Call for Artists: The 2021-2022 Cedar Commissions

The Cedar Cultural Center, a nonprofit performing arts organization and all-ages music venue located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is looking for the next round of artists to take part in the 2021-22 Cedar Commissions!

If this application process presents barriers to you based on language, location, or disability, The Cedar will accommodate special application requests to the best of our ability.

Please contact Robert Lehmann at rlehmann@thecedar.org or 612-440-8406.

What is The Cedar Commissions?
The Cedar Commissions is a program that commissions six early career/emerging Minnesotan composers and musicians each year to create and perform new music. Since the program’s launch, The Cedar has commissioned 60+ artists of diverse styles and backgrounds. The Cedar Commissions is made possible by a grant from the Jerome Foundation.

What do Cedar Commissions Artists do?
Cedar Commissions artists must create 30+ minutes of new music for The Cedar’s stage between August 2021 when recipients are announced and February 2022. We define new music as music that has not been previously written, composed, recorded, or performed. Artists debut their new work at a live public concert at The Cedar in February 2022. Artists are required to attend six cohort meetings, held each month at The Cedar from September to January. Finally, artists must participate in a wrap-up meeting in March 2022 and complete an evaluation.

In the event that social gathering restrictions are in place due to COVID-19 during the grant period, we will work with artists to make adaptations to the meeting formats, collaboration methods, and performance platform as needed (in 2020, we recorded artists’ pieces at The Cedar and premiered them online).

What do Cedar Commissions Artists receive?
Cedar Commissions artists are each paid $4,000 in September 2021. They also have access to an additional $500 stipend to be used for additional tech and performance expenses. Whatever remains is paid out to artists after their final performance in February. Additionally, artists receive artistic mentorship, administrative and marketing support from Cedar staff, high-quality professional photos, and video documentation of their final performances.

Who is eligible for a Cedar Commission?
1. Applicants from ALL musical genres and styles are eligible
   - The Cedar is committed to supporting a diverse cohort of artists that reflects its stewardship of global music, relationships, and community. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) and LGBTQ+ artists are encouraged to apply.

2. You must be an early career / emerging artist to be eligible
   - Jerome defines “emerging artists” as artists who have a focused direction and goals, even while still developing their artistic “voice;” have yet to be substantially celebrated within their field, the media, funding circles or the public at large; and are vocational (as opposed to avocational, academic, amateur or educational) artists. Read more on this definition at jeromeldn.org/defining-early-career-emerging-artists.

3. You must apply as a lead artist, not as a group to be eligible.
   - The Cedar Commissions is intended for individual artist leads, not groups or bands. You are certainly encouraged to work collaboratively with other musicians as part of your project, but your application needs to have one name on it with one artist’s project vision in mind.
   - Only one application per lead artist is allowed.
   - Collaborators (musicians or bandmates) can be listed as part of more than one project.

4. Applicants must live in the state of Minnesota to be eligible.
Who is ineligible for a Cedar Commission?

Applicants living outside the state of Minnesota, and full-time, degree-seeking students are not eligible for The Cedar Commissions. Previous Cedar Commission recipients are ineligible for two years following their commission year.

How do I apply for The Cedar Commissions?

Submit the following by **Wednesday, June 30th, 2021 at 11:59 PM CDT** by email to rlehm@thecedar.org

1) **Up to two pages or up to three minutes of video describing your project**

   *Please answer the following questions:*

   - **What is your project idea?**
     - Please clearly outline your idea for The Cedar Commissions. The strongest project ideas have a clear focus, are rooted in your previous artistic work, but clearly “push” or “stretch” you as an artist.
     - Explain how receiving a Commission will help you explore innovative new territory, ideas, or collaborations that wouldn’t be possible without this support.
     - Explain why this work is artistically relevant, both personally and in a larger community, cultural, or societal context. Why you? Why this project? Why now? And why does it fit at The Cedar?
     - **Note:** Your project idea must primarily focus on the creation, writing, or composition of new music (which includes experimental and improvisational music), not on the recording, audio production, or purchase of equipment. These activities may be included in your budget, but should **NOT** be the primary focus of your project or budget. This grant is not meant to be primarily focused on skill development.

   - **How feasible is your project?**
     - Please include a rough timeline for completing your project, and explain how you plan to budget the Commission funds in order to successfully complete your project idea. Make sure to set aside an appropriate portion of the budget as payment for your time as well as your collaborators’.
     - **Note:** All works will be performed along with two others’ projects in an evening-length performance. New work must be no more than 45 minutes in length and stageable within The Cedar’s space.

   - **How will this project further your career as an emerging artist?**
     - Explain how receiving a Commission will support the next step of your career as an emerging artist.
     - Explain how your samples support your proposal or demonstrate your ability to carry out your project.
     - Please provide a clearly defined vision of your final performance.

2) **One page or up to a minute and a half video describing your artistry**

   *Please include the following information:*

   - We want to know about your background as an artist. Please let us know about your previous performance experience, composition experience, and any other relevant artistic and musical experience (this may include any private lessons, formal education, mentorship or apprenticeships, self-teaching, performing with bands, etc.)
   - Feel free to format this information in the form of a resume, submit a page of written narrative, or share a video hosted on any 3rd party site (YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.). Please attach a transcript or rough outline of your video submission, as well.

3) **Two audio or video work samples totaling no more than 5 minutes in length**

   - Strong work samples should represent your musicality and capability as an artist. Please briefly identify your role in the work samples (for example: “I wrote ‘Track 1,’ produced it, and played piano and vocals”).
   - Samples may be hosted on any 3rd party site (YouTube, Vimeo, Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.)
   - The total length of the 2 work samples combined must be 5 minutes or less. If your work sample is one part of a longer piece, please note start and end times of the sample in the body of your submission email.
How are Cedar Commission Artists chosen?

Artists are selected through a review process. A review panel made up of local musicians, former Cedar Commission artists, community members, Cedar Artist Collective members, and Cedar staff looks at every application and reviews them based on four criteria:

1. **Project Idea**
   - Do we have a clear understanding of what this project is, and what the artist is trying to do?
   - Is this idea strongly supported by the artist’s past work?
   - Is this idea exploring innovative new territory, ideas, or collaborations that wouldn’t be possible without receiving a Cedar Commission?
   - Do we have a clear understanding of why this work is artistically relevant at this moment in time, both personally and in a larger community, cultural, or societal context?
   - Does this project idea primarily focus on the creation, writing, or composition of new music (not audio production, recording, purchasing new equipment, skill development, etc.)?

2. **Feasibility**
   - Do we feel that the artist has outlined a realistic timeline and budget to complete this idea?
   - Will the new work be 30-45 minutes in length and stageable within The Cedar’s space?

3. **Emerging Artist**
   - Does the artist demonstrate how they are an emerging/early career artist based on this definition?
   - Does the artist demonstrate how this project will support the next step of their career?
   - Do we think this project will push or stretch the artist?
   - Does the artist provide a compelling vision of their final performance and articulate the impact they hope it will have on audiences?

4. **Work Samples**
   - Do the work samples give us a strong idea of the artist’s musicality and capabilities?
   - Do the work samples support the rest of the artists’ application?

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**When will the 2021-22 Cedar Commissions Artists be announced?**

Applicants who receive a commission will be notified no later than July 30th, 2021. Public announcement of Commissions artists will take place on August 9th, 2021.

The Cedar is committed to providing feedback on applications as requested.

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**How can I get support on my Cedar Commissions Application?**

**Attend an Online Cedar Commissions Application Webinar**

*Tuesday, May 25th from 6PM to 7PM CDT*

This webinar will walk you through the Cedar Commissions application, and give you an opportunity to ask questions about the application process. Webinar will be hosted via zoom and archived online at thecedar.org/cedar-commissions

Free - [Sign up here](#)

**Attend an Online Cedar Commissions Q&A with a Past Cedar Commissions Artist**

*Saturday, June 12th from 2PM to 3PM*

This session is geared towards people who’ve dug into the application and have gathered questions in the process. The Q&A with a past Cedar Commissions artist will be streamed and archived online at thecedar.org/cedar-commissions

Free - [Sign up here](#)

If you cannot attend any application sessions, questions may be emailed to Robert Lehmann at rlehmann@thecedar.org

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