

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pencil, poised to write on a sheet of music paper. The paper is filled with musical notation. The background is dark, and there is a large orange triangular graphic on the right side of the image.

THE
CONDUCTOR-COMPOSER
CONNECTION
COLLABORATING WITH LIVING COMPOSERS

WELCOME!



Pierce College
Puyallup, WA

I am **Dr. KAITLIN BOVE**
Director of Bands
Assistant Professor of Music



Today, we will discuss ...

BENEFITS OF COMPOSER COLLABORATION

MODES, STYLES & PROJECTS

Commissioning & Consortiums

Campus Residencies

Video Rehearsals

Q&A or Outreach Projects

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS, CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

Discussion Question ...

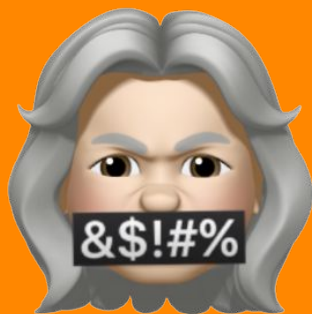
In what ways have you interacted with composers in the past as a performer, director, or otherwise across your career as a musician?



What's the difference between
Ludwig van Beethoven and John Mackey?



John Mackey is alive.
(and also much taller)

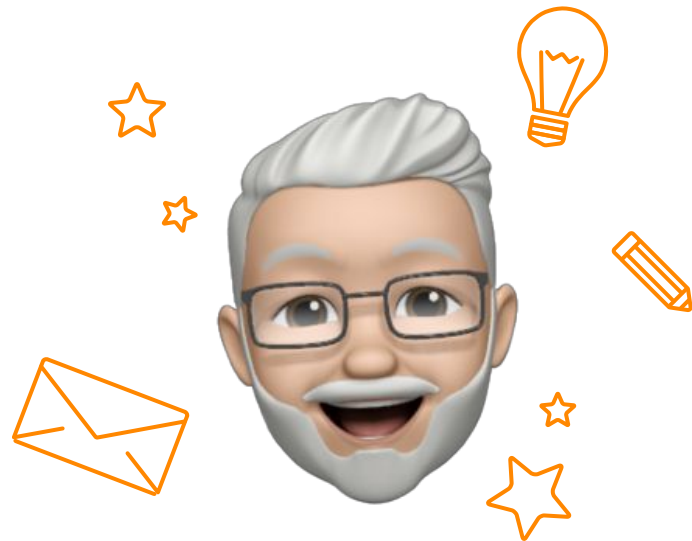


Advantages to Programming Dead Composers ...

- ▶ Often well-documented performance practices
- ▶ Historical/Heritage Context
- ▶ Dead composers can't actively contradict your interpretation

Advantages to Programming **LIVING** Composers ...

- ▶ Accessibility
- ▶ Feedback
- ▶ Deeper connection
- ▶ Composer intention
- ▶ Visible career pathway for students
- ▶ Grow heritage



COMMISSIONING

Work with a composer to create a new piece for you and your ensemble

WHAT KIND OF PIECE ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

- ▶ Difficulty Level
- ▶ Duration
- ▶ Style
- ▶ Specific Composer
- ▶ Extra-Musical Theme
- ▶ Instrumentation Concerns

- ▶ When do you want the piece delivered?

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT COMPOSER FOR THE JOB

- ▶ Where Do You Find Composers?
- ▶ Listen to Their Music
- ▶ Difficulty Level
- ▶ Location
- ▶ Delivery Date
- ▶ Will You Get Along?

COMPOSERS APPRECIATE KNOWING ...

- ▶ Difficulty Level
- ▶ Duration
- ▶ Extra-Musical Theme
- ▶ Style (*sometimes*)
- ▶ Instrumentation Concerns
(*i.e. "please don't feature the oboe"*)

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS ...

EXPECT TO FUND:

- ▶ Per/minute Composition Rate
- ▶ Engraving/Copyist Fee*
- ▶ Composer World Premiere Residency*

INDIVIDUAL VS. CONSORTIUM

INDIVIDUAL:

- ▶ Pay **full fee**
- ▶ **Premiere** the work
- ▶ Retain **exclusivity** for a time frame

Best for a very specific topic/need/interest

CONSORTIUM:

- ▶ **Split fee**
- ▶ **Premiere** the work*
- ▶ Handle **organization & payment**

Best for pieces with mass appeal

CONSORTIUM TIPS

LOW BUY-IN = More Members (20 @ \$250)

HIGH BUY-IN = Less Members (5 @ \$1000)

Know the **DIFFICULTY LEVEL, DURATION, EXTRA-MUSICAL THEME, PAYMENT & COMPLETION DATE**, and **EXCLUSIVITY** details before you launch your consortium

COMMISSION CONTRACT

HAVE A CONTRACT IN PLACE PRIOR TO LAUNCH ...

- ▶ *Total* Fee & Payment Date
- ▶ Estimated Difficulty/Duration
- ▶ Title (if known)
- ▶ Delivery Date & Format
- ▶ Exclusivity Clause

Contract may be generated by commissioner or composer

HOW DOES THE COMPOSER PUBLISH?

SELF PUBLISHED

- ▶ Deal solely with composer
- ▶ Set terms with composer
- ▶ Work with composer after delivery date

PUBLISHER

- ▶ Deal with composer and/or publisher
- ▶ Publisher influences terms
- ▶ Publisher may require extra fees
- ▶ Work with publisher after delivery date

HOW TO ANNOY YOUR COMMISSIONED COMPOSER ...

- ▶ Too few/many consortium members
- ▶ Source Material/Title too specific
- ▶ Musical outcome too specific
- ▶ Providing no framework then unhappy with results
- ▶ Financial issues
- ▶ *“In the style of <insert more expensive composer>”*



FEE NIGHTMARES

A HORROR STORY





NIKK
PILATO

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

SCENE

Nikk Pilato sets out to commission a new piece for his high school band to perform at the BOA National Concert Band Festival ...



NIKK:

Donald Grantham, will you write us a 5-minute, grade 6 work for wind band that will eventually become *Baron Cimetière's Mambo*?





DONALD:

Why, certainly! My rate is
\$1000 per minute of music.





SEVERAL MONTHS
LATER ...



NIKK:

Thanks for the completed piece, Mr. Grantham - here is your \$5000.





SUDDENLY -



DONALD:

Actually, your bill is \$8,000.
My publisher needs \$3,000
for copying fees ...





NIKK:

Hey, Boosters - about that fundraising ...



THE END ...?



THE

CAMPUS RESIDENCY



Bring a composer into your classroom
and concert hall



Campus Residencies work best for ...

PREMIERES AND/OR MAJOR WORKS

COMPOSER FEATURE PROGRAMS

**CONNECTING THE COMPOSER DIRECTLY
WITH YOUR STUDENTS & COMMUNITY**

Financial Considerations ...

EXPECT TO FUND COMPOSER'S:

- ▶ Travel to and from site
- ▶ Meals during travel and residency
- ▶ Honorarium (daily/residency fee)

- ▶ The purchase price of the pieces you are performing

**consider splitting a residency with other local schools!*

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA CASE STUDY

**STUDENTS IN THE 3 USC BANDS
WERE GIVEN 2 SURVEYS WHILE
PREPARING THOMAS' MUSIC:**

- 1 Survey Mid-Rehearsal Cycle
- 1 Survey After Thomas' Residency



OMAR

THOMAS

PEABODY CONSERVATORY



CHRISTIAN MICHAEL FOLK
& AMANDA SCHLEGEL

USC MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCHERS

SURVEY RESULTS SHOWED:

AN INCREASE IN
STUDENT **CONFIDENCE**
TO PLAY THE PIECE TO
TEMPO

OMAR



THOMAS

PEABODY CONSERVATORY



CHRISTIAN MICHAEL FOLK
& AMANDA SCHLEGEL

USC MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCHERS

SURVEY RESULTS SHOWED:

AN INCREASE IN
STUDENT PERCEPTION
THAT THE PIECES ARE
**ENJOYABLE, PLAYABLE,
UNIQUE, & INTERESTING**

OMAR



THOMAS

PEABODY CONSERVATORY



CHRISTIAN MICHAEL FOLK
& AMANDA SCHLEGEL

USC MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCHERS

SURVEY RESULTS SHOWED:

**A SIGNIFICANT
INCREASE IN STUDENT
CONFIDENCE TO
PERFORM WITH
EMOTIONAL INTENTION**

OMAR



THOMAS

PEABODY CONSERVATORY



CHRISTIAN MICHAEL FOLK
& AMANDA SCHLEGEL

USC MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCHERS

“

It was great to see how important the piece is to Omar. It inspired me to loosen up a bit and enjoy the music more, even though it was still really hard.

”

“

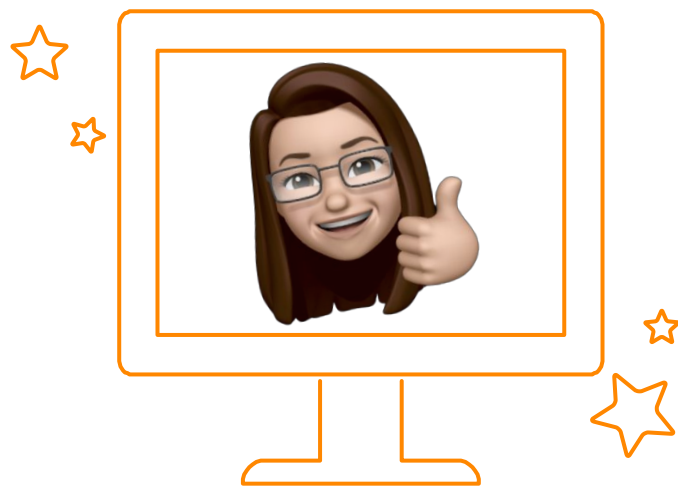
Omar was so cool. I loved hearing about the background of the piece, why he wanted to write it, and why he was excited about. Gave me a lot more context to the character we were meant to create with the piece and helped me feel a lot more personal connection with it. What a BLAST!

”

THE

VIDEO REHEARSAL

Bring a composer into your classroom when you can't bring them into your classroom



Video Rehearsals work best for ...

FEEDBACK ON SHORTER PIECES

**FIRST COMPOSER
COLLABORATIONS**

PROGRAMS WITH TINY BUDGETS

**FEEDBACK FROM COMPOSERS
WHO CAN'T TRAVEL TO YOUR
SCHOOL**

- Don't Travel
- Cannot Leave Family or Job
- Are Already Traveling Elsewhere
- Travel Distance is Prohibitive



ALEX
SHAPIRO

FRIDAY HARBOR, WA

Lights Out (2015)
interactive Video
Rehearsals and
choreography
collaborations

Video Rehearsals Tips

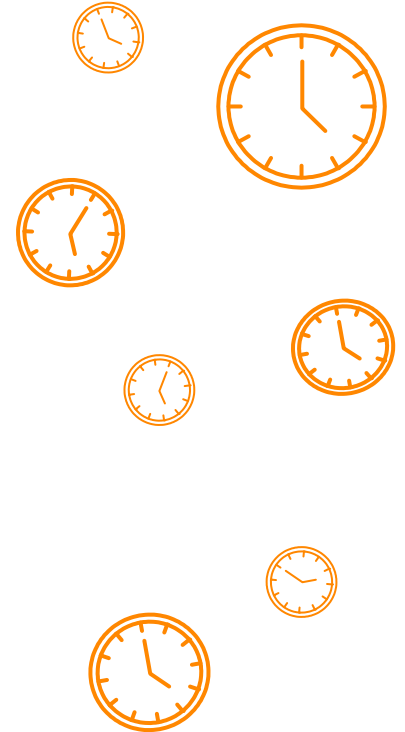
CHECK YOUR TECH

SEND A RECORDING PRIOR TO REHEARSAL

SCHEDULE MORE TIME THAN YOU THINK YOU NEED

TIME ZONES

Q&A: SCREEN QUESTIONS AND MODERATE



Will all composers do Video Rehearsals?

NO! Some composers love or hate the technology. Every composer values their time in a different way. Don't take it personally!



Should you pay a composer for a Video Rehearsal?

YES! Some may offer to do it for free (especially if you are a consortium member) but don't ask if you can't afford to pay for the clinic.



A CONDUCTOR-COMPOSER
COLLABORATION OF
STRAVINSKIAN PROPORTIONS





SCENE

Andy Pease wants to program a full concert of music for the Stravinsky *Octet for Wind Instruments* instrumentation for the Hartwick College faculty to perform.



ANDY
PEASE

HARTWICK COLLEGE





COMMISSION

Andy commissions
Oliver Caplan, Joanne Harris,
Chris Lamb, and
Michael Markowski to write
companion pieces.





FUNDING

The finances for the commission, residency, and recording project came from grants, the music department account, and student activities funding.





RESIDENCY

On campus, the composers worked with the faculty octet, student ensembles, composition majors, and produced the recordings of their pieces.



What was most memorable about the Stravinsky Project?

“What I especially love about Andy and this project was that he wanted the composers to be involved in the rehearsals and recording process from the beginning. This might sound so simple, but it's actually really rare that composers are engaged in this way for a professional recording.”



MICHAEL
MARKOWSKI

NEW YORK, NY
USA

What was most memorable about the Stravinsky Project?

“Being a part of Andy Pease’s octet project was especially wonderful as a composer who enjoys score study! Having the opportunity to dig into what my friends and colleagues had written in Igor’s tremendous wake was such a fun way to get to know them better; and lend my voice to the conversation.”



JOANNE
HARRIS

NEW YORK, NY
USA



HEAR FROM THE COMPOSERS!



What do you, as the composer, get out of working with ensembles?

“It’s always amazing to get to know the musicians in the ensembles, and I learn quite a lot from being a part of the rehearsal process. Most of the time, composers only get to hear the performances of our pieces.”



VIET

CUONG

PHILADELPHIA, PA

USA

What do you, as the composer, get out of working with ensembles?

While those are always rewarding, it's the rehearsals where we can really get perspective about what parts of our writing work most effectively. In rehearsals with ensembles I kind of take "inventory" of what works best, and this perspective allows me to improve my writing with each new piece."



VIET

CUONG

PHILADELPHIA, PA

USA

What is your advice for first-time conductor-collaborators?

“Thanks to the internet, composers are usually just an email or message away! Don’t be afraid to reach out—trust me, composers are alone most of the day and we’re always happy to hear from you.”



VIET

CUONG

PHILADELPHIA, PA

USA

Setting Goals ...

What's one way you can reasonably collaborate with a living composer at your school site next year?

What about a more long-term goal?



THANKS FOR COMING!

Questions?

Contact me at
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