

WHAT IS IT?

When you arrange a piece of music you are creating new features for an existing idea.

You're responding to an existing composition, you're fleshing it out, you're giving it new dimensions, making it bigger. An arrangement might be created in a live room by a band, or with a midi and audio recorder (like Cubase) or on paper (using notation).

The line between writing and arranging is very vague – where does writing stop and arranging start? Essentially the writing elements are the melodies, chords and lyrics – anything after that is arrangement, but this is not a strict rule as there are many ways in which music evolves from basic idea to finished product.

WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

We very rarely hear music in a completely 'raw' state. When we listen to music we expect it to have some arrangement - additional musical ideas that support it. These could be grooves, bass lines, riffs, counter melodies or vocal harmonies. An arrangement can make a basic song bigger, more 'colourful', more satisfying.

Arranging skills can often put the vital gloss on a song.