

On Commissioning

New works are often a result of a Commission. Working with a living composer can be a truly rewarding experience. Jointly making a new piece of art come to life, sharing fresh ideas with a composers, and hearing input about a piece from its creator are unique and exciting opportunities. The interest and publicity of a new work and its premiere can also be very helpful to a career. A new piece can open doors musically, creatively and for your career.

Most composers have limited experience with the harp. Make sure that you work with the composer to explain the instrument, and make the piece a playable and successful one.

The following information is excerpted from a "Meet the Composer" publication*. For more information contact "Meet the Composer", 2112 Broadway, Suite 505, New York, NY 10023; 212-787-3601

CHOOSE A COMPOSER whose music moves you and who can write for the occasion and instrumentation you have in mind. Contact candidate composers or their publishers to request samples of their music.

BASE THE COMMISSION FEE on the composer's reputation, the length of the work, number of performers, and the budget of the commissioning party. Consult the "Meet the Composer " pamphlet's schedule of fees, seek professional advice, and remember, fees are always negotiable. There is a composer for every commissioning budget.

PLAN FOR PERFORMANCE OR RECORDING and agree on the composer's involvement in rehearsal and public presentations. Performing and recording costs and personal appearance fees are separate from the commission, and should be agreed in advance.

THE COMPOSER OWNS THE COMMISSIONED WORK and all rights to its use under US and/or International Copyright Law. Commissioners may have exclusive use of them for a period of time.

COMMISSIONING PARTY MAY NEGOTIATE RIGHTS such as:

*exclusive right to give premiere performances

*exclusive performance rights for a limited period

*exclusive right to give the premiere in other cities

*right to make the work's first commercial recording

*right to be credited as commissioner in published editions, recordings, and programs of all future performances

FUNDING FOR COMMISSIONS is available from many governmental, foundation and private sponsors. "Meet the Composer" offers an array of commissioning programs. Costs can be reduced when several organizations or individuals co-commission a work, which also ensures multiple performances. The American Harp Society Chapters can serve as 'fiscal conduits' for grants which require a non-profit

status. You will need a COMMISSIONING AGREEMENT between the commissioner and the composers. The pamphlet from MEET THE COMPOSER has great pointers on what should be included.

*Excerpts from: "Commissioning Music, A Basic Guide" pamphlet - Meet the Composers, Inc., 2112 Broadway, Suite 505, New York, New York 10023

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