

## Commissioning Music/USA

2010 Guidelines and Application Instructions

Deadline: March 8, 2010



Commissioning Music/USA  
is made possible with generous support from:

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Meet The Composer, Inc.  
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[www.meetthecomposer.org](http://www.meetthecomposer.org)

## About Meet The Composer

Meet The Composer supports the creation of new musical work and the engagement of new work with people and communities throughout the United States. We are motivated by a core belief that interaction with a living composer and his or her music has the power to invigorate and inspire musicians and audiences alike.

MTC was founded in 1974 as a project of the New York State Council on the Arts. Led by the visionary composer John Duffy, Meet The Composer soon became an independent organization dedicated to the idea of composers as active professionals with a central role in our country's musical culture. In the more than thirty years since, MTC has grown to become a truly national organization, serving in all fifty states composers and audiences of a thrillingly broad range of new music.

## The Purpose of Commissioning Music/USA

Countless new and important works have come into being through commissions. Commissions also provide a vital source of income and artistic development for composers. To ensure that composers and their commissioners have the knowledge and resources to successfully complete their goals, Meet The Composer offers support through its *Commissioning Music/USA* program. This support takes the form of subsidized commissioning fees as well as technical assistance in managing the entire life-cycle of a commissioning project.

Once a project is completed, Meet The Composer will make information on the commissioned work and the composer available to presenters and performers looking for new repertoire or new composers to commission.

## How Commissioning Music/USA Works

*Commissioning Music/USA* supports not-for-profit performing and presenting organizations that wish to commission a new work in any style or genre. The program provides full or partial commissioning fees primarily for composers as well as technical assistance regarding contracts, copyright, collaboration issues and other areas where needed.

The 2010 round of *Commissioning Music/USA* will commission works that involve music with other visual, media, or performing art forms in integrated and inseparable ways. The works supported will be created by a collaborative team involving at least one composer or sound artist and other collaborator(s) working in different disciplines. The work itself may take an established form (ballet, opera, musical theater, etc.) or other new, idiosyncratic, or emergent forms. The new work can be for any instrumentation, type of ensemble or electronics, and can be in any style.

For the purposes of these guidelines, Meet The Composer considers a collaborative relationship to have the following qualities:

- Equal creative roles
- Non-directorial working relationship (i.e. one collaborator is not directing the work of another)
- Copyright ownership in the work is held jointly by the collaborators



In cases where three or more collaborators are involved in the creation of the proposed work, applicants will be asked to specify two primary collaborators to facilitate application review (one of whom must be the composer).

**Most awards through Commissioning Music/USA will be between \$10,000 and \$20,000 in support of commissioning fees.** Primary consideration is given to the composer's fee and music copying costs. Collaborators' fees, for particularly strong applications, may be supported at the discretion of the panel. The program provides support for artist commissioning fees and music copying costs only. Production, design, administrative or other costs are not supported.

Applications to the *Commissioning Music/USA* program are submitted by the presenter, ensemble, or exhibition space that is commissioning the new work. The artists and the commissioner prepare the application and supporting materials as described in these guidelines. Two or more organizations may form a consortium to jointly commission a new work.

## **Project Requirements**

The commissioned work must be an entirely new work, both musical and non-musical portions. Proposals for expansions, arrangements or restagings of existing works are not eligible.

Additionally, proposals for works that have already been publicly presented, either in part or in whole (including workshops), at the time of application are not eligible for support. Similarly, plans to present the work, either in part or in whole, before January 1, 2011 are not eligible for support.

The commissioning organization(s) must present or perform the new work a minimum of four times within three years of being accepted into the program. Higher numbers of planned performances and performances in different locations will make an application more competitive.

The 2011 round of *Commissioning Music/USA* will consider applications for concert works, i.e. stand-alone musical works created by a single composer and performable in a "concert" setting, in the following categories: chamber, jazz, orchestral, chorus, and solo works. Applications and guidelines for the 2011 round will be available later in 2010.

If an artist creates multi-disciplinary work on their own that is best reviewed in the 2010 cycle, they are welcome to apply. Vocal works that are settings of pre-existing texts and will not involve authorial collaboration should apply in 2011. If you are unsure in which year to apply please contact Meet The Composer for assistance.

## **Past Commissioning Projects**

Over 200 works have been commissioned through this program since its inception in 1996. Information on these commissioned works is available in the MTC Commissioning History database at: [www.meetthecomposer.org/works](http://www.meetthecomposer.org/works).



## Eligibility

### Collaborative Artists:

- Must be based in the U.S. (either as citizens or permanent residents)
- Must not be enrolled in a degree-granting program (i.e. no students)
- Must have finished all previous *Commissioning Music/USA* commissions, including all reporting requirements
- May appear on only one application per deadline

### Organizations:

- Must produce, co-produce, perform or otherwise present multiple events in which music serves a central role and have done so for at least three consecutive years, preferably five or more; this can be as a season, tour, festival or run
- Must be under the direction of professional artistic leadership; this does not include advisory positions, councils or boards of directors (if your organization does not meet this criteria, but has the capacity to complete the project as proposed, please contact Meet The Composer to discuss)
- Have a competitive selection process for performers though performers need not be paid
- Must be based in the U.S. and be a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; organizations not meeting this requirement may apply with fiscal sponsorship but must contact Meet The Composer prior to applying for approval
- Must have completed all past commissions and have submitted the required documentation before applying again
- May submit only one application per deadline as single commissioner or lead commissioner in a consortium; organizations may, however, participate in a supporting role in up to two other consortiums per deadline

To allow for expanded reach and greater exposure of commissioned works, *Commissioning Music/USA* encourages proposals by consortiums of organizations wishing to jointly commission a new work. Each of the co-commissioning organizations must meet the requirements above and one organization must be designated the lead organization to manage the commission.

## Awarded Projects

If accepted into the program, MTC, the commissioning organization(s), and the commissioned artists enter into a commissioning agreement which stipulates dates for delivery of the completed work and a deadline for completing the performance requirement. In general commissions take three years to complete, although larger projects may be given more time.

The commissioning fees are paid in two installments: first half on signing the agreement, second half upon completion of the work and scheduling of the performances. Payments are made to the commissioning organization (or lead organization if a co-commission). That organization is then responsible for paying the contracted artists within ten days of receiving the funds.

MTC requires periodic written updates on the status of the project, advance notice of performances and, where possible, complimentary tickets for MTC staff, funders or major donors. MTC requires a final report on the project after completion.



## How To Apply

Applications must be submitted on-line by authorized representatives of the sponsoring organization at [www.mtconline.org](http://www.mtconline.org). Before beginning an application, read these guidelines thoroughly and have the following items prepared ahead of time:

### 1. Sponsoring Organization Information

- a. Application contact person's name, address, phone, email
- b. Organization name, address, phone, email, website, EIN (tax identification number)
- c. IRS Determination Letter (a scanned or electronic version to be uploaded and attached to your application)
- d. A signed and dated letter stating the organization's commitment to and role in realizing the work of the collaborative team (to be scanned and uploaded to your application)

### 2. Consortium Organization Information

- a. If applying as part of a consortium, please supply the following information for each member of the consortium
  - i. Organization name, contact person name and email, organization's EIN (tax identification number)

### 3. Composer Information

- a. Name, address, website, email, phone
- b. Biography (1500 character limit)
- c. List of works (a scanned or electronic version to be uploaded and attached to your application)
- d. A signed and dated letter stating their commitment to the project and their collaborative role in creating the new work (to be scanned and uploaded to your application)

### 4. Collaborator Information

- a. Name, address, website, email, phone
- b. Biography (1500 character limit)
- c. A signed and dated letter stating their commitment to the project and their collaborative role in creating the new work (to be scanned and uploaded to your application)
- d. In cases where three or more collaborators are involved in the creation of the proposed work, applicants will be asked to specify two primary collaborators to facilitate application review (one of whom must be the composer).

### 5. The Commissioned Work

- a. Title, length, instrumentation
- b. A description of the proposed work (3000 character limit)

### 6. Projected Performances

- a. Dates, venues, city/states, audience sizes

### 7. Project Budget

- a. Eligible expenses
  - i. Composer commissioning fee
  - ii. Music copying costs
  - iii. Collaborator commissioning fee
- b. Ineligible expenses; please estimate your total expenses in each of the following categories for realizing the performances of this commission; these expenses are not supported through this program, however this information is important for review purposes
  - i. Design and director fees
  - ii. Production costs



- iii. Administration costs
- iv. Marketing/publicity costs
- c. Total project expenses
- d. Project income
- e. Amount requested
- f. Total project income
- 8. Lead Organization's Annual Budget**
  - a. Most recently completed fiscal year – income and expenses
  - b. Current fiscal year – income and expenses
  - c. Upcoming fiscal year – income and expenses
- 9. Work Samples**
  - a. Submit two samples of works by the applicant collaborators, preferably completed within the last five years. If not available or if this is to be their first collaboration, submit two examples of past work that is collaborative in nature for each applicant artist, preferably completed within the last five years.
  - b. Work samples must be recordings, preferably video, of live performances; even for artists' whose work is primarily textual or visual, this will give the panel the necessary context to evaluate the work's integration into a performance setting
  - c. CD or DVD only, labeled with the name of the artist and the applicant organization
  - d. Please provide the following detail for each work sample
    - i. title, creators, year work completed, performers, year recording made, tracks/chapters for panel review, brief description providing any background or contextual information necessary for review.

**Tips for preparing work samples:**

Choose carefully, work samples are crucial to the success of the application and are reviewed first. See the explanation of the review process below.

Time for work sample review is extremely limited. In most cases panelists will have no more than three to four minutes for each work sample in an application. To utilize the limited time to the best degree possible and still convey the entire scope of larger works, applicants are urged to prepare samples as follows:

- Track/Chapter 1: work sample #1 excerpt—roughly five minutes**
- Track/Chapter 2: work sample #1 complete work**
- Track/Chapter 3: work sample #2 excerpt—roughly five minutes**
- Track/Chapter 4: work sample #2 complete work**

## **Application Deadline**

Applications must be completed online by midnight **March 8, 2010**.

Applications may be completed all at once or in stages, but must be submitted before midnight eastern standard time.

All work samples must be mailed separately and postmarked by **March 8, 2010**. Please send work samples to:

Meet The Composer  
 Attn: Commissioning Music/USA  
 90 John St., Suite 312  
 New York, NY 10038

Applicant organizations will be contacted by email to acknowledge receipt of their application materials shortly after the deadline. Award notification will be made in July 2010. Notification will be sent by email to the lead organization's contact person and copied to all artists and co-commissioners listed on the application.

For Questions: Scott Winship, Program Manager: [swinship@meetthecomposer.org](mailto:swinship@meetthecomposer.org)

### **Also Keep In Mind:**

- Email is our preferred method of contact. Please ensure any spam filters you use are set to allow delivery of all email from meetthecomposer.org
- Early notification will not be given, please do not call or email requesting such
- All content from websites specified in any proposal materials (contact information, biographies, project descriptions, etc.) can be taken into consideration in determining eligibility and in application review.

### **Application Review**

The review criteria used to evaluate applications are as follows. Criteria are listed in order of priority.

- Artistic strength and accomplishment of the collaborative team as demonstrated by the work samples or their collaborative potential if submitting separately created works
- Artistic promise and feasibility of the proposed commission
- Demonstrated capacity and planning through application materials to realize the work
- Number of proposed performances and the potential exposure of the new work and commissioned artists
- Appropriateness of the commissioning fee (i.e. is consistent with industry standards) and feasibility of plans to secure funds for fees that are larger than the support offered by this program

Applications are first screened by Meet The Composer staff for completeness, clarity and eligibility. Where possible, applicants will be contacted to rectify any problems with an application. All eligible applications are then reviewed by an outside panel comprised of professional artists, presenters and arts administrators.

The review process has two steps. First is an artistic review. Based on the first criterion above, panelists will review work samples and assign a numeric score to each collaborative team. These scores are used to create a ranked list. Teams which are in the top 25 to 30 percent of this list are then moved on to the second step of the review process. The second step includes a detailed project review: In this stage panelists evaluate each proposed commission using all of the criteria above to make the final selection. In previous years 10 to 15 percent of applications were selected for awards.

