



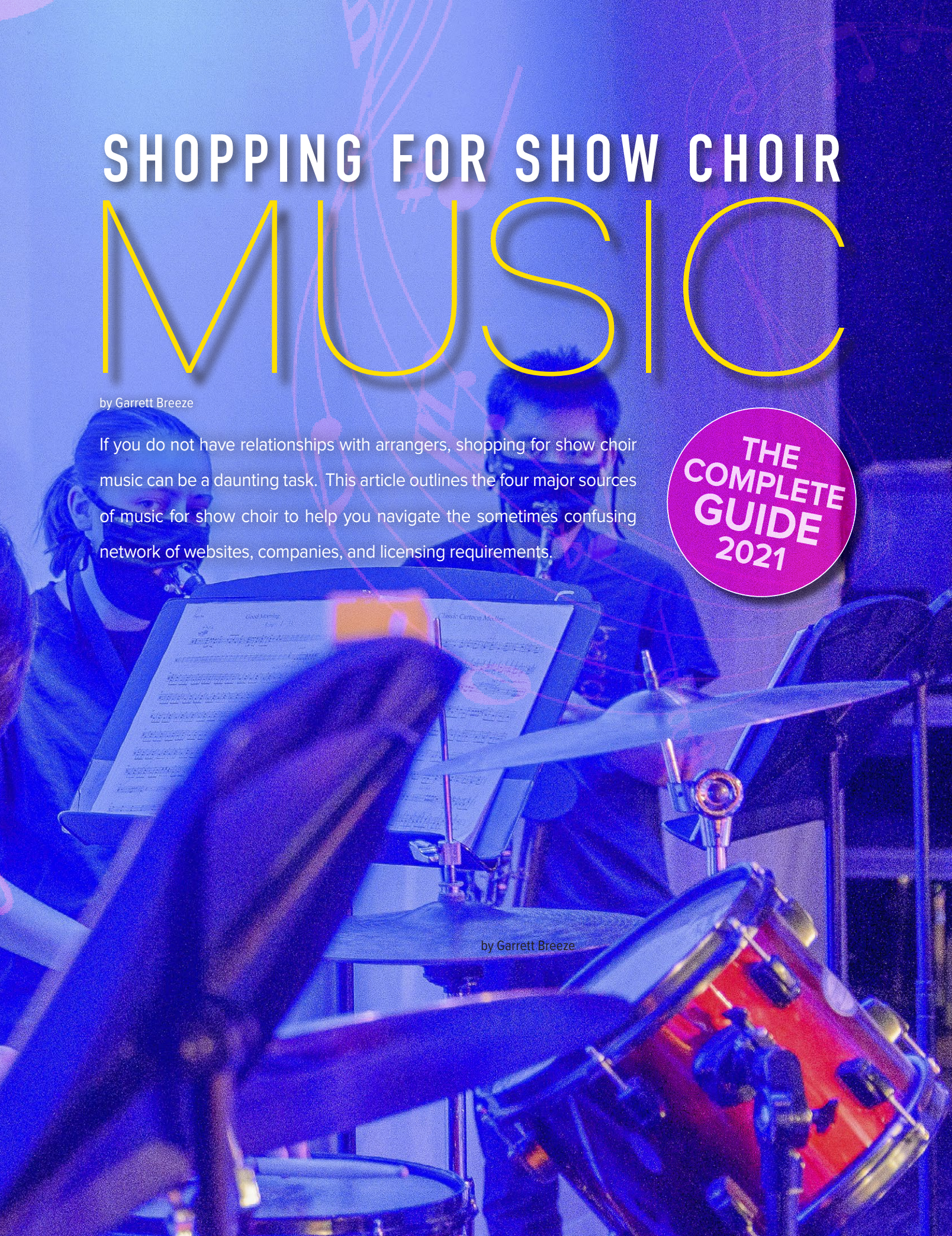
SHOPPING FOR SHOW CHOIR MUSIC

by Garrett Breeze

If you do not have relationships with arrangers, shopping for show choir music can be a daunting task. This article outlines the four major sources of music for show choir to help you navigate the sometimes confusing network of websites, companies, and licensing requirements.

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by Garrett Breeze





The cheapest source of music for your show choir will be stock arrangements available from the traditional major music publishers such as Hal Leonard or Alfred. These are great options for non-competitive performances or for prep groups that are still learning the basics. If you intend to use a stock arrangement in one of your competitive shows, it should fit the following criteria:

- The voicing should be high enough that your singers can easily project while dancing. Alto parts below middle C and bass parts below G3 tend to get covered easily.
- If it is going to be used as an opener or closer, it must have dance breaks—or moments you could vamp or leave the vocals out to create one.
- It should have instrumental accompaniment that is comparable to the rest of your show—it is a real downer if you only use the full band on some of the songs in a set.
- And finally, the less repetition a chart has, the more effective it is going to be in competition. Many stock charts repeat

large sections note for note—that does not go over great in competition.

The main disadvantage of using a stock arrangement, of course, is the inability to go back to the arranger and request changes. However, there are still minor edits such as the following that can have a big impact: choosing a more appropriate tempo, making a cut that shortens the arrangement, doubling parts—or leaving parts out—for the sake of voicing, or adding an extra note occasionally to embellish an important chord. It is also permissible to change the key of the arrangement if this can be done without recreating the sheet music.

Arranger Catalogs

It is common practice in the show choir industry for arrangers to maintain a list of all the custom arrangements they have written in past years. This list is typically updated each summer at the end of competition season. Some of the most prolific arrangers have built websites to advertise their catalogs where listeners can hear audio samples and sort by voicing, genre, theme, function, and other identifiers. Examples of these include

breezetunes.com, bmkmusic.com, ericvancleave.com, and showchoircharts.com.

Purchasing music from an arranger's catalog will require the exact same kind of copyright license as a new custom arrangement, but the arranger's fee will be much lower. This option is a great way for choirs with lower budgets to perform highly competitive music; it is also a great way for you to "audition" a new arranger and get to know their style before investing in a custom arrangement.

The biggest advantage of using previously arranged titles is the time saved. Even though custom arrangement licenses are still required, the fact that a song has been cleared previously is generally a good sign approval will be granted again. Furthermore, since the music is already finished, rehearsal and preparation of other show elements—such as choreography, costuming, and lighting—can begin right away!

Using catalog arrangements in your show does not make the design process any easier—in fact, in many ways it is more challenging! It is much easier to hire one arranger, give them all the information about your group, pick songs together, and then let

them do their magic. As with most things, communication is key. The arrangers themselves are the best resource for helping you find something that is a good fit. Not only that, but many arrangers will also adjust charts in their catalog for a nominal fee.

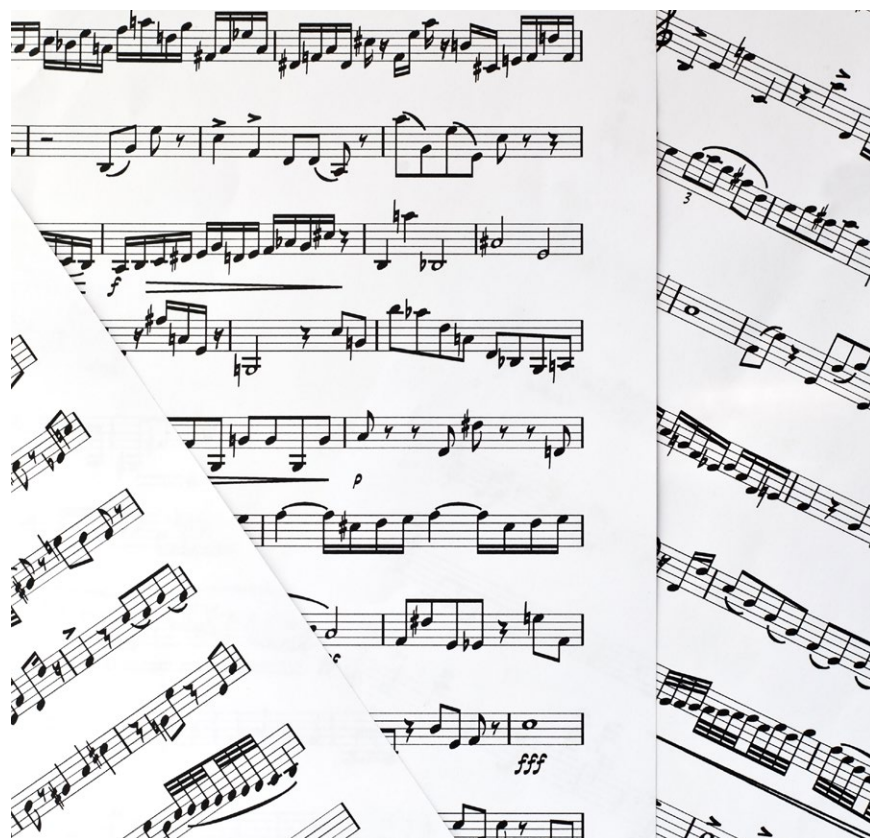
As you browse arrangers' catalogs, make sure you are thinking about the following:

The voicing has to be right for your choir. Many custom charts are written with unusual part combinations because they were originally written for unbalanced ensembles. Check ranges for sopranos and tenors; and make sure there is not more division in the chart than your group can successfully handle.

Is it in a good key? Do not be afraid to ask for the chart in a new key if that will make your life better. Notation software has a magical button that modulates everything in an arrangement with one click.

Get the right band parts to satisfy your instrumentation. The configuration of the band, especially horns, can vary greatly from chart to chart. When in doubt, always ask. There may be an easy solution to missing parts, for example, copying a trombone part into a tenor sax part if you have more saxes than bones.

ALWAYS put show function first. It does not matter how much you like a song; if the arrangement was designed as a transition number and you want it to be a closer, it is not going to do what you need it to do.



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Independent Publishers and Nontraditional Music

Due to the costs associated with licensing, there are a small but growing number of composers and arrangers who maintain independent catalogs of competition music that can be purchased and performed without requiring additional permissions. This category includes composers who have written original songs for show choir, arrangers who have struck deals with independent artists to arrange and sell their music, and others who have done the hard work of pre-clearing arrangements to sell directly (the most popular of which is showchoirstock.com.) Many groups get creative and widen their search for music even further, incorporating a cappella arrangements, concert choir, gospel music, folk songs, or patriotic tunes into their shows.

Custom Arrangements

The best—and most expensive—way to buy music for show choir is to have it arranged specifically for your show. There is simply no substitute for having an experienced

arranger on your staff who can be a part of the creative team, get to know your program, and craft something unique and memorable. The benefits should be obvious, but they include:

- The ability to highlight the strengths and avoid the weaknesses in your singers
- Having a person who can make edits and tweak things as needed
- Getting the exact parts you need for your instrumental accompaniment
- Being able to execute a creative vision with few limitations

Because every arranger does things differently, knowing how YOU like to collaborate—and how you like to communicate—is the key to working together effectively. Make sure they know the areas where you want something specific and the areas where you want them to be creative. Keep them in the loop as things develop, as things change, and as you learn more about the needs of your choir.

It can be hard to find an arranger who is the right fit. Of all the players in the show choir community, arrangers are perhaps the least visible. Additionally, because they are not required to travel and do their work in person like choreographers, it can be harder to forge those relationships. Some directors and choreographers treat arrangers like just another vendor—a store where they can buy music—but making the arranger a full and equal member of the creative team will work wonders for your show.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: With more than 1,000 show choir arrangements in circulation, Garrett Breeze is a sought-after clinician and adjudicator whose credits include film and television, Broadway stars, and Grammy-winning classical artists. His show choir music is available at breezetunes.com and he recently launched a new catalog of music for concert and church choirs at holidaychoirmusic.com.



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What got you into pasta and fundraising?

My husband and I went to Italy on our honeymoon over 25 years ago where our love of pasta & Italy began! We were young and a little naïve, so we quit our corporate jobs to start a pasta company. We wanted to bring the Old-World Italian quality back to the States but create pasta shapes that appealed to American families. Our first shape was "Music City Pasta"—boots & guitars sold to tourist shops here in Nashville. We've grown into making college logos, holiday shapes, and so much more!

WHAT SETS YOUR PROGRAM APART FROM OTHERS?

Fun Pasta is a unique product, not widely distributed, and is really a one-of-a-kind program. It's healthy, affordable, and makes great gifts too. Plus, everyone loves pasta! Our service is exceptional, and we work with lots of repeat leaders every year. Our in-office fundraising guru is Joann, who everyone knows and loves. She can't wait for the fall season to begin every year!

Fundraising evolved naturally as people saw these fun shapes and knew they would appeal to families. Pasta was healthy, wouldn't melt, and was easy to distribute. Also, the uniqueness was always a selling point. Now this was before the internet existed, so we'd get phone calls and decided to set up a program that we knew would work—all paper and regular mail. Wow, seems like a century ago!

Today's fundraising model combines traditional with technology. You can show a brochure to a customer and take orders on the app, or just share a link via text, email, Facebook, or other social platforms. Fundraising has become easier and certainly Covid has forced companies to evolve their technology even faster.



WHEN A GROUP CHOOSES YOU WHAT CAN THEY EXPECT FROM FUN PASTA FUNDRAISING?

You can expect quality products, great service, quick shipping, and an easy to run program. This is really hassle free for the leaders. No order forms, no envelopes, and no order entry! We make it easy to run online or with our new app. Sellers can share their personalized links right from their computers or phones. It's an efficient and fun way to fundraise. Plus, groups earn 40% profit on every sale.

WHAT ARE YOUR BEST-SELLING PRODUCTS?

Some best sellers are our Chicken Noodle Soup (noodles are shaped like chickens!), our Spinach Basil Garlic Pasta Ruffles, and all our Holiday Pasta. It's fun to browse each category because you can find pasta, soups, chilis, or gifts for everyone and all their interests. Collegiate Pasta Salads are great fun at tailgate parties and make fun gifts. And all of our packages serve at least 4-6 people.

YOUR PASTA IS CUTE, BUT DOES IT TASTE GOOD?

We manufacture our pasta the Old Italian way with only the highest quality ingredients, specialized

equipment, and slow drying methods, to ensure that taste and texture are perfect! All our pasta is plant based and egg free. We have mac 'n cheese for vegans and most products are allergen friendly.

HOW LONG DOES PASTA LAST IN THE PANTRY?

Pasta can be kept for two years if stored in a cool, dry place. Our products with seasonings have a shelf life of 18 months. So you can buy ahead for holidays and stock up!

HOW MUCH PROFIT CAN GROUPS EARN?

Groups will earn 40% on every sale. There are no minimums or upfront costs. You are also eligible for Bonus Cash Prizes, up to \$500, based on your overall sales. And you can enter our Sweepstakes until September 19th for a chance for more!

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FUN PASTA?

Go to our website, FunPastaFundraising.com and you can download our brochure and read more details. Feel free to call us with any questions 800-247-0188, or email jo@pastashoppe.com. We'd love to help your group achieve its goals this year!

Carey Aron is President of The Pasta Shoppe & the Fun Pasta Fundraising team. For more than two decades, they have been creating happy & healthy pasta for families! Fun Pasta offers a unique, online, and contact free product fundraising program for groups of all sizes. When not in the kitchen whipping up a pasta recipe, Carey can usually be found hiking in local parks, ripping recipes out of food magazines, or binge-watching Netflix with her husband and 8-pound Maltipoo.