

GETTING STARTED WITH COMMISSIONING NEW MUSIC

I. Choose your composer

II. Secure your funding

- Create a budget first! (sample attached)
- Research grants and foundations (see attached list)
- Check with local arts council
- Host a Fund Raiser event!
- Use a Crowd Funding site (see attached list)
- If you are not part of a non-profit organization, find an umbrella organization that will sponsor you.

III. Set Your Timetable

- In general - plan on one year from invitation to performance depending on the scale of the work.
- Try to make sure you have the music in hand 6 weeks before the concert at the **latest**.

IV. Create a Contract with the Composer:

Be sure to include the following:

- Schedule of payment (usu. 50% down/50% on completion and delivery)
- Ownership (usu. composer)
- Instrumentation
- Length of work
- Right of sole performance
- Right of sole recording
- Credit for commissioning on all published copies

V. You've received your new work, now what?

- Read/play through to see if there are any issues with notation, registration, trills, etc.
- Discuss and inform composer of any changes you feel are needed to the score (corrections or clarifications). Do not be afraid to suggest changes that will increase its legibility. Your composer should be open to your suggestions as they should want to make their piece intelligible for others.
- Make sure the composer has changes in his future editions and dates each score revision.

VI. Performing your new work!

- Publicity is key! (Use a publicist if you can)
- Target new music listeners
- Use social media - create video posts to drive interest on line/rehearsal shots/composer interviews
- Use a ticketing website and/or an easy QR code link to attach to your posts
- If it is a free event, at least use an online invite app (eventbrite or similar) to encourage registration
- Consider live-streaming your concert so it can be heard by a more people (registration for this also)
- Be sure to have a working session with the composer
- Make sure to have a dress rehearsal in the hall (it will sound very different than your living room!)

[OPTIONAL — VII. Recording - preserving your legacy]

- Refer to **II.** above (change hall rental to studio time, add producer, mastering and editing)
- Choose a distributor (most will charge a fee for production & distribution)
- Many organizations self-produce and just hire a distributor to get it out worldwide
- Consider releasing as digital download only to keep costs low
- Publicize for maximum exposure/downloads - social media/YouTube

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions, or want advice or project feedback - I'm happy to help!

Ms. Swinchoski appears at the NYFC Flute Fair courtesy of The Music School of Delaware, Wilmington, DE

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SOME COMMON ISSUES YOU MAY ENCOUNTER IN YOUR NEW SCORE

These are some of the most common issues I've seen with new commissions:

- notation - beaming not consistent with beat placement in measure
- meter not compliant with overall structure of rhythms/melodies
- distribution of hands in piano works (pianist will need to look at this to check)
- parts not physically lined up in the score - hard for pianist to see where others are.
- spelling inconsistencies
- trills that aren't possible
- instrument range inconsistencies
- missing dynamics/tempi in score (sometimes they only print on the top line of the score)

Many music writing programs will create notation that will add up to the correct number of beats in a measure, but the beaming might not be user-friendly. The composer always needs to check his scores carefully to be sure all the notation is readable. The more the player has to stop and decipher, the less time there is for creating texture and phrasing in your new work. (And the less likely that someone else will want to make the effort to learn it.)

Ex. 1

notation adjusted

Ex. 2

notation adjusted

Original Score

250

Fl. Cl. Pno.

p **O**

This system covers measures 250 to 264. It features three staves: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Piano (Pno.). The Flute and Clarinet parts are in 4/4 time and contain melodic lines with triplets and slurs. The Piano part is in 4/4 time and features a complex accompaniment with many sixteenth notes. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present. A circled letter 'O' is placed above the piano staff at measure 257.

265

Fl. Cl. Pno.

P

This system covers measures 265 to 279. It features three staves: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Piano (Pno.). The Flute and Clarinet parts continue their melodic lines. The Piano part maintains its intricate accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. A circled letter 'P' is placed above the piano staff at measure 275.

280

Fl. Cl. Pno.

This system covers measures 280 to 291. It features three staves: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Piano (Pno.). The Flute and Clarinet parts have long, sustained notes. The Piano part continues with its accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p* is present.

292

Fl. Cl. Pno.

This system covers measures 292 to 303. It features three staves: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Piano (Pno.). The Flute and Clarinet parts have long, sustained notes. The Piano part continues with its accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *p* is present.

Original flute part

255 *p* **0**

260

266

271

278 **P**

287

297

The original flute part consists of seven staves of music. It begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff (255) features a series of eighth-note triplets, followed by a dynamic marking of *p* and a circled '0' above the staff. The second staff (260) continues with eighth-note patterns and includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#). The third staff (266) shows a change in time signature to 7/8, then 4/4, and finally 6/8. The fourth staff (271) continues in 6/8 time. The fifth staff (278) has a circled 'P' above the staff. The sixth staff (287) continues with eighth-note patterns. The seventh staff (297) ends with a double bar line.

Easier to read

254 *p* **0** **PNO**

259 **PNO** **PNO**

264 **PNO**

269 **PNO** **P** **PNO**

277 **PNO**

284

The 'Easier to read' version consists of seven staves of music. It begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff (254) features a series of eighth-note triplets, followed by a dynamic marking of *p* and a circled '0' above the staff. Red arrows labeled 'PNO' point to specific notes in this staff. The second staff (259) continues with eighth-note patterns and includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#). Red arrows labeled 'PNO' point to notes in this staff. The third staff (264) continues in 6/8 time. A red arrow labeled 'PNO' points to a note. The fourth staff (269) continues in 6/8 time. Red arrows labeled 'PNO' point to notes, and a circled 'P' is placed above the staff. The fifth staff (277) continues in 6/8 time. A red arrow labeled 'PNO' points to a note. The sixth staff (284) ends with a double bar line.

FINDING A COMPOSER

- Start small, use your contacts, check out local college composition departments, listen on music sharing sites, (Soundcloud, Youtube, etc.)
- Determine the style of music that speaks to you, that makes you want hear more!
- Explore ASCAP & BMI for composer profiles. Attend their conferences and listen.
- Don't be afraid to reach out via social media or email.
- If they're not available for a commission they may turn refer you to other composers of a similar style that can meet your needs.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR COMMISSIONING COMPOSERS

MEET THE COMPOSER:

<https://newmusicusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Commissioning-Music-A-Basic-Guide.pdf>

AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM:

<https://composersforum.org/resources/commissioning-by-individuals/>

FUNDING LINKS FOR COMMISSIONING NEW MUSIC AND RECORDING

GRANTS & FOUNDATIONS

Alice B. Ditson Fund: <https://ditsonfund.org/programs>

American Composers Forum: <https://composersforum.org/programs/acf-create/>

Chamber Music America: <https://chambermusicamerica.org/grants/classical-commissioning/>

Copland Fund: <https://coplandfund.org/programs>

Frank & Lydia Bergen Foundation: <https://www.wellsfargo.com/private-foundations/bergen-foundation/>

Fromm Foundation: <https://www.networkfornewmusic.org/commissions>

Koussevitzky Foundation: <https://www.koussevitzky.org/how-to-apply/>

National Endowment for the Arts: <https://www.arts.gov/grants/grants-for-arts-projects/music>

Network for New Music: <https://www.networkfornewmusic.org/commissions>

New Music USA: <https://newmusicusa.org/program/new-music-creator-fund/>

CROWDFUNDING

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT CROWDFUNDING:

[HTTPS://WWW.LAUNCHBOOM.COM/BLOG/BEST-CROWDFUNDING-SITES-FOR-MUSICIANS/](https://www.launchboom.com/blog/best-crowdfunding-sites-for-musicians/)
Important!!

- Campaign video
- Consistent posting and engagement
- Incentive Rewards

Kickstarter: <https://www.kickstarter.com/>

Indiegogo: <https://www.indiegogo.com/>

ArtistShare: <https://www.artistshare.com/featuredartists>

Zeffy: <https://www.zeffy.com/home/product-peer-to-peer-campaign>

SAMPLE BUDGET

EXPENSES:

Composer fee _____

Performer fees _____

Hall rental _____

Piano tuning _____

Publicity _____

Printing/Posters _____

Postage _____

Admin costs/fees _____

Ticketing _____

Arch. rec./video _____

(Reception) _____

Other _____

****TOTAL:** _____

INCOME:

Grants _____

Foundations _____

Individual Contributions _____

Fund Raising _____

Expected Ticket Sales _____

Other Income _____

****TOTAL:** _____

**** Totals should match!**

KEEP IN MIND: Most grants will want to know your exact plans for the premiere performance, so set the date, book the hall and plan the rest of the program. Try to build a program focussed on highlighting your new commission.



MARGARET SWINCHOSKI, flutist, began her musical studies at the age of nine in Vermont. She graduated with degrees and high honors both in Performing Arts and Music Education from Johnson State College, Johnson, Vermont and has been honored with their Outstanding Alumni Award. She received her Master of Arts degree from Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College.

Currently principal flute with the NY Gilbert & Sullivan Orchestra, she has served as principal flutist with the Westchester and Harrisburg Symphony Orchestras, and travels to Ohio each summer to play principal flute with the Lancaster Festival Orchestra. Ms. Swinchoski is on the faculty of The Ridgewood Conservatory in Ridgewood, NJ and The Music School of Delaware in Milford, DE.

Ms. Swinchoski has spent her entire career surrounded by new music and was involved in the creation of dozens of works prior to 2002. Since then, as a founding member of the Palisades Virtuosi, she has commissioned and premiered 100 works for flute, clarinet & piano from such well-known composers as Paul

Moravec, Melinda Wagner, Eric Ewazen, Carlos Franzetti, Robert Manno, Dan Cooper, Frank Ezra Levy & Allen Shawn among others. Palisades Virtuosi has concertized through the tri-state area and in Nevada, Hawaii and Canada. Volumes 1 thru 6 of PV's New American Masters series have been released by Albany Records and Volume 7 on the 4-Tay Records label. To date these recordings have received fantastic reviews, including being named to the Fanfare Magazine "Most Wanted" lists!

Recently moved to Delaware she has formed a new flute & harp duo, Duo Dolce, with Joy Slavens, and the Horey-Swinchoski Duo with marimbist, Scotty Horey, fellow faculty member at The Music School of Delaware.

She was a featured soloist at the National Flute Association Convention in the World Premiere of Leo Kraft's "From The Hudson Valley" and also premiered Richard Lane's Flute Concerto with the Adelphi Chamber Orchestra. She has appeared as a concerto soloist with many other orchestras.

Ms. Swinchoski was presented in her debut recital by Artists International at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. Her solo debut CD "From The Hudson Valley" was released by Albany Records in 2000 and garnered rave reviews from "Fanfare" magazine and "American Record Guide". Ms. Swinchoski can also be heard on the Newport Classics, CRI and High Point labels.

MARGARET SWINCHOSKI - WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS



1989 - with Quintet of the Americas - works by Stuart Balcomb, Jacob Druckman, Steven Mackey, Roberto Sierra, Julia Wolfe and Jeffrey Wood

witty, inventive, and colorful readings — AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE
wonderful tone, great ensemble — FANFARE MAGAZINE



1996 - Leo Kraft's "Cloud Studies"

A joyful, enchanting journey. Filled with vibrant color and sensitive autumnal mood. Outstanding musicianship that speaks to the soul. — AMAZON REVIEWS



2000 - Solo Release - works by Eric Ewazen, Arthur Foote, Leo Kraft & Godfrey Schroth

"This is one of those "little" recordings that will not get much press or have many sales but will be treasured by the few people lucky enough to happen on it." — FANFARE RECORDS

"Immediately, one is struck by Swinchoski's technical acumen. Then the listener settles in and absorbs timbres and musicianship rarely heard from concert flutists. A distinct personality comes through Swinchoski's recording." — SALT LAKE TRIBUNE



2011 - with Lancaster Festival Orchestra & Richard Stolzman - works by William Bolcom and Claire Fischer

Under conductor Gary Sheldon, the Lancaster (Ohio) Festival its through a wide array of styles, offering a sure touch for whatever requirements the music demands at any given time. — GRAMMOPHONE MAGAZINE



2016 - with di-vi-sion - Douglas Anderson - "Chamber Symphony No.2"

The performance seems committed and the instrumentalists play very well. The recording is clear and well balanced. — FANFARE MAGAZINE



2018 - Quintet a Pois - Jeffrey Kaufman - "Overture to a Shakespeare Comedy"

A cheery, seven-minute "Overture to a Shakespeare Comedy" (2016) is given a lively performance by Quintet a Pois. — AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE



2017 - with di-vi-sion - all works by Benjamin Yarmolinsky

delightful works for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello & piano!



2019 - with di-vi-sion - Jim Lahti - "of death and the planets"

...rhythmic fluidity of speech and elegance of contrapuntal texture...Excellent interpretative performances by the ensemble... — KATHODIK.IT

PALISADES VIRTUOSI'S NEW AMERICAN MASTERS Series



2006 - Volume 1 - works by Dan Cooper, Aaron Grad, John Lampkin, Richard Lane, Robert Manno, Godfrey Schroth and Paul Mack Somers.

"The stylistic and emotional range of this release is as extraordinary as is Palisades Virtuosi's fine-tuned ensemble work... In terms of intonation, articulation, and musical insight, Palisades Virtuosi represent the best of our current world-class standards." --FANFARE MAGAZINE



2008 - Volume 2 - works by Gary Eskow, Carlos Franzetti, Frank Ezra Levy, Caroline Newman and Allen Shawn.

"The NJ based PV are truly definitive. That is to say that their standard of playing is both masterful and in full support of the contemporary composers who have contributed and will continue to contribute to their growing repertoire. They and their composers are exploring, and revealing, the possibilities of their unique ensemble..." -- FANFARE MAGAZINE



2010 - Volume 3 - works by Eric Ewazen, Randall E. Faust, jazz legend Dick Hyman, Fred Messner, Ben Model and Brian Schober

"There is not a single detail of execution or recorded sound to quibble with here, and fans of all three instruments will find much to admire and emulate. Sustaining a repertoire is a noble cause, but creating one is a feat few dare to attempt with such sustained effort. Kudos to Palisades Virtuosi for their noble mission." --FANFARE MAGAZINE



2012 - Volume 4 - works by Ryan Francis, Matthew Halper, Amanda Harberg, Sunbin Kim, Joseph Turrin, Melinda Wagner and Gwyneth Walker.

"This is an enjoyable recital, both in the music and performances. ...Recommended to those who enjoy well-written woodwind music, and to others interested in exploring worthwhile music by American composers who are not yet household names." --FANFARE MAGAZINE



2014 - Volume 5 - works by James Chwalyk, Jr, Sergio Garcia-Marruz, Pulitzer Prize winner, Paul Moravec, Steve Perillo, David Sampson, Raymond Wojcik and Donald Reid Womack.

"True "virtuosi," the performers aren't daunted by the occasionally demanding scores, but penetrate easily to the heart of each singularly different offering....As everywhere on this disc, the players respond with both virtuosity and style"



2017 - Volume 6 works by Adrienne Albert, Matthew Baier, Gary William Friedman, Linda Marcel, Ting Ho, Jeff Scott and Gary Schocker.

*"Palisades Virtuosi...perform with such high levels of exactitude."
"The real heroes here are the members of Palisades Virtuosi, who deliver faultless renditions throughout of this varied selection of pieces with unflagging enthusiasm and freshness."*

<http://www.palisadesvirtuosi.org/new-american-masters-volume-6>



2021 - Volume 7 - works by Seymour Barab, Thomas Juneau, Jeffrey Kaufman, Ron Levy, Martin Sedek, Roger Stubblefield, & Kerry Turner.

"[Palisades Virtuosi's] playing is unfailingly spirited, colorful, and sculpted with the greatest care. The contributions of the various "guest artists" are also quite admirable. The sound quality is excellent, offering a natural, rich, and well-balanced acoustic."

NOTES