

Commissioning logistics in a nutshell:

NOTE: Consortiums involve all of this for *each* commissioner. This admin work can be managed by the composer or one of the commissioners, but note that there are resources on the next page that make collecting this info or the process in general easier!

- **Timeline** - Working backward, you need to consider when the piece will be performed, when it will be due (usually taking into account a buffer in case changes need to be made), when the composer wants to start writing, and the fee schedule (see below)
- **Fees** - You need to consider whether you'll pay up front, when the piece is delivered, or some combination. Many put up a down payment, often 50%, and the rest upon delivery. Note that platforms like Consortio (see below) are built to protect payers and payees and involve different timelines because their payment systems are different
- **Musical** - The composer needs to have as much information as is applicable for the ensembles involved. This usually includes but is not limited to a) how many musicians, b) skill level, c) other forces if applicable, d) ranges (general, not just extremes), and e) current programming examples
- **Contracts** - These sound complicated, but if everyone's on the same page, they certainly don't have to be. Consider the logistics above and make sure to clarify who owns publishing rights (usually the composer), premiere rights (usually the commissioners), recording rights (could be the commissioner), and any exclusives (some commissioners want to hold performance rights for 1+ years, though make sure that's ok with the composer since that limits their ability to sell it and make a living!)
- **Performance** - Make sure to clarify
 - printing costs and whether you'll get physical copies. Most composers send final drafts in PDF and the ensembles print themselves
 - recording needs. Many composers find recordings incredibly helpful for future opportunities, and ensembles need them for grant and competition applications too (see further suggestions below)

Other considerations/suggestions to maximize results:

- Aim for commission experiences that involve direct connections with donors and audiences, not just the ensembles. Many do not realize what composers do or even if they're alive!
 - Face-to-face interactions are meaningful, engaging, and transformative
 - If in-person isn't possible, consider having the composer record a few short videos about the piece, its history, their writing process, their own musical or personal past, and more. These are great materials not only to build awareness of the project, but also for potential grant opportunities later on
- Think creatively about recording costs. Instead of hiring producers, recording engineers, professional mic setups, considering buying/borrowing a Zoom H6 recorder and center it at the first audience row. It's better than nothing and can be edited post-performance.
- Don't be intimidated by cost, administrative work, or other risks. Organizations, tools and services like the ones below are available to make it easier for you to get to the art and impact of that art sooner!

Organizations which help choruses of all kinds minimize their workload and maximize their effectiveness administratively and/or artistically:

- **Consortio** - Tools and services designed to make consortium commissioning easier, affordable, and meaningful for all involved. Beyond logistics (scheduling, payments, contracts, and more), there are dedicated spaces for interaction with composers and a searchable marketplace full of future work ideas for programming consideration.
- **Chorus Connection** - A one-stop-shop for administrative help with choruses including scheduling, project management, and more. Their mission is “to connect choruses with their members, patrons, and communities, making it easy for them to deliver beautiful choral music to the world.”
- **JW Pepper’s CutTime** - One example of a larger company’s organizational tools. Many are opening up to different components of their tool sets so you can customize to suit your needs.

Organizations which support, celebrate, and amplify BIPOC voices. Consider learning from, collaborating with, and donating to these leaders of our field!

- **The Composer Diversity Database** - An extensive database of composers, works, and research resources. From their home page: “The Institute for Composer Diversity is dedicated to the celebration, education, and advocacy of music created by composers from historically underrepresented groups through online tools, research-based resources, and sponsored initiatives.”
- **MBC** (Music by Black Composers) - From their mission and story page: “MBC was born from the realization that young musicians learning classical music seldom, if ever, have the opportunity to study and perform music written by Black composers. This omission silences a rich vein of musical creation from global cultural consciousness. The effects of this erasure are most serious for aspiring Black classical musicians... Many give up; many more do not even start... With a multi-pronged approach, [MBC is] spreading awareness of and access to music by Black composers to children and adults alike in ever-expanding ways.”
- **WOCA** (Women of Color in the Arts) - From their member profiles page: “WOCA is an extensive network of female professionals dedicated to creating an equitable, inclusive and diverse performing arts field. Our professionals hail from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds... and serve in an assortment of roles at performing arts centers, festivals, dance and theatrical companies, artist management firms, museums, educational institutions, foundations, service organizations and state and federal arts agencies.”
- **CAAPA** (Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts) - From their history page: “... seeking to create wider-based performance opportunities for African American classical musicians and performing artists, as well as introducing the classical music genre, along with other art forms to African American audiences.”
- **Alternate ROOTS** - From their home page: “Alternate ROOTS supports the creation and presentation of original art that is rooted in communities of place, tradition or spirit. We are a group of artists and cultural organizers based in the South creating a better world together. As Alternate ROOTS, we call for social and economic justice and are working to dismantle all forms of oppression—everywhere.”