Sydney Symphony Orchestra
DIGITAL AUDITION EXCERPTS SYSTEM

Digital excerpts – where the excerpt is scanned, cleaned up in image software, and inserted into a Word document – have several advantages over traditional cutting-and-pasting; it is quicker to prepare, the presentation is neater, distribution is easier, quality of reproduction is better (candidates are given an image a generation younger) and excerpts may be more easily re-used in future auditions, as they may simply be cut-and-pasted.

1. SCAN ORIGINAL PART

We recommend you scan as a .tif with as high a resolution as possible (600 dpi is fine). We strongly suggest that you always keep, in a separate folder, a copy of the original scan. If you make a mistake – or, in future years, if you want to use a different bit of the same part – it's then still there.

2. CROP AND CLEAN UP

We used to use an old Windows bundled program called Microsoft Photo Editor. This worked very well and presumably for that reason Microsoft no longer supplies it. We now use a free download called GIMP. A large monitor is very helpful at this point. The amount of cleaning you can do is really only limited by the time you have (and how obsessive you tend to be), but with practice you can fix amazingly fine details. Compare, for example, the eighth bar of this viola excerpt from *Don Juan:*

A few things things about cleaning. Firstly, at a high magnification, pencil becomes a quite distinctive speckled band which stands out clearly from the ink and can therefore be easily tidied up. This is the point encircled in the excerpt above:


Secondly, let's look at correcting the accidental 3/4 bar in the Strauss. This is the original. We need to create space at ★ to fit a minim rest:
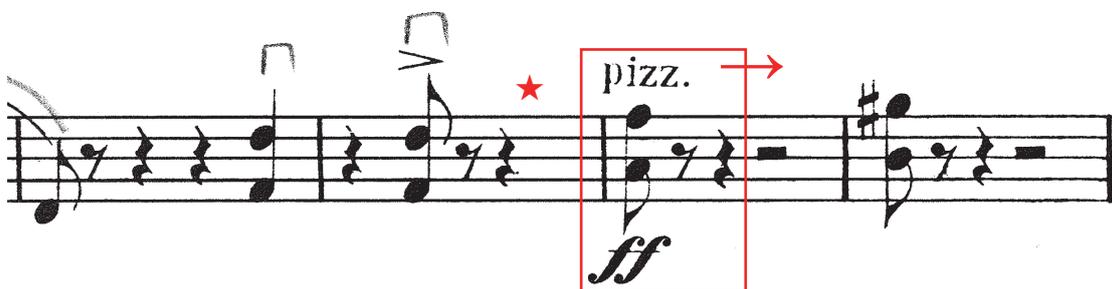
We need to create space because the space occupied by the rest needs to be in the correct proportion. We can't just do this:

(Well, we could, but it would be wrong.) So firstly we move everything between ★ and the minim rest in the last bar (which will stay put).
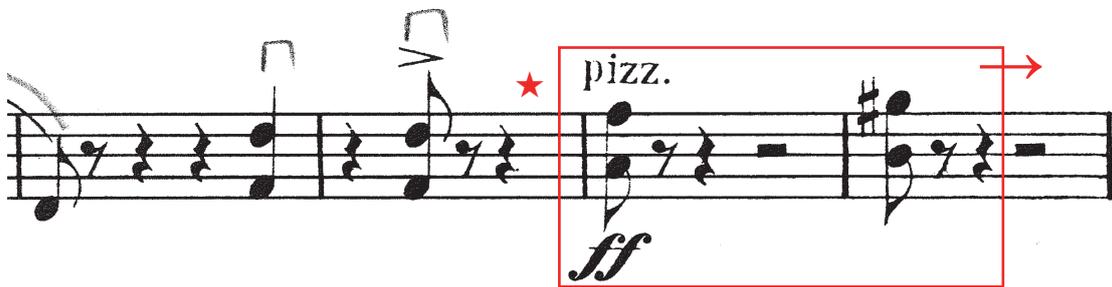
Next, we move everything between ★ and the minim rest in the third bar.

Then we copy a minim rest and paste it into the space we've created. Close examination will reveal we've cloned the one in the third bar, but really it could come from anywhere in the piece. (Almost all the engraved parts you're going to scan were created – in mirror image, amazingly – using punches: this is why you can clone a rest, or notehead, or really anything, from somewhere in a part and paste it elsewhere.)

And then we clean up around the minim rest. This is where the 'how obsessive you tend to be' rule kicks in. I usually do this by copying staff lines and pasting over the top as it's quicker than erasing. I've also cloned the quaver rest from the fourth bar into the third, as it's less grotty, ditto the crotchet rest from the third bar into the fourth.

The scan is very grainy at high magnification, and the imperfections in the image are your friends. Observe the divot in the second staff line:

At 1000% (a) it is much clearer. What we do is copy bit of staff line which doesn't have a divot: it can be an entire section of line, or even just the top half of the line (b). We paste it over the top of the divot, which magically disappers (c). The lines are all still very grainy but we don't need to worry about smoothing it out, because at 100% these imperfections are invisible.

(a)   (b)   (c)

Here it is at 100% again. And compare to the original:
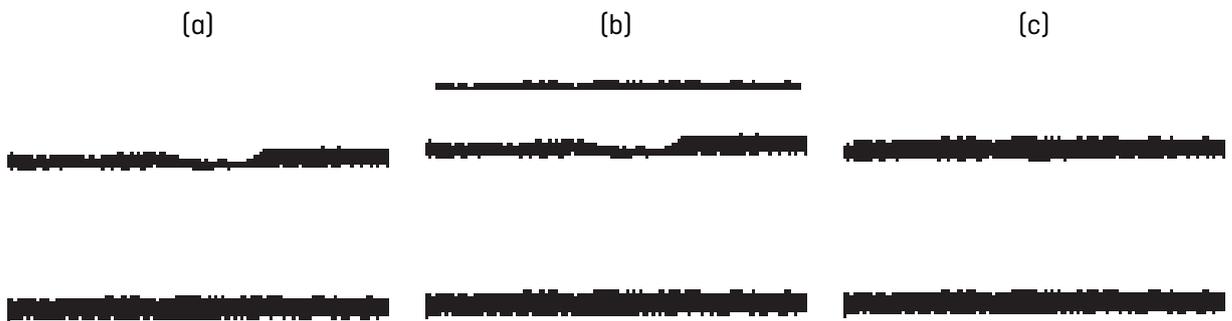
Even I wouldn't bother cleaning up that divot if I were doing an excerpt, but the point is that the eye doesn't see the graininess at 100%, and this means that you have quite a lot of latitude when cleaning up. If you regularly zoom out to 100% you can see what it'll look like on the page.

3. INSERT PICTURE

Most original parts are going to be too wide to fit on an A4 page. Rather than shrink the original images, it's much neater (and easier) to keep the image at 100%, put it into a Word document on a larger paper size (we use B4 JIS, 257mm x 364mm). Once the Word document has been converted to pdf, of course, it may easily be printed at any size.

There are two ways to insert pictures in a Word document; 'inline' or 'floating'. Inline pictures are positioned directly in the text at the cursor: basically they behave exactly as if they were a character in the text. This is the SSO logo as an inline picture. Floating pictures, however, are not related to the text and so can be precisely positioned on the page by dragging with the mouse, or nudging with the arrow keys (like a text box). We want to set up the excerpts as a floating picture.

The procedure tends to differ slightly from one version of Microsoft Word to the other. In the latest version, the one with the stupid ribbon, we do this:

❑ On the **Insert** tab, select **Picture**: select the excerpt you wish to place, click 'OK'.
❑ Right-click on the picture and select **Picture...**. Click on the following tabs:
    ❑ Click on the <u>Size</u> tab. Check it is at 100%. (The aspect ratio should stay fixed, but check this as well.)
    ❑ Click on the <u>Layout</u> tab. Select **In Front of text**
    ❑ Now click on **Advanced...** and select the **Position** tab.
        ❑ For 'Horizontal', select **Absolute position**
        ❑ For 'Vertical', select **Absolute position**
        ❑ Under 'Options', tick all four boxes
        ❑ Press enter.
❑ Right-click on the picture again and under **Order**, select **Send Behind Text**.

One last thing on floating pictures. Click the 'Show All' button (the one with a ¶ – it's in the 'Home' tab on the ribbon, under 'Paragraph'). When the 'Show All' button is switched on, every time you select a floating picture or a text box, an anchor appears. For instance, in the example below we have selected the text box containing the [:

The anchor tells us that the box is attached to the paragraph '**Excerpt 1** Allegro vivace'. If you delete that paragraph, you will also delete the picture. If you move that paragraph (i.e. type a couple of carriage returns above it), the picture also moves relative to the paragraph. This is because one of the four 'Options' boxes we ticked above was **Move object with text**.

4. PUT EXCERPT IN POSITION

Excerpts must appear in consistent positions on the page. Turn on the 'Show All' button:
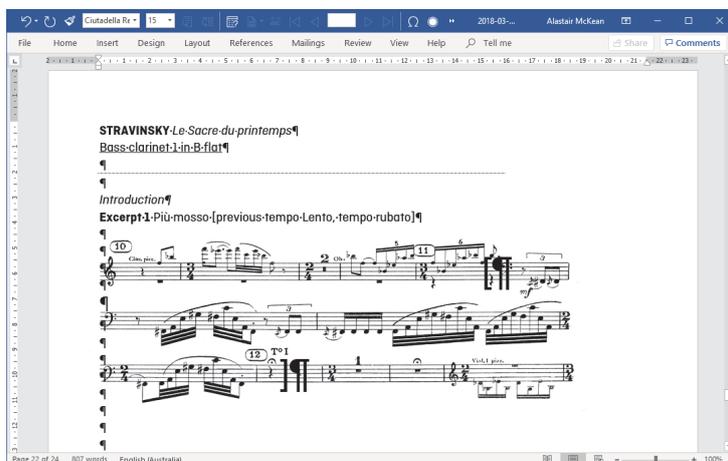

What we have on the ¶s is quite important:

¶ 1   Name of composer, title of piece.
¶ 2   Type of instrument, i.e., auxiliary winds, key of clarinets/horns/trumpets, which percussion instrument is required, violin I/violin II: leave blank if n/a
¶ 3   Blank (the dotted line is a paragraph border applied to ¶ 3. This can be found in the 'Paragraph' section of the 'Home' tab on the stupid ribbon)
¶ 4   Blank
¶ 5   Movement details, if multi-movement work: leave blank if n/a
¶ 6   Excerpt No.xyz (bold, all caps): tempo indication
¶ 7   Blank
¶ 8   Blank

The excerpt sits with the top line of the first staff on the top of ¶ 9. The left-hand edge of music lines up with the left-hand margin (represented by the line of ¶s). Because the picture floats, you don't need to worry terribly much about how closely to crop the original image – just move the picture so that the music itself is in place, and you're set.

As you can see from the comparison below, if you follow this rule it means the excerpt always starts at the same vertical position, *even if* the information about them differs from one excerpt to the next.
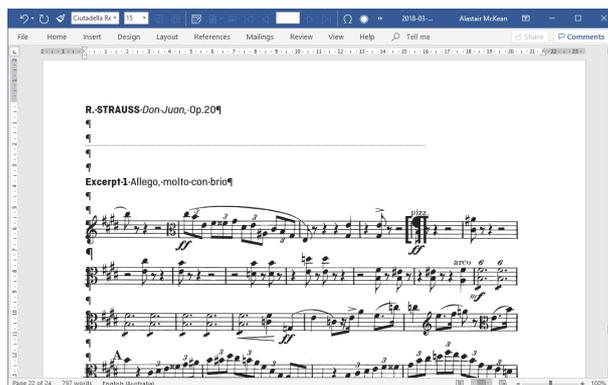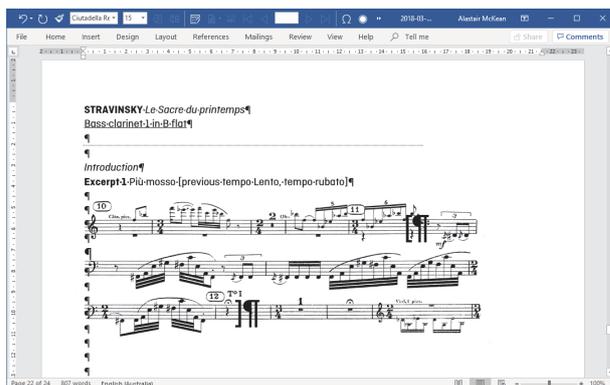
If there's more on a page than just a single excerpt, it's good to have consistent vertical spacing between the various things on the page. I enlarge one of the ¶s under the excerpt, until a ¶ is flush with the bottom line of the last staff in the excerpt. Then I allow:

3x ¶s to a footnote (p.4 of the bass clarinet book);
4x ¶s to another excerpt from the same work (p.8 of the bass clarinet book);
6x ¶s to an excerpt from a different work (p.5 of the bass clarinet book).

If there is a footnote I count the same number of ¶s to the next excerpt.

The curly lines (p.6 of the clarinet book) are a string of ~ characters, in a grey font colour, at large font size, with the horizontal spacing adjusted so the ~s run into each other.

5. POSITION BRACKETS AND OTHER THINGS

The start/stop brackets are simply a large [and] in a text box. Text boxes always behave like a floating picture. Because the excerpt is now set to **Send Behind Text**, the brackets appear over the top of the excerpt, just like if you'd drawn them on; so, you can position them half-way through a line if you wish.

The curly lines (see page 6 of the clarinet book) are a string of ~ characters, in a grey font colour, at large font size, with the horizontal spacing adjusted so the ~s run into each other.

6. EDITORIAL POLICIES

This is of course entirely up to you, but there are a few policies the SSO generally follows when preparing the papers:

a) We give candidates as close a reproduction as possible of the part they would be playing in the orchestra.
b) We copy from the original part whenever it is available. If an Urtext is available we will use that as the basis for the excerpt. Errors are tacitly corrected.
c) We erase all pencil marks from the part before scanning, or erase them in GIMP.
d) We always give the prevailing tempo indication as it appears in the part. We usually do not include metronome markings or bowings unless they are in the part itself. Editorial metronome markings (i.e. those from the principal) are enclosed in brackets.
e) If we cannot gain access to an original part, or if the original is poorly copied or illegible, we engrave the relevant excerpt in notation software. We make this as close as possible to a legitimate part, even to the point of engraving otherwise unnecessary bars for verisimilitude or ease of reading.

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