

COMPOSER COMMISSIONING

GUIDELINES

Philosophy

MTNA is dedicated to encouraging the creation of new works by American composers and annually assists its affiliated State Associations with the generation and performance of new music through the national Composer Commissioning program. A newly commissioned work receives its premiere performance at the convention of the State MTA responsible for that commission.

To further promote and recognize outstanding contributions to American music, MTNA annually has its State Affiliates submit their commissioned works to a panel of recognized composers for selection of the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year. The new work of the selected composer is presented in a concert performance at the next MTNA National Conference, and the composer is proclaimed the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year. The selected composer also receives a check for \$3,000.

Definition of a Commission

A *commission* is a formal, written agreement between two or more parties authorizing the performance of a certain task—that is, the act of entrusting, of placing confidence in someone to carry out a task that person has been authorized to do. In terms of the MTNA Composer Commissioning program, a commission is for the successful creation of a new musical work, for which the commissioning State MTA will pay a *commission fee*, including MTNA's matching funds up to \$750. *A commission is not a prize for an extant composition*; rather, it is meaningful encouragement for a recognized composer to create a new musical work after formal agreement is reached.

General Considerations

MTNA makes no stipulations regarding composer choice, performance medium, composition length or compositional style. These decisions are left to each state association and its commissioned composer. However, three practical considerations are worth noting:

- First, the new work by the selected MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year is presented in a concert performance during the next MTNA National Conference. The total time allotted for this, including recognition of the composer and presentation of the award, is twenty (20) minutes. When the length of the composition exceeds this amount of time, a representative portion of it may be presented.
- Second, the selected composer is responsible for providing the performer(s) for the presentation of the new work at the National Conference. MTNA provides no honorarium to defray expenses for this performance.

- Third, a composer entering a contractual agreement for commission of a new work will have his/her labeled score and CD deposited in the MTNA Archives at the University of Cincinnati Libraries, and accepts the fact that the three anonymous scores and CDs will not be returned. This is intended to encourage other performances of a commissioned work by making the score available for study and interlibrary loan. In an effort to protect the rights of the composer, the staff at MTNA National Headquarters affixes this notice to the front of the score:

Important Notice

Reproduction of this score, in whole or part, by mechanical or handwritten means is prohibited. The composer holds all rights pertaining to the attached score, including performance rights. Permission to perform this work must be obtained from the composer. Music Teachers National Association can assist with contacting the composer. Write to Executive Director/CEO, MTNA, The Carew Tower, 441 Vine Street, Suite 3100, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202-3004, or call the Executive Director/CEO at (888) 512-5278.

Suggestions for Conducting the Composer Commissioning Program at the State Level

CHOOSING A COMPOSER

- The State MTA President may appoint a commissioning chair to work with a committee to solicit and consider nominations.
- Any member or local association may recommend composers for further consideration at the state level.
- Each state should develop a procedure for selecting a commissioned composer. To be considered, a composer may be asked to submit scores, tapes, CDs and resume (or curriculum vitae) for review.
- The State MTA board should approve the final selection.

COMMISSIONING A COMPOSER

Generally, commissioning is done one or more years in advance of the premiere performance. Some states allow two years. A minimum time of ten (10) months

between commissioning a composer and the premiere performance at the state convention is recommended.

- Additional money may be provided by the State MTA for extraction of parts.
- The Internal Revenue Service requires that a Form 1099-MISC. (ellaneous) be issued to any person receiving more than \$600 per year. Therefore, the State must issue this form to the Composer by year-end in the year of payment, as well as file a copy along with a 1096 Transmittal Form to the Internal Revenue Service. Forms can be obtained from any office supply store, as well as the Internal Revenue Service. The 1099-MISC. form must be issued to the composer by January 31 of the year following payment, and the 1096 form must be filed with the Internal Revenue Service by March 1 of the year following payment.

PRESENTING THE PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Previously commissioned works may be performed along with the new work.

- The commissioned work, the winning compositions of the State's MTA-MTNA Student Composition Competition, and a work by each of the judges of the student composition competition may be programmed together to make a distinctive convention session.
- The commissioned work and compositions by members of the State MTA may be programmed together.
- Funds are sometimes provided by the State MTA to aid the premiere performance at the state convention.

The continued success of the MTNA Composer Commissioning Program depends on constructive input from the state MTAs. Questions and/or suggestions should be directed to the National Composer Commissioning Chair, found under National Chairs listed in every issue of *American Music Teacher*.

Information about the MTNA Composer Commissioning program also can be found on the MTNA website at www.mtna.org.

COMPOSER COMMISSIONING PROGRAM

RULES AND REGULATIONS

MTNA is dedicated to encouraging the creation of new works by American composers and annually assists its affiliated state associations with the generation and performance of new music through the MTNA Composer Commissioning program. A State MTA wishing to participate in the program must complete a contract in triplicate. In a joint commission, one of the participating State MTAs completes a contract form, acting on behalf of the other(s). Contracts are available from the MTNA National Headquarters.

Awards

The State MTA pays the composer a commission fee. The total amount of the fee is at the discretion of the State MTA. MTNA will match the State MTA's contribution to a maximum of \$750, but in no case will MTNA's contribution exceed the state's portion.

Two or more state associations may jointly commission a composer. Up to \$750 per state will be matched equally by MTNA. Thus, at the maximum dollar-for-dollar match, two states could offer a combined commission fee of \$3,000; three states, \$4,500; etc. Additionally, states participating in a joint commission may augment these amounts at their discretion, but with no further contribution from MTNA.

Eligibility

A State MTA may commission any composer who is a resident of the United States. The composer does not need to be a member of MTNA, a resident of the state(s) offering the commission, or a resident of any state in the division of which the commissioning state is a member.

Procedures and Regulations

- 1) After a State MTA Board approves selection of a composer to be commissioned, that state's Commissioning Chair must complete the MTNA Composers Commissioning Contract in triplicate. In a joint commission, the Commissioning Chair of the state MTA acting on behalf of the other(s) must complete the contract in triplicate.
- 2) The contractual delivery of the commissioned work to the State MTA Commissioning Chair must be at least four (4) weeks before the premiere performance at the state convention to allow the State MTA President to notify the MTNA Executive Director/CEO in writing, (see below), that this condition of the contract has been met and for the Executive Director/CEO to initiate the procedure for issuing a check in the amount of MTNA's matching funds.

- 3) The State Commissioning Chair must forward three copies of the signed contract including "Exhibit A" to the composer for signatures; include a stamped envelope addressed to the State MTA President.
- 4) After signing all three copies of the contract, the composer forwards them to the State MTA President. The State MTA President is responsible for checking that the contract is complete and accurate before forwarding all three copies to MTNA National Headquarters.
- 5) The MTNA Headquarters staff checks that the contract is complete and accurate and signifies final approval of the contract by signing all three copies.
- 6) One copy is filed at National Headquarters, the second is mailed to the composer, and the third is sent to the State MTA President for the state association's files.
- 7) When the composer has completed the composition and delivered it to the State MTA Commissioning Chair, and arrangements have been finalized for the premiere performance at the State MTA convention, the State MTA President must notify the MTNA Executive Director/CEO in writing that these conditions of the contract have been met.
- 8) Notification should be made a minimum of four weeks prior to the premiere performance. Upon receipt of the State MTA President's notification, a check is issued payable to the State MTA in the amount of \$750 or one-half the commission fee if the total amount of the fee is less than \$1,500.
- 9) The State MTA Treasurer may expect to receive the check within six weeks after the MTNA Executive Director/CEO is notified. In a joint commission, a check will be issued in the amount of MTNA's portion agreed upon in the contract. That check will be mailed to the State MTA Treasurer of the state who signed the contract on behalf of the other state(s). That person is also responsible for requesting the agreed-upon funds from the other state(s).
- 10) The Internal Revenue Service requires that a Form 1099-MISC. (miscellaneous) be issued to any person receiving more than \$600 per year. Therefore, the State must issue this form to the composer by year-end in the year of payment and file a copy along with a 1096 Transmittal Form to the Internal Revenue Service. Forms can be obtained from any office supply store or the Internal Revenue Service. The 1099-MISC. form must be issued to the composer by January 31 of the year following payment, and the 1096 form must be filed with the Internal Revenue Service by March 1 of the year following payment.
- 11) A credit line that reads: "The (insert year) commissioned work is funded by Music Teachers National Association and [State] MTA," must be printed on the program. Immediately following the premiere performance, the composer is presented with the check for the commission fee.

- 12) Each commissioned composer for each commissioning year will be considered for the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year award. The State MTA Commissioning Chair will submit four copies of the score and four copies of the recording to MTNA Headquarters at 441 Vine St., Ste. 3100, Cincinnati, OH 45202-3004 and postmarked no later than December 1. Three copies of the score and three copies of the recording must be submitted with no identification whatsoever of the composer, copyright holder or the nominating state. The fourth copy of the score and recording should be labeled completely and properly for submission to the MTNA Archives. All submitted copies of the scores and CDs become the property of Music Teachers National Association. The three unmarked copies of scores and CDs will not be returned to the composer and will be discarded upon completion of the selection process.
- 13) All scores and CDs are anonymously submitted to a panel of three recognized composers for selecting the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year and one or more Honorable Mentions.
- 14) By mid-January the National Composer Commissioning Chair informs the MTNA Executive Director/CEO of the results of the selection process. The MTNA Executive Director/CEO immediately sends a congratulatory letter to the composer selected as the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year. The Executive Director/CEO also forwards information regarding the selected composer to the MTNA conference program staff for the purpose of scheduling the performance at the next National Conference.
- 15) According to the terms of the contract, the selected composer is responsible for providing the performer(s) at the national conference. MTNA provides no honorarium or reimbursement of expenses for this performance.
- 16) As soon as possible after results of the selection process are known, the MTNA Executive Director/CEO sends notification of results to all other composers and State MTA Presidents and Commissioning Chairs. Scores and CDs are deposited in the MTNA Archives at the University of Cincinnati Libraries.
- 17) Immediately following the performance of the new work at the National Conference, the selected composer is presented with the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year award and a check in the amount of \$3,000.