melody and lyrics at the top of my page. (Old habit again). This will be very useful as time goes on, especially for arranging purposes.

Being a piano player, chord symbols are a must with me. They really help with voicing ideas. Make sure you transpose these correctly (use the piano if necessary and sometimes use some chord substitutions if you want), and I place them above the lyric line.

Once again the more you put down, the less you need to remember. I put down voicing/color ideas as I am going along.

- Texture –Large, intimate, solo with background?
- Dynamics
- Color (orchestration)
- Harmony
- Phrasing
- Time signature- writing in 4 instead of 3?

I also write suggestions on the work score all the time; new ideas, rhythm ideas, inserts to be added, instrumentation ideas and things like that.

Another good habit is to put in articulation ideas (accents, fermatas, etc.) as you go. Be specific. When you are finished with the chart, check for mistakes and sing it back to yourself. Do you like the articulations? That is what the eraser is for. Do the lines make sense? Are you using decent voice leading? After a while this will become second nature.

**Word of advice:** As your chart evolves, you may have to change your measure numbers. It is a little time consuming, BUT it will save you LOTS of time in the long run. Don't assume you will remember. **Do it now!** While I am mentioning erasing, I suggest an old- fashioned Pink Pearl eraser. Inexpensive and very dependable. Here again, personal preference.

### **Challenging idea!**

Try setting a time limit of 3 to 4 hours to get the chart done- it really sharpens you up and gets you moving.

### **Orchestration**

Orchestration is combining different sections of the orchestra or band together. I call this color. I also call it fun.

**Insert 'Ariel'** -a chart for a variety show

- Once again, what/who are you writing for? A string quartet is way different than a string orchestra. Concert band is a lot different than a brass quintet and so on
- Is this arrangement going to be a vocal accompaniment? Write down ideas, mark suggestions along the way

### **Things to remember:**

#### **Transpositions-**

Remember your transpositions. Young trumpet and clarinet players are not great in 4-5 sharps or flats. (Who is?) If you have to do that, I recommend sometimes omitting the key and writing accidentals or maybe just changing the concert key. Are you looking for an educational thing or ease in rehearsal (time crunch), it's up to you.

By the way, I always write my score in concert key. You will need to remember the transpositions at times if your range starts going in the nosebleed section or the basement. If you can't remember them, find them on-line, make a copy and keep them close to you when you are doing your chart. After awhile you will remember them. Keep your instruments all the time in your mind. Back in the day the pros used to write scores already transposed to save money on copyist fees, but these days I feel so lucky to be using Finale that will automatically transpose the instrument when you extract the parts. I am not familiar with Sibelius, but I would suspect it can do the same thing. Either program is very good. It all depends on which one you learned on and feel the most comfortable with.

Be very specific on your voicing and which notes are written where. Do NOT write sloppily, it will come back to bite you later. Yes, I use the piano a lot when I am arranging. Different voicing and spreads will change the whole sound of the arrangement. I love using chord substitutions (within reason). That's my style. It adds so much richness and color. Nelson Riddle never did. He used the changes that the composers wrote. Everyone has his or her own style.

What type of background do you want and where do you want it?

Chorale type backgrounds are always effective with a melody going on above or below it. Do you want brass stabs in the background while the melody is doing nothing? What about strings? They can pretty much do anything that you want them to (or are willing to teach them!)

Counter-lines are always fun. Counter-lines of counter-lines are even more fun. Big bands have been doing it for years. Solo instrument with background, duet with background. No background at all.

Unison, harmony, unison in octaves. How about a time signature change for a measure or two? How about taking a melody that's in 4 and changing it to 3? Or 6? Or 11? Wow, what a concept. Syncopation in the melody, syncopation in the accompaniment, stretching the melody, shortening the melody, these are tools that can be used. The idea bank is endless and only limited by your imagination. Use mutes, pizzicato, bell tones, mallet instruments. Be creative.

That key change that happens in the *un-likely* spot. I always try to write in a way that would impress me if someone else had written it. I like those 'Wow, that was cool' moments. The more I have, the better I like it. It can always be changed if you don't like it..

One thing I want to warn you about is knowing when to underwrite is a virtue and skill. Usually I overwrite. I get so caught up in the whole arrangement that I want to have everyone doing this and that line. That's why I have my Pink Pearl handy. Be careful. The listener brain can only focus on so much. Many arrangers write for the players, I usually write for the buying public and the general audience. (Money!) If you overwrite, it can become nothing but pointless noise to your audience, your musicians and your client. Ouch, that can cost you a gig. Always remember that less is more.

Here is another warning about overwriting. Remember that brass and wind players need to breathe and also take a break once in awhile. The more experienced the players, the less you have to worry about this, but you still need to be aware of limitations. I played trumpet when I was a kid, so that helps me understand certain limitations on all wind instruments. Read over the line(s) you have just written out. Are you out of breath afterwards? You have to put in a rest somewhere for the player(s) to breathe. What about slurs and ties? Are they too difficult for your players? Are they impossible? Look it up in one of your many resource books. String crossings for string players are always a concern. If you have questions, call a friend who plays that instrument. They will be thrilled (secretly!) that you asked. It's all a big learning process. Keep an idea bank. Write it down, don't trust your memory, you have way too much going on now in there. You are too busy doing your chart.

As the chart evolves, you may have to change measure numbers. Once again...

### **Do it now**

The more you write down in the working score, the less you need to remember.

- When you are finished with the chart, check for mistakes and sing it back to yourself
- Do you like the articulations? (that is what the eraser is for)
- Do the lines make sense?
- Are you using decent voice leading? After awhile a lot of this becomes second nature
- Does it sound complete? Does it make musical sense?
- Write everything in that you can think of. It will save rehearsal time.

### ***Bass lines***

“When you are composing a piece, your bass line should be vibrant, not sleepy or lazy. Your harmonies should sing and not be weak.”

*Yet one more from Brahms*

Bass lines are very important to me. (I play left hand bass on most gigs.) Tuba players and bass players always get the boring end of the deal. They are always given these go-nowhere, silly whole and half note parts in younger to intermediate music. I try to challenge my players immediately unless, of course, your players really are not that good yet. You know their capabilities better than anyone. If you are writing a bass part for a pro it really is up to you in what you want. Mancini always wrote his bass parts out and I think he wrote some really great bass lines. For younger players, I also write specific parts. It's a no-brainer. If you are writing for pro-players do what you feel is right for the chart. Most good players don't mind specific ideas and parts. If they want to embellish, they always can ask.

The same holds true with piano/keyboard parts. Do you know the player(s)? What can they read? Chord changes? Just notes? Rhythms? Do they swing like a rusty door?!? How good of a reader are they? Personally, I am not a concert pianist so a few notes are okay, lots of

notes are not okay. Once again if you have specific ideas, write them in. Don't leave anything to chance. It is your chart. You can always tell them not to play.

***Example: The Water is Wide***

A chart written for a wedding. Simple melody, arranged for strings and brass.

***Inner parts***

I always try to give the inner parts melody and neat parts. Those Violin B or viola players need to play the melody or cool counter-lines once in awhile. Stretch the 2<sup>nd</sup> clarinet chops or the bassoon player that only doubles the baritone part. How boring is that? 3<sup>rd</sup> trumpet players shouldn't always be your worst players. We are all important. In my opinion, the orchestration, (who plays what, where and with who else) IS the MOST important part in arranging. Break up the monotony. Color, color and more color is the key. The more interesting parts for the player will be more interesting for the listener.

***Trust your ear.***

Walter Piston taught us all those certain no-nos. that's all fine and good if you are writing out a theory assignment for Professor Yawn at the University of Wherever. I do believe that we need the rules. I still use them all the time. Contrary motion and no parallel 5ths are still valid, but once you know how to write within these rules (and I mean know and understand them) you have my permission to move on to the next step and break a few! Be gentle though, we can't put everything we know into every piece we arrange.

Before I give you my closely guarded secret to orchestration and arranging, I want to tell you about harmony. Harmony is the of adding notes to a melody (above or below) and it should make the music sound bigger and hopefully better. Harmony can be our friend or can be your enemy. It comes in two different flavors: Consonance and dissonance. Consonance is pleasant sounding, dissonance is less pleasant. They both create feelings. What kind of feeling do you want to give out? It's up to you. I will go into more detail later on.

**Recorded accompaniments**

Once again...

- Who/what are you accompanying?
- Your options and colors with instrument voicings will change with different key signatures. You may have to transpose the chart.

**Do it now.**

- What are you writing for (purpose)
- Simplify- how faithful will it be to the original
- Texture- Large, intimate, solo with background-get it in your head first.

*once again...*

- Dynamics
- Color (orchestration)

- Harmony
- Phrasing- highs and lows emotionally

**And now the big announcement you have been waiting for:**

➤ ***Uncle Andrew's Big Secret to Arranging and Orchestration***  
(insert fanfare here with lots of brass, tymp, triangles and drum rolls- major triads, of course!)

Anything goes!

That's it. Well, I'll be. No way. Just trust your ears, write and toss, write and toss, write and toss, write and toss, use the K.I.S.S. principal and of course lots of experimentation and hard work and you will do just fine.

## Voicings

“Harmony should not only be the accompaniment of the piece, but help and allow the idea to develop, so to speak, to help it emerge clearly and powerfully.”

*-another quote from Brahms*

***What do you mean by voicings?***

I can only touch on a few of the common techniques that can be used. If you want to expand on this, there are probably a zillion books out there that you can purchase. A lot of them are good, a lot aren't. What you are writing for is the only limit of what you can do. Two part writing can be just as exciting as writing for a huge orchestra. Actually writing for two instrument (in my opinion) is more challenging than orchestrating an orchestra or a band. You really gotta know your stuff for smaller ensembles.

### **Basic ideas:**

- Unison (Think about the opening of 'Eine Kliene')
- Unison in octaves (once again, think of the opening of 'Eine Kliene'!)
- In 3rds
- In 6ths
- How about 4ths? -could be interesting
- How about an octave spread added to a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Triads (root-3<sup>rd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> with the melody in the top voice ) are always a crowd pleaser. These are usually tutti passages with everyone playing the same rhythms as the melody.

### **Or:**

- Single melody with a counterline (2 part)
- Counterline to a counterline and use that one instead
- Melody with an obbligato or Alberti bass line



## Tensions

Scale tones that are not in the triad. Remember I spoke about dissonance earlier. (9<sup>th</sup> = 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, 11<sup>th</sup> = 4<sup>th</sup> degree, 13<sup>th</sup> = 6<sup>th</sup> degree). Tension always adds color, sparkle and, well..... tension!! I used to use dissonance as a whole meal, now I just add it as a spice.

“Anybody’s writing can sound good with an orchestra, but a quartet is a b\*\*\*h

*J. LaBarbera*

I really agree with John LaBarbera. You have so many colors to choose from when you have so many different instruments or voices at your disposal. With a smaller group, you have to keep changing things around to keep it interesting for your players and keeping your audience from snoring. All that and keeping it musical is key.

There are several different ways you can write out harmonies to enhance your masterpiece. These are just ideas to get your juices flowing. Hang on tight; this is where it gets exciting.

### 3 part writing

Remember that the melody range and instrumentation will always affect what you do.

### 3 part suggestions

How about:

- Triads, chorale style (3 part) Building straight down from melody is called 3 way close. Remember those tensions
- Melody, harmony and a counterline (3 part)
- Melody with guide tones underneath. Guide tones are usually whole or half notes that support the melody. The 3 and 7 degrees of the chord ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> are great tensions. (also 3 part)

### More than 3 parts:

Basic ideas are always usable -Remember the K.I.S.S. principal- Sometimes less is more.

- Drop 2- 2<sup>nd</sup> chord tone down 8vb
- How about drop 2 with the 3<sup>rd</sup> voice doubling the melody instead either octave
- 4 way close (same as above, but with 4 notes instead)
- Drop 3- 3<sup>rd</sup> chord tone down an octave
- Drop 2 & 4
- You can always double melody too (unison, octaves, 2 octaves)
- Counterpoint- double time or half time
- Imitation- part of the melody that is repeated starting on a different pitch
- Canon- melody starting on a different count
- Key change using a common note
- Pedal points

\*Remember that your voicings should always represent the chord symbol

(♭ 5, # 5, minor, major, etc.)

## Scores

### Make a checklist

Did you remember...

- Rehearsal numbers
- Rehearsal numbers in the middle of multi-measure rests (in the parts)
- Dynamics in the correct place on the parts- below the staff
- Articulations, bowings, etc.
- Layout of score and parts. Does it make sense, is it readable

Transpose the score (if you are using a notation program). This way you don't need to bother with transpositions during rehearsal. Extract part, print score and parts.

## Let's do an arrangement

### Long Tail Blue

### Coda

As I was working on this presentation, so many thoughts came and went through my brain. I remember how long I have been doing this (don't ask!), how much I knew then, how much I know now and how far I still need to go.

I also remember what one of my teachers at college once said; "...you should learn something new everyday but then you still only know 1/2 of what you should know." That made a very big impression on me. I feel that I need to keep an open mind to everything and everyone. I listen to all types of music and try to learn who did what and how they did it. I have favorite arrangers and so will you as time goes on. I try to write something EVERY DAY, even if it's a short snippet of something. Listen to the masters; what they did with a quartet is unbelievable. Study scores and don't be afraid to ask questions, try things out, ask more questions and try more things.

Most importantly, get your charts played. Get the best players you can find. Barter for their time; buy them pizza, pay them in charts, whatever it takes. Be critical of your work, record it whenever possible. Finale now has a great playback with very realistic instruments, but nothing is like real players. **Listen.** Don't be afraid to try something new, something different, and something that doesn't sound like everyone else. If the audience knows where you are going with your chart, you've been too obvious. One true, non-ordinary idea will make or break a chart. I'm always try to impress my colleagues with cool parts.

Above all, remember that it is only music and you cannot become emotionally attached to it. Ever! This is a very hard thing to realize and understand. Not everyone will like your music

(especially kids) and they will make harsh and sometimes even hurtful comments. Have broad shoulders and just smile. The more you write, the better your charts will become. This is a promise. Don't we tell our students to practice? And that's what you need to do- write and toss, write and toss, and then write some more. (thanks again to one of my old arranging teachers). It is so satisfying to hear one of your charts performed and that it actually sounds the way you heard it in your head.

Good luck, good energies and hope you write lots of great charts,  
Andrew

A little about me:

Studied arranging and composition for 2 years at Berklee in Boston .  
Road work, (lounge and show bands, singers, comedy acts, dancers)  
BME at VanderCook College of Music- Chicago and began teaching music in 1983.  
String orchestra Arielteacher in Tampa since 1990.

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### ***Instrument ranges, transpositions and techniques***

If you are not familiar or need help with practical instrument ranges, instrument transpositions, techniques and the proper way to how to notate them, I suggest that you look on-line for guides and/or manuals that will explain these.

### ***Doubling Rules***

<b><i>Position/ Inversion</i></b>	<b><i>Primary Chords</i></b>	<b><i>Non-primary</i></b>
Root	Root	Root or 3 <sup>rd</sup>
6/3	Root or 5 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> (best), Root, then 5 <sup>th</sup>
6/4	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>

### ***General Rules for Harmony***

1. When there is stepwise motion in the bass, move in contrary stepwise motion in other voices
2. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> of a 7<sup>th</sup> chord is in the soprano, it should resolve up by step.
3. If the leading tone is NOT in the soprano, it doesn't have to resolve.
4. Bass ALWAYS clarifies the harmony.
5. NO parallel 5ths, octaves or unisons between ANY two voices.

# VOICING TECHNIQUES

Arranged By  
ANDREW R. GUARINE

UNISON

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 UNIS. IN OCT

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

VOICING TECHNIQUES

17 UNIS. IN OCT.

VLN A

VLN B

VLA

CELLO

CB

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

25 SIMPLE HARMONY

A E/A A E7 A E7 A E7 A E/AA E7 A A/E

VLN A

VLN B

VLA

CELLO

CB

25 26 27 28 29 30

VOICING TECHNIQUES

DIFFERENT CHORD CHANGES

33

E7 A E7 A A E F#- E7 A6 A E E7 A Esus E7

31 32 33 34 35 36

4-WAY CLOSE

41

A E F#- E7 A F#- A Esus E7 E13 E7 A6 E-7 F#- G(A7) Esus A7 D(A7)

37 38 39 40 41 42

43 DROP 2    45 DROP 3    47 DROP 2 & 4

VLN A  
VLN B  
VLA  
CELLO  
DB

43                          44                          45                          46                          47                          48

49 4-WAY CLOSE W/ ADDED TENSION    51 DROP 2 W/ ADDED TENSION    53 DROP 3 W/ ADDED TENSION

VLN A  
VLN B  
VLA  
CELLO  
DB

49                          50                          51                          52                          53                          54



VOICING TECHNIQUES

55 DROP 2  $\frac{2}{4}$  w/ ADDED TENSION

57

D6 B7(b9) E-7 A7 D6

VLN A

VLN B

VLA

'CELLO

CB

55 56 57 58 59 60

61

G<sup>A</sup>7 D-7 G<sup>A</sup>7 D-7

VLN A

VLN B

VLA

'CELLO

CB

61 62 63 64

**Some selected reading, resource materials and websites that I recommend:**

***Books***

*Arranging for Large Jazz Ensemble* by Ken Pullig and Ted Pease – Berklee Press  
*Arranged by Nelson Riddle*- Nelson Riddle- Alfred (Pub.)  
*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Music Theory* –2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.- by Michael Miller- Alpha (Pub.)  
*Sounds and Scores: A Practical Guide to Professional Orchestration*- *Henry Mancini*  
*The Contemporary Arranger*- *Don Sebesky*  
*The Study of Orchestration*- Samuel Adler  
*The complete arranger*- Sammy Nestico

*Websites*

<http://www.johnlabarbera.com/> - neat site  
<http://members.aol.com/dmarko1/brahms/composition.htm> -where I got a lot of quotes and ideas.  
 Lots of links to other sites  
<http://www.garritan.com/> has free music classes (Rimsky-Korsakov) at the website  
<http://idiotsguide.com>  
[http://en.allexperts.com/e/l/li/list\\_of\\_music\\_arrangers.htm](http://en.allexperts.com/e/l/li/list_of_music_arrangers.htm) –lists lots of arrangers with links

***Resources***

Any score by any master.  
 Any score NOT by a master  
 Any Nelson Riddle arrangement (recording) -One of my heros  
 Any Henry Mancini arrangement (recording) –another one of my heros  
 Frank Sinatra albums- He worked a lot with Don Costa, Nelson Riddle and Les Brown  
 Records by Quincy Jones, Burt Bacharach, Tony Bennet, Tom Jones, The Beatles, The Beach  
 Boys, The Moody Blues, Elton John, Whitney Houston, and ... - are you seeing a pattern here?  
 Really good arrangements by really good arrangers and producers  
 Really lousy arrangements by anyone (and there a bunch of them!)  
 College notes form arranging and theory classes (I bet you still have some of them!!)  
 Your own arrangements-

I always make a note of the arrangers on the back of albums, CD's, TV and movies. A notepad works fine.