

Chamber Music America

2021 CLASSICAL COMMISSIONING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Application Deadline: April 23, 2021, 9:00 PM ET

Grant Notification: June 2021

Grant Period: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024

Grants made through this program are funded through the generosity of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Chamber Music America's *Classical Commissioning Program* provides grants to professional U.S.-based presenters and ensembles whose programming includes Western European and/or non-Western classical and contemporary music. Grants are provided for the commissioning and performance of new works by American composers. The program supports works scored for 2–10 musicians performing one per part, composed in any of the musical styles associated with contemporary classical music.

The Board of Directors of Chamber Music America has made diversity, inclusion, and equity a primary focus of the organization's work, and has adopted the acronym ALAANA (African/Black, Latinx, Asian/South Asian, Arab, and Native American) for use in its equity focus. Read CMA's [Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity](#).

Women and ALAANA composers have historically been under-represented as *Classical Commissioning* program grantees. To help applicants become familiar with these artists, CMA has compiled a database of ALAANA, women, and gender non-conforming composers who have expressed interest in creating new work for classical/contemporary chamber ensembles. The [Composers Equity Project](#) can be found on CMA's website.

CMA's goal, through its panel process, is to arrive at a final slate of grantees whose composers are representative of the field in terms of race, gender and contemporary style. Applicants are presented anonymously to panelists who, through multiple rounds, review submitted sound samples only, and make their selections without knowing the identities or demographics of the ensembles and composers.

ELIGIBILITY: ENSEMBLES

An ensemble is eligible if

- it is a professional group with a commitment to Western European or non-Western contemporary classical music (as demonstrated on a submitted work sample)
- it consists of fixed personnel and instrumentation or is part of a flexible roster or a collective that performs in varying configurations of no more than 10
- in the case of a duo, performs as equal partners, rather than as soloist and accompanist, and consistently publicizes itself as a duo
- the leader/primary member of the ensemble is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (non-profit status is not required of ensembles)

ELIGIBILITY: PRESENTERS

A presenter is eligible if it

- is a 501(c)(3) organization or otherwise eligible for charitable contributions for federal income, estate and gift-tax purposes
- presents classical, contemporary, other music genres, and/or multi-disciplinary performing arts programs

PRESENTERS AND ENSEMBLES

- must be based in the U.S. or its territories
- must be CMA Organization-level members, paid through June 2021, the date of the panel
- must have no overdue reports or outstanding financial obligations to CMA
- must have waited one full grant cycle after completing any previous CMA commissioning project before re-applying

If applying to the program, an ensemble may not be a guest on another group's application. An applicant ensemble may apply to either CMA's 2021 *Classical Commissioning* or *New Jazz Works* program, but not both. Similarly, a composer may appear on only one application in either program. A presenter may submit only one application and apply with only one ensemble.

ELIGIBILITY: THE COMPOSER

- must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- may not have outstanding commitments to this commissioning program, or to *New Jazz Works*
- may be a member of the applicant's ensemble
- is an individual, not a group

THE COMPOSITION

The proposed new work

- must be a new concert-music piece written for 2–10 musicians and scored for one musician per part (a conductor, if used for the performances of the work, is considered one of the 10 musicians)
- must be in the form of a notated score (the composer retains all rights)
- must be finished and one digital copy of the score submitted to CMA by September 30, 2022
- must be booked for its premiere by February 1, 2023 (does not need to be premiered by this date)
- must be performed at least three times in public in the U.S. or its territories by June 30, 2024
- must be performed exclusively by the commissioned ensemble (including guest artists) through June 30, 2024
- may not include a greater number of guest artists than there are musicians in the applicant ensemble

The program does not fund previously written works or arrangements of previously written works, works-in-progress, portions of works (such as individual movements or variations), compositions that are soloistic in nature (such as concertos or works for soloist and accompaniment), consortium commissions, music for dramatic works (staged or unstaged), chamber opera, choral works, incidental music for other media, or fees for non-musician participants in the proposed work. If the work is to be written as part of a collaborative project involving other artistic disciplines, it must also be a stand-alone work for concert performance.

GRANT COMPONENTS AND FUNDING

Composer Fee

The fee ranges from \$5,000 to \$20,000, depending on the length and scope of the proposed work, as well as on the size of the ensemble for which it is scored. CMA may fund the request in full or in part.

	Up to 10 minutes	10 to 25 minutes	More than 25 minutes
2 to 4 musicians	\$5,000 to \$7,500	\$7,500 to \$15,000	\$13,000 to \$18,000
5 to 10 musicians	\$7,500 to \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$17,000	\$15,000 to \$20,000

Rehearsal Honorarium

Each musician, including guest artists, receives \$1,000 toward rehearsal of the new work.

If the composer will perform or conduct the work, the rehearsal honorarium is considered to be included in his/her commission fee. Conductors are eligible for honorariums; however, the number of musicians (including the conductor) may not exceed 10.

Copying Costs

Up to \$1,000

GRANT AWARD AND PAYMENT

CMA contracts with and makes grant payments to the applicant entity—either the ensemble or presenter. It is the grantee's responsibility to compensate the composer and, if the grantee is a presenter, the ensemble.

If a grantee ensemble has 501(c)(3) status, payment is made to the organization. If not, all grant payments are made to the designated primary ensemble member, who must provide government-approved documentation showing his/her U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status. A presenter grantee must provide proof of non-profit status.

Grant funds are taxable; grantees must comply with all applicable city, state, and federal laws, ordinances, codes, and regulations affecting the project. The designated ensemble member or presenter grantee is solely responsible for the management of the project, and the disbursement and reporting of grant income.

THE APPLICATION

CMA uses an online application through Submittable. Only online applications will be accepted. Go to <https://cma.submittable.com> to create a free Submittable account if you do not already have one.

- Log-in at <https://cma.submittable.com>
- You may type directly into the online form or draft your responses in an offline document and cut/paste your information into the online application.
- To save the work you have done on your application, you must click the "Save Draft" button at the bottom of the form before exiting. You may return to your saved application to continue working on it by following the log-in instructions. Submittable maintains your draft for 21 days.
- CMA recommends that you also save your draft in an offline document as backup.

Uploads

Audio Uploads

Audio files must be uploaded to the online application. Acceptable file-types are mp3 or m4a. Submissions are reviewed from the beginning; therefore, editing of each audio file is recommended. MIDI files are not accepted.

The Composer's Audio Work Samples:

- should provide high quality performances
- two selections, preferably chamber music, with up to 5 minutes of a single work, or excerpt from a work on each file
- must include work[s] written within the past 25 years
- may be re-recorded from a commercially released studio recording

The Ensemble's Audio Work Samples

- small ensemble works (2-10 musicians), with up to 5 minutes of a single work or an excerpt from a work on each file
- should show the group's ability to perform contemporary music at a high level
- two selections (contrasting works are recommended)
- must include at least one work written within the past 25 years (Audio File 1 or 2)
- must include at least one unedited recording from a live concert performance (either Audio File 1 or 2); the remaining sample may be from a commercially released or studio recording

Additional important Ensemble Audio notes:

- The files may not include works:
 - performed by soloists or that contain extensive solo passages;
 - that prominently feature guests/soloists not involved in the proposed commission;
 - with orchestra;
 - that are scored for more than 10 musicians;
 - that are performed by more than one musician per part.
- If the ensemble is a subset of a larger collective or roster, a majority (greater than 50 percent) of the musicians that will perform the commissioned work must appear on each work sample. Include, if possible, at least one work with the same (or similar) instrumentation and size as the work to be commissioned. The number of musicians on the ensemble files, however, should not exceed the commissioned instrumentation by greater than 50 percent.
- If the new work is for a small group, such as a duo or trio, do not include audio performed by a larger ensemble.
- If the ensemble is of fixed instrumentation and personnel (such as a string quartet) and has had a personnel change, the recording must feature a majority (greater than 50 percent) of the current members.
- If desired, include a work of another period if the music reflects the group's mission and strengths.
- It is recommended that the ensemble audio files feature different works rather than two movements from the same work.
- If a work includes narration, the instrumental element must be strong enough for panelists to adjudicate the artistry and technique of the ensemble.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

MOU(s) from the composer and, if applicable, guest artist(s) are required. Presenter applicants must also upload one from the ensemble. A composer may not sign an MOU with more than one applicant, and an ensemble may not appear on more than one application. If a duplication occurs, the applicants will decide which application moves forward. If no agreement is reached, both applications will be disqualified. Sample MOUs can be found in the Application.

PANEL REVIEW PROCEDURE

Classical Commissioning applications are reviewed by an independent panel of chamber music professionals versed in current compositional trends and performance practices. The panel does not include members of the CMA staff or board. See [Representative list of panelists](#).

Round 1: Composer's Audio Review

The Composer's Audio Samples—listened to anonymously (without knowledge of the composer's identity)—are evaluated for compositional technique/skill, imaginative understanding of the instrumentation, and ability to speak to the listener on an emotional level. Panelists listen to 2 minutes of each Audio Sample from the beginning.

Round 2: Ensemble Audio Review

Applicants advanced to this round (approximately half of the applicant pool)—listened to anonymously (without knowledge of the ensemble's identity)—are evaluated for their performance of the selected repertoire, artistic vision, ensemble cohesiveness and ability to speak to the listener on an emotional level. Panelists listen to 2 minutes of each file from the beginning.

Scores are combined and ranked from Rounds 1 and 2 to produce the final slate. The adjudication continues only if a tie between the applicants needs to be broken. If not, the top-scoring applicants will become the grantee slate.

To Submit an Application

- Go to <https://cma.submittable.com> and click on "2021 Classical Commissioning Application."
- Complete all text boxes on Submittable
- Prepare your attachments. Label Audio files as indicated below:
 - **Ensemble Files:** E1 – Applicant Name; E2 – Applicant Name
 - **Composer Files:** C1 – Applicant Name – Composer Name; C2 – Applicant Name – Composer Name
 - **Memorandum(s) of Understanding** from the Composer and, if a Presenter applicant, between the Ensemble and Presenter
 - **Composer's bio** or résumé
- Upload attachments to application.
- When complete, sign and date the application.
- Click "Submit" to send the application to CMA. You will receive a confirmation email.

OTHER INFORMATION

[FAQS](#) | [APPLICATION](#) | [APPLICATION WORKSHOP SCHEDULE](#)

SUPPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Program: [Susan Dadian](#), program director, Classical/Contemporary, (212) 242-2022, ext. 102
- Membership: [Geysa Castro](#), membership manager, (212) 242-2022, ext. 114
- Technical: [Submittable](#)

Application Deadline: April 23, 2021, 9:00 PM, ET

Late submissions will not be accepted. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications in advance of the deadline to avoid any last-minute complications.

[CHAMBER MUSIC AMERICA](#), the national network of ensemble music professionals, was founded in 1977 to develop, strengthen, and support the chamber music community. With a membership of nearly 6,000, including musicians, ensembles, presenters, artists' managers, educators, music businesses, and advocates of ensemble music, CMA welcomes members representing a wide range of musical styles and traditions. In addition to its funding programs, CMA provides its members with consulting services, access to instrument and other insurances, conferences, seminars, and several publications including *Chamber Music* magazine and the weekly e-newsletter, *Accent*.