International Contemporary Ensemble
Call For ____ Info Session #2 Notes
February 9, 2021

Please visit this document (from our first Info Session) for an overview of the Ensemble’s history in commissioning activities and previous collaborations with artists.

General

● The International contemporary ensemble invites individual creators or creators collectives in the practice of performed sound so composers sound artists generative music makers, or fill in the blank with your, your craft to collaborate with us over an 18 month period. Starting in April 2021 selected artists will be commissioned for a new work to be premiered at one of our concerts during the upcoming season commission fees start at minimum $4,000 and selected artists will also receive remote workshop and rehearsal opportunities with the Ensemble’s musicians throughout the process. Two of the selected artists will be supported through generous partnership with the Jerome Foundation.

● The deadline is March 2nd

● The selected artists will receive a commission of $4,000, and more depending on the size and scale of the work workshop time within musicians including individual group sessions, and as I said during the pandemic as it continues to be unsafe to meet in person, especially for winds and voice, we meet remotely. And it works quite well.

● We provide electroacoustic technical support, we have a pretty deep roster of musicians who have a big commitment with digital signal processing and live sound.

● We provide production, scenographic, lighting, video and instrument design support

● Performance of the works will be by members of the International Contemporary Ensemble, and/or its collaborators, or your collaborators, if you’re applying with a collective, or you yourself.

● We provide documentation, including documentary promotional storytelling. High Definition performance video, and it's usually when the artists permit including you the artist who's created the work if you agree, we put it on to our archive www.digitice.org

● We also provide marketing and PR support. And just to zoom in on that point, that means that throughout the process, we help our audience understand what we're doing with you, the composer-creator, opening a little window into that process.

● Scope and Scale: These aren't limitations, but points of comparison. So for us, $4,000 is a commission, for example, a solo piece with electronics, it's about 12 minutes long or less. It could also mean that $4,000 commission is for an instrumental duo. And maybe you are one of the players in that duo, like with Jen Curtis and Tyshawn Sorey, seven to nine minutes in length. Anything larger in scale than that will be a larger commission. We just wanted to give you a little benchmark of what $4,000 means for our commissioning scale.

● The panel – will be made public but only after they have reported their decision to the Ensemble.
Questions

- "I'm primarily known as a jazz composer and performer and have strong recordings of my work in that area. I'm also composing more experimental chamber music, but have few high quality recordings of that work. Would you recommend I submit work that is closest to what I have in mind for the ensemble, or music that is musically further from what I would compose for the ensemble but with better recordings?"
  - It's a really hard decision to make but I know that our panel has the ability to interpret from your intentions based on what you write in the artist statement. So if you were to say something like, “this is a high quality piece that I'm very proud of. But I know it's not the style that I would like to write for the International Contemporary Ensemble. Instead, work sample #2 is something that I would like to see, it is more the direction I'd like to go with the International Contemporary Ensemble.” Even just that brief description of work sample #1 vs. work sample #2 will be very good information for the panel.
  - There's also nothing preventing you from providing your website. We're not only going to assess it based on some kind of limitation of the two work samples, we just don't want to require everyone to make a huge portfolio for this application, but if you'd like to add more work samples by way of your website, please do.

- "Could you help and give direction on how to write a good artistic statement?"
  - What we're looking for is your distinctive creative voice in the artistic statements. What is it that motivates you to create and how might that manifest in a collaboration with us? It’s not a specific proposal. What is the way that you've always wanted to collaborate but never have been able to? How does that define your goals as an artist? Aim it more toward goals and aspirations, than anything else.
  - The biography is where you can speak to your experiences. The artist statement might be places where you speak to what you'd like to do as an artist.

- "Is it open to non US citizenship?"
  - Yes, anyone in the world can apply.

- "For the Jerome foundation spots, how is residency defined? If I go to school in Minnesota but graduate later this year and don't continue to live in MN, am I still eligible?"
  - You are eligible for the parts that aren't funded by Jerome, no matter where you live. Think of the Jerome Foundation support as just that – support for a project that will involve composers and artists supported by lots of different foundations.
  - In order to be compliant with the Jerome Foundation guidelines we will also be selecting composers who hail from New York City or Minnesota, and what that means is that you are currently a non-student living in either of those locations. You'll see questions in the application that help us to answer that question. But ultimately, if the panel likes your work, it doesn't matter where you come from.

- "In reading the application call, it says that you are open to collaborations from composers, sound artists, etc...are you open to working with a poet/performer/vocalist where that artist provides the text and some musical ideas/sketches, but the compositions are co-created (as opposed the artist creating a composition ahead of time..."
for the ensemble). What if you WANT to share your idea/proposal instead of just submitting work samples?"
  ○ Yes. There's a long history of generative composer author types, within the ensemble.
  ○ If you want to submit a proposal, you’re welcome to, but I’d especially like to acknowledge that it takes a lot of time and we just don't want to exploit your artistic labor for just an application process. So, if you decide to do that, thank you. It is not required, but if that's what you desire to do. You’re welcome.

● “Can WAV files be shared in the application?”
  ○ Yes, since they are links to your own hosted material, instead of uploads. You can send whatever format you already have hosted somewhere so Google Drive, Dropbox, etc. whatever kind of cloud storage. Everything is hyperlinked, not upload based.

● “Am I eligible if I'm at the tail end of a Jerome Foundation fellowship?”
  ○ Yes.

● “Will the uploads be limited to one file type per piece? As in, only a PDF, or only a video, etc?”
  ○ It will not limit you since it is just putting in links instead of files.
  ○ That being said, if you find any problem with the application, and you're on the page and you meant to fill out something on the previous page and you would like to redo it just send us an email. You can fill it out again. We have no desire for the application process to cause any confusion or disqualify you.

● “Is it appropriate to propose a piece for a specific ensemble member?”
  ○ You absolute may, no problem. We just can't necessarily guarantee the timeline, because then it becomes a process of mutual availability and working with that specific person to realize the work on the timeline that makes sense for them, but that sounds totally doable.
  ○ We don't have control over any individual’s schedule, so we'll just work together on that.

● “Can I send collaborations with other musicians to show my process?”
  ○ Yes, absolutely. Your work samples can include prior collaborations, including if the prior collaborations happened to be with members of the International contemporary Ensemble or Talea or whoever, that would be great.

● “How many artists are you planning to commission? (roughly?)”
  ○ This year three to five commissions. And we'll do exactly the same thing next year. And hopefully, if we have better fundraising circumstances (it's not the greatest time to fundraise for an ensemble or organization) we will increase this number. This is a huge important part of our work so we're maximizing the number we could do at any given year.

● Is it appropriate to apply with a solo/collaborative project AND as a duo?
  ○ So if you have a solo project, and you'd like to be considered in that space. You also have a collaborative project and you'd like to be considered for that. Feel free to submit two applications. And the reason for that is that a lot of artists' collaborative work is very different from the work they do by themselves. So we
wouldn't want you to be assessed in one space by the panel differently than in another. If you feel you're a different artist in each of those spaces then, I hope it's not too much to ask, just fill out a second application for the collaborative project.

- Can you elaborate a on what you listed as support for instrument design? Would that also include helping instrument construction or is that just a sort of design process?
  - I'll just give a couple examples. So, in the projects with Bergrun Snaebjornsdotir and Sabrina Schoreder, she's made a lot of transducer instruments. Those are taking the elements of the percussion collection that we have in our ensemble and adding vibrating transducers to them with amplifiers and in many cases it's a combination of fabrication by the composer themselves, or by members of our staff/team, and artists.
  - Ultimately, we don't want the limit of your creativity to stop at instruments of the orchestra. But if you have an idea for modifying instruments or creating something from scratch – Sabrina Schroeder and Ashley Fure’s projects have had really substantial fabrication related to them. Sometimes that means that the scale of the project has to increase and so we have to work together to also raise more money for the project, but we're not afraid of doing that. Just don't want to over promise that we can make another Ashley Fure Force of Things level instrument design. But we're certainly down to, to explore it and expand in that way, anytime.

- “I'm unsure what the instrumentation of the ensemble is. It seems to vary from project to project.”
  - Definitely, the instrumentation of the performers in the ensemble membership is modular. That being said, it includes all of the representatives of every instrument category in the Western European orchestra. It also includes harp and guitar, percussion and electronics video projection design, etc.
  - In its largest form, we've taken the stage with 36-50 people.
  - Most of our work is duos, trios, septets.
  - The average scale of our work is modular and usually unusual instrumentation so it's much more rare that we assemble a string quartet, than it is to have a bassoonist and cellist who play together.
  - Composers often take the opportunity to combine players in a unique way that they wouldn't have, if they were commissioned by a string quartet or orchestra. So I encourage that here as well.
  - Electronics are also in almost every project that we do.

- “Can you elaborate about receiving “Production, scenographic, lighting, video, and instrument-design support” - Does that mean collaborating with other artists from those fields? Does it mean that the commissioned artist has to come up with visual ideas?”
  - There's no obligation to create a visual component to your work. First, if you decide you'd like to do that but you don't know the artists we can help to try and find that person.
  - It's not necessarily the case that every project should have that. We don't, for example, add visual layers to the projects just for superficial reasons. But if it’s
core to your work, the projection design or lighting design, then we'll support that in our group in the collective of our 36 musicians and artists. There are already people working in visual media, lighting design, sound electronics, and instrument design.

- “The call is meant for composers only or performers as well?”
  - This relates to what it's called “Call for ____.” We don't want to feel that in, or rather we don't want to prescribe the traditional practice of composing as the only person to whom we're inviting. So instead, if you are a performer, and you have always wanted to compose this might be a place for you. If you are a performer who works in devised work like devised theatre (so you want to create a project in real time with the artists, without scores) that’s great!
  - The whole purpose of this is that every artist should feel welcome in this process, because so many artists have felt unwelcome despite not considering themselves a capital C composer. But also those composers are welcome to!
  - We welcome people from lots of different disciplines and affiliations with artistic craft. We're also not turning down composers who like to sit down with their engraving software or pen and paper, that's also very welcome.

- “You mentioned the ensemble might collaborate with other artists on these commissions, can you elaborate on which of the ensemble’s collaborators could potentially be involved (or does it depend)?”
  - That'll happen after your application is accepted and we start talking about what the piece will be. It will take time to figure out if this is a piece that we can manage, or that it can be realised effectively with the people who are in the Ensemble, or if we should add some visual artists or choreographers, directors, text makers.
  - We will supplement the core skill set of the group with more artistic collaborators, if needed.

- Is there a time limit for the submitted samples?
  - No. But if you submit a work that is the durational piece that was for example, a 24 hour piece, and you'd like to help us know which component of that, which, you know, 30 second moment of that you'd like us to jump into, feel free to make a note about that.

- “I'm a poet and you said you work with devised authors but I'm also a performer. In terms of a work sample, would you want to see like a PDF of poems or would you prefer something that actually shows me performing? Or would you like both?”
  - I would recommend that one of your work samples is core to the primary artistic craft you're trying to apply with, and the other is aspiration, toward the project that you might realize with us.
  - Another way of describing that: “This is a piece I'm very proud of. And this is a piece that I would like to expand with the help of the International Contemporary Ensemble.” And then, in your artist statement you might talk about the hybridity of those two spaces like, “this is what I've been doing; this is what I'd like to be doing.”
• “So, no problem for a link to be to a compressed folder that contains a wav file, a PDF of score, and a descriptive text statement, pointing to specific moments in the piece to highlight?”
  ○ No problem.
• “Is it possible or advisable or acceptable to submit one PDF that has multiple links in it that's all the same? For a large scale project, in the way it may have developed as one sample and then something very separate. Or should they be specifically on two different links/places when we submit?”
  ○ I like the idea I like what you're proposing a lot and I think the panel will as well, which is essentially that you're offering a kind of brochure, a little like a synthesis of what a piece was. So, if you consider yourself like a tour guide of your work and that PDF helps them to understand that maybe this is a photo of how the work was installed, this is a link to the third portion of the piece and here's a link to the first portion of the piece, that's fantastic. You don't have to go to that length, but if that's the way you want to best express what you thought was most valuable about your work, then please do.
  ○ In short, yes, you can upload that kind of PDF. The work sample itself is totally open as to what you'd like to do but I know being totally open doesn't help being clear. So to be clear, please help us in guiding the panel through your work.