



## BMG Information Sheet Number 2

### The players, who and where from?

In our experience, finding and retaining players is the most difficult aspect of running an orchestra. Possible sources of recruits include

- Pupils, your own and those of other teachers
- Current members bringing people in by word-of-mouth
- Advertising, targeting such outlets as community centres, schools, libraries, art centres, youth centres, church congregations, superstores
- Placing ads in free sheets
- Music shops
- Music appreciation societies
- Writing articles for local papers

One current orchestra is aiming for the long term, by introducing youngsters, aged 10-13, to the mandolin through hands-on school demonstrations, and offering ongoing 10-week group lessons for beginners at a local arts centre to immediately harness the interest generated by these visits. Over time this should build up a strong pool of young people who will join the ranks of the performing group.

Continuing the musical education of your players is a good way to maintain and expand interest in group playing. Most orchestras will have members with a great variety of abilities (the classically trained who cannot play chords, the folk players who cannot read music well, the self-taught with a need to develop sound quality).

Aim to develop the abilities (technical, sound quality) and knowledge (how to tune, how to improve sight-reading, how to practise best for orchestra) of your players. Send them on existing courses or organise your own especially if your orchestra has a specific need.

A course could be public and also aim to attract new people who might want to join your group or just hear them play.

Different types of performance opportunities also keep interest high, such as:

- putting on your own concerts, children's concerts, or concerts with a topic such as "Concertos", "A Trip Through Mandolin Music" or "Meet the Banjo" .
- playing for charity events, art exhibition openings and as part of art displays for an arts guild, using multimedia.

It is important to always be aware that people will come and go, and you should always be on the look-out for new recruits. Do not become complacent with the status quo, as things can change quickly – people move away, lose interest, or even die, and you might suddenly find yourself without key players.