

Musicians' Union



FEE GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA COMMISSIONS 2013

Fees for media commissions will vary according to the nature of the project and the commissioner, the status of the composer, medium, and most importantly the rights package required.

Bear in mind that you may not always be able to negotiate a fee but may be presented with a budget you need to work to. Generally the fee offered for a media commission will incorporate the cost of producing a recording as well as writing the music, so you will have to weigh up how long the work will take to complete.

The following issues should be considered when costing composition work:

- How much work is involved?
- Is the commission for the compositional element only, i.e. producing a score, or will you be performing/producing a recording? If you are producing a recording, will there be additional costs you'll need to factor in such as musicians' fees and studio costs?
- How much music is required? How complex is the commission?
- Will you consider the fee in terms of a daily or hourly rate or a rate per minute of completed music?
- How many individual cues? In addition to calculating per minute fees, some composers will also include an uplift/further fee for each individual cue.
- The status and experience of the composer
- The type of programme or production and whether the music will be synchronised
- The number of episodes the music will be used in
- The rights acquired in the commissioning agreement
- The restraints of the budget of the production or project. Is negotiation possible?
- How much time will you need to set aside for additional rewrites/editing? Applying daily rates to some elements of the work may be useful, particularly if there is a need for rewrites or amendments.
- Time you may spend in attendance at recording sessions or the edit
- The terms of the publishing contract, if there is one? What royalties are payable? You may have a sense of the level of royalties that may be generated by a certain type of

programme or production if it is successful. For example, a successful children's TV series may be repeated many times (more often than drama) and therefore has the potential to generate royalties. The level of potential royalties may also vary from channel to channel.

If you are writing lyrics as well as the music, this should be taken into consideration when calculating how long the work will take and may need to be budgeted for separately.

A programme credit should be agreed and stated in the contract, even when a moral rights waiver is included in the commissioning contract. Moral rights waivers should be resisted where possible.

ORCHESTRATION AND MUSIC PREPARATION

Fees for orchestration and music preparation should be considered and budgeted for separately.

The MU publishes guideline rates for arrangers and copyists which can be obtained from the Music Writers' Section Secretary or your MU Regional Office

PUBLISHING

It is important to clarify contractual terms prior to undertaking any work.

The copyright in the composition should be retained by the composer; thus providing for the possibility of PRS/MCPS royalty payments in the event of further exploitation.

It is becoming more common for commissioners, particularly in television, to put pressure on composers to assign their publishing rights to a favoured third party. These deals should be resisted where the terms are unfavourable, such as a publisher asking for a 50 / 50 split of royalties (we would advise seeking a 70 / 30 split in your favour).

In feature film and advertising, most respondents to our survey said they had retained the publishing rights in the music and less were obliged to sign a publishing deal when accepting a commission.

COPYRIGHT AND RELATED RIGHTS

In addition to the copyright in the composition itself there are quite separate and independent rights in: (i) the recording, and (ii) the performance embodied in the recording.

While the right to synchronise the composition, the recording and the performance into the specific programme/production would be covered by the agreed commissioning fee, the composer should ensure that the use is limited solely to that particular programme / production and that they are clear as to the exact exploitation rights sought by the commissioner.

The MU provides a contract advisory service whereby any commissioning contract can be vetted, free of charge, by specialist music industry solicitors. Contact your MU Regional Office to take advantage of this free service for members.

FEE EXAMPLES

These are examples of actual fees paid to composers for commissions and are taken from survey data. The examples given are total commissioning fees, excluding royalties, received by MU and BASCA members for media projects. The majority of these fees cover the production and delivery of a recording as well as the score.

The number of minutes refers to the amount of music commissioned.

TV DOCUMENTARY	
MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE
10	£1,500
10	£4,000
12	£1,500
15	£1,500
19	£2,000
20	£2,500
20	£2,500
20	£3,000
20	£4,000
21	£2,000
25	£3,000
25	£3,500
25	£4,000
28	£3,000
30	£3,000
30	£4,000
35	£3,500
40	£2,000
40	£3,500
40	£5,000
40	£8,000
40	£8,000
45	£5,000
45	£7,000
45	£10,000
45	£10,000
50	£8,500
55	£6,100
60	£3,500
60	£6,000
70	£7,000
80	£9,000
90	£10,000
60	£5,000
160	£24,000
180	£12,000

FEATURE FILM		TV DRAMA	
MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE	MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE
2	£800	10	£4,000
11	£1,700	20	£2,000
18	£2,000	20	£2,000
25	£30,000	25	£3,000
30	£30,000	35	£5,000
35	£22,000	35	£6,000
45	£10,000	40	£10,000
50	£10,000	88	£27,500
50	£14,000	100	£80,000
50	£23,000	100	£20,000
55	£14,000	120	£42,000
60	£30,000	120	£45,000
90	£70,000	160	£80,000
90	£84,000	180	£36,000
		180	£38,000
		200	£50,000
		240	£125,000
CHILDREN'S TV		TV LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT	
MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE	MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE
14	£2,500	9	£500
20	£1,500	10	£5,000
20	£1,800	12	£4,000
20	£5,000	15	£3,000
30	£5,000	15	£3,000
39	£8,230	15	£7,000
43	£15,000	23	£6,000
87	£25,000	24	£6,000
100	£14,250	24	£7,900
104	£21,450	30	£6,000
120	£14,000	120	£12,000
120	£20,000	240	£20,000
120	£50,000		
130	£15,000		
160	£27,000		
180	£18,000		
360	£30,000		
480	£65,000		
520	£52,000		
550	£79,500		
600	£60,000		
480	£65,000		
520	£52,000		
550	£79,500		
600	£60,000		
ADVERTISING		TV SIGNATURE TUNES AND STINGS	
MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE	MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE
0.25	£3,400	0.5	£800
0.5	£3,000	0.5	£3,000
0.5	£4,000	0.5	£6,000
0.5	£5,000	0.5	£5,600
0.5	£8,000	0.5	£1500

ADVERTISING CONT.		TV SIGNATURE TUNES AND STINGS CONT.	
MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE	MINUTES OF MUSIC	TOTAL FEE
1	£1,000	0.5	£3,000
1	£1,600	0.5	£1,500
1	£1,500	0.5	£3,500
1	£1,500	1	£2,800
1	£3,000	1	£2,000
1	£8,000	1.33	£2,000
1	£15,000	1.5	£4,500
1	£20,000	2	£450
2.5	£5,000	2	£1,100
4	£10,000	2	£1,090
5	£12,000	2.5	£350
		3	£1,600
		3	£1,050
		3	£2,500
		5	£640
		5	£1,500
		5	£3,200
		5	£5,000
		5	£1,500

FEE PER MINUTE OF MUSIC

CATEGORY	RANGE OF PER MINUTE FEES	MEAN AVERAGE PER MINUTE FEE
TV DOCUMENTARY	£34 - £400	£117
FEATURE FILM	£111 - £1,200	£509
TV DRAMA	£100 - £800	£294
CHILDREN'S TV	£75 - £417	£163
TV LIGHT ENT.	£56 - £500	£248
ADVERTISING	£1,000 - £20,000	£8,263
TV SIG TUNES & STINGS	£128 - £7,000	£1,624