

CLC MUSIC PREPARATION RESEARCH PROJECT

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

OVERVIEW

This report summarizes my findings on rates, industry practices, and general concerns among professional music engravers/copyists (an interchangeable term for the purposes of this report), music librarians, and dedicated music printers within Canada, the United States, the UK, Europe, and Oceania. The report is divided into three parts. Part 1 presents existing rates and fee structures drawn from a variety of sources: international music organizations and unions, online guidelines compiled by freelance music engravers and printers, and individual rates from the interviewees who took part in the corresponding survey. Part 2 synthesizes the participant responses into relevant categories for examination. Finally, Part 3 presents recommendations and initial steps toward the formation of a national standard set of fees. This proposed template acknowledges diverse factors such as union minimum rates versus open market practices and expectations, local cost of living, and the many practical challenges facing professional music copyists today.

PART 1: DATA COLLECTION OF EXISTING FEE STRUCTURES

A. INTERNATIONAL MUSIC PREPARATION FEES

I collected music engraving/copying and printing & binding fee templates from several international musicians unions and organizations. I edited the selection down to three major organizations:

- The American Federation of Musicians (AFM 2019)
- Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM 2022)
- The Musicians Union of the UK (MU 2023)

These rate sheets deal primarily with music preparation services for “commercial music preparation” settings (film & TV scoring sessions, musical theatre, orchestral crossover/“pops”) but provide a valuable metric for pricing services per page or per active frame of music, which can often be applied to classical/concert music settings.

As the music engraving/copying scale rates varied for multiple disciplines/settings (Symphonic, Broadway, Recording Session, Film & TV) I calculated an average fee of the General Price List, Symphonic (“concert music”) minimums, and Broadway (“commercial music”) minimums.

B. INDIVIDUAL MUSIC ENGRAVER / PRINTING & BINDING PRICING

After examining the above fee structures, I collected individual pricing lists from other freelance music engravers/copyists and dedicated music printers. Some pricing lists were collected via personal websites, though the vast majority (ca. 90-95%) were provided by colleagues voluntarily on the

condition of anonymity. In total, the data from 60 participants was ultimately included for weight. To ensure that I would be surveying only industry professionals and not amateurs/hobbyists or semi-pros, I set the following criteria as a barrier for entry:

For the purposes of this report a freelance career music engraver/music copyist is defined as an individual who earns at minimum 50% of their annual income from music preparation (digitizing/copying handwritten materials, cleaning notation software files, extracting parts, setting cues, printing and binding, and mailing services). The mean portion of income derived from these tasks was 79%, and 47% self-identified as deriving their entire income from music preparation.

Half of surveyed subjects (50%) also worked full-time, part-time, or on an occasional contract basis at a major music publisher (e.g. Carl Fischer, Boosey & Hawkes), an independent publisher, or a dedicated music preparation house (e.g. JoAnn Kane Music Service) in addition to their freelance work. 28% were affiliated with a union such as AFM or MU (U.K.), though none expressed that they were strictly bound to union minimums (at least, in most settings).

A concerted effort was made to focus on the rates of Canadian (or at least North American) freelancers. Ultimately 37% of participants were based in Canada, 41% in the United States, 20% in UK or continental Europe, and 2% in Oceania.

I also took into consideration and tried to compensate for cost of living discrepancies in cities such as Los Angeles (U.S.), New York City (U.S.), and London (UK) by including an equal number of working professionals in lower cost of living centres (e.g. Orangeville ON, Gatineau QC, Oklahoma City OK, Lancaster, PA). In this case, Toronto, Ontario was used as a reference point for a 'median' cost of living given that most freelance engravers/copyists tend to live in large metropolitan areas with a decently comparable cost of living (excepting Los Angeles, New York, and London which are notably higher). As most career music engravers/copyists are concentrated in major metropolitan areas for practical reasons related to the profession, composers and other commissioning parties should take local cost of living into consideration in the negotiating process.

In some cases the surveyed music engravers and printers quoted prices that reflected their local union minimums. Many individuals also provided information regarding pay modifiers (e.g. overtime, rush service, holidays, overnight) and some also included incidental fees such as currency conversion, transfer fees, and late fees (compounding interest), though these latter surcharges were negligible.

In some instances some music engravers/copyists and printers (particularly the latter) provided prices at far below the proposed union rates and open market prices. For example, multiple freelancers gave a \$30/hour bench rate for services such as music engraving, proofreading, transcription from audio, writing piano reduction, MIDI import cleanup, and printing & binding which is less than 50% of the respective mean rates for these services. An even greater disparity was found in printing & binding services when rated per page (rather than hourly), ranging from as low as \$0.18 to as high as \$1.33 per-page (over 7X greater) for certain page sizes. At a glance these price discrepancies could be explained as competitive pricing due to heavy saturation of the market (high supply/low demand), but are more likely due to a lack of industry transparency and awareness of union minimums and going market rates.

B.I. FLAT FEES

Most music engravers/copyists I interacted with did not express any preference for flat/per-project rates. While such fees do have their place (e.g. to work with the given budget cap of a performance org, or simply to offer the client peace of mind), they are also inherently problematic in that the copyist must assume the risk of going over-time and thereby making less per hour. N.B. that freelancers should always attempt to price out a flat/project rate by using page and frame rates and data from past projects, while also being mindful of the complexity of the music.

B.II. BULK PRICING

Relatively few freelancers (28% of those surveyed) are affiliated with a union, and even then most are not always bound to union minimums unless working on a top-to-bottom union production (rare in any setting). Freelancers typically understand that sometimes a commissioning body (e.g. an opera company, a film producer) may have already budgeted fairly strict caps for their services, meaning that some flexibility in terms of pricing can be expected.

A major incentive for freelancers is volume and steadiness of work, and so most freelance engravers/copyists will likely consider a batch discount for larger-scale projects vis-à-vis a number of factors such as the type of work, their relationship with the client, and their current workload. Whether there is an existing relationship with the commissioner (or the likelihood that such a relationship could develop) can play a significant role (e.g. long-standing relationships and/or easier to work with clients generally may receive better flexibility than first time, one-time, or difficult to work with clients).

N.B. that all of the above applies less so in the case of printing and binding due to the fixed cost of materials/overhead.

B.III. REVISIONS

Few participants communicated any specific policy regarding revisions, presuming that this would fall under the freelancer's hourly "bench rate." Some basic tweaks may be executed gratis on a good faith basis, especially on larger projects and/or for easy to work with clients. If substantial revisions and/or rewrites are expected, the engraver/copyist may request a higher rate, or include a clause regarding some type of cutoff for free revisions into their negotiations.

C. SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE INFORMATION

In addition to both international organization rates and individual pricing lists, I researched various online communities discussing music preparation rates. I secured a number of referrals for freelance engravers/copyists and dedicated printing services, some of which had price lists online. Despite my best efforts to explain the nature of the project, generally speaking these individuals/orgs were hesitant to engage, most likely for fear of being undercut by a competitor. Though only a small portion of cold emails were successful in yielding supplementary data and/or new connections, I was fortunately able to forge some new contacts via Instagram and Facebook connections and personal referrals.

PART 2: QUESTIONNAIRES

SUMMARY

I used my own music preparation experience to design a brief questionnaire to gain insight into the individual processes of other professionals. I contacted about 100 individuals and music prep houses—all either currently working as music engravers, music librarians, and music printers in a professional capacity or having retired in the past 3-5 years—and received about 60 responses consisting of about 50 fully/partially filled out forms, a handful of requests for phone or Zoom interviews, and a few subjects politely declined for feeling the project was out of their personal scope. All were made aware that every portion of the survey was voluntary, and all were guaranteed anonymity. I have divided participants' answers into relevant categories below.

A. INCOME PERCENTAGE

Of those who were ultimately included for weight, music preparation projects made up a substantial range of our respondents' income. All were clearly informed about the 50% of income at the highest point barrier for inclusion, which was only in a few rare cases extended down to 30-40% and only in the name of securing as much Canadian representation as possible. The mean income percentage for all subjects was 79%, and 47% of those surveyed reached 100% of their income via music preparation projects (music engraving/copying, printing & binding, music librarian services) at its highest point.

B. TYPES OF MUSIC PREPARATION

Though there exists some crossover in the freelance market, most respondents either fell into one of two lines of work:

- 1) "Concert" music preparation - primarily focused on preparing music for chamber ensembles, choir, wind ensemble, and symphonic orchestra, generally for publication (reproduction) or for multiple use rental materials. Almost all writing of piano reductions would fall into this category.
- 2) "Commercial" music preparation - primarily focused on preparing music for "pops" settings (popular music/symphonic crossover), the scoring studio (orchestral recording sessions), or musical theatre. In the case of a scoring session materials will generally be for single use (though as time is of the essence in these high-pressure situations, clarity is paramount). Most transcription from audio and MIDI/XML cleanup would fall into this category.

The majority of respondents identified primarily as music engravers/copyists, editors, or music librarians (generally for classical/concert music, film & TV, or musical theatre in that order). Some did perform other services such as preparing piano reductions for rehearsal, porting and cleaning up .MID or .XML data transfers, or transcribing from audio. The music librarians surveyed were encouraged to focus on music engraving/copying and printing and binding tasks, though some did feel it germane to include mention of their availability as an on-site session librarian for the recording studio (preparing folders, making cuts, re-printing & binding parts, marking bowings, and generally being on-call during a rehearsal or recording session). All of this to say, a concentrated effort was made to try to emphasize those working primarily in concert music preparation by request of the org, but not at the expense of relinquishing helpful data.

C. PRICING CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES

C.I. SOURCING FUNDING, EXPECTATIONS OF DELINEATING LABOUR

There is growing frustration and confusion in the industry concerning the increasingly normalised expectation that music preparation should be handled by the composer and music librarian. This functionally erases the profession of the music engraver/copyist, who historically handles all of the music preparation and delivers a performance-ready set of hard copies to the music librarian. This coupled with the lack of proper education in these areas at the post-secondary level has resulted in rapidly falling standards for music preparation.

Another participant (who self-identified as both a professional composer and engraver) spoke of the importance of highlighting the difference of the two tasks:

"Preparing materials is mostly or even completely separate from the creative act of writing a piece and thus should be handled separately from commission fee, or at least somehow addressed in commissioning contracts."

There is also the question of whether the composer or commissioning body should pay for the music preparation. Composers/orchestrators may feel coerced to do their own music preparation (or pay for it out of pocket) in the name of securing a commission, but may—especially on larger projects—end up having to hire out in the name of time or else deliver an inadequate product. Failing that this job often falls to music librarians who generally go unnoticed in the production process, but whose work is essential in salvaging otherwise inconsistent materials.

Securing a dedicated music preparation budget and timeline in the negotiation process between the composer and commissioning body can alleviate this undue stress. It is also for this reason that it is strongly recommended to include a music preparation budget as a separate line item in a commissioning contract or quote as to help orgs and commissioning bodies become accustomed to this very real necessity of writing music for live performers. One participant:

"I believe that music organizations and other commissioning bodies need to understand that this line of work requires careful attention to detail, substantial time and patience, and a considerable amount of artistic craft. Too often, I have found myself in situations where the commissioning body believes that they should pay me less than what I ask for, simply because they don't fully understand how much work and attention to detail goes into engraving."

C.II. UNDERCUTTING, UNDERVALUING LABOUR

When providing additional comments, many participants expressed concern regarding a lack of transparency and solidarity amongst their peers. One highly seasoned industry veteran expressed skepticism that a set of guidelines would be able to enact real and lasting industry change due to the undercutting / "race to the bottom" mentality. They continued to speak on how orgs/commissioning bodies (e.g. orchestra boards, opera companies) are often widely disconnected from the realities of how time and labour-intensive proper music preparation can be:

“I don’t know that publishing some kind of rate sheet will improve compensation. There is always someone who ‘bought Sibelius’ and is willing to work very cheaply, just to make some money. You get what you pay for in those situations. I have an opera that was commissioned by a Canadian opera company premiering soon, and they insisted on using their own copyist (very inexperienced, did the job for next to nothing). It was a chamber opera, which I estimated would cost about \$15,000 USD to prepare. They paid this person \$3,000. I didn’t even bother to ask if that was CAD or USD, since either one was so low that I would never agree to it.”

It has become increasingly normalised for composers and orchestrators to do their own music preparation in an effort to save on overhead costs, thereby securing the gig but ultimately offering an inferior product. Generally, participants spoke to the necessity of building the profile of music copyists, thereby amplifying their value and necessity to the process. One participant noted that professional musicians will be less likely to “take the music seriously” if it is not professionally prepared:

"For better or for worse, professional musicians will tune out and not take music seriously if it looks like it was typeset without care, and it’s difficult to quantify that.”

Another participant expressed concern regarding under-funded projects:

“I’m afraid that we are currently plagued with under-budgeted projects where the orchestrators have been asked to lump the music preparation in with their own work. Most orchestrators are understandably fighting their own deadlines and so the materials get a cursory look at best. Plus having to print sub-standard parts and also potentially act as an ad hoc music librarian while the musicians struggle - not good! Anything that can be done to raise the profile worldwide of the valuable part that trained music copyists play in the process is therefore definitely very worthwhile, since otherwise I fear we are at a tipping point of the noble art of music preparation going into extinction.”

Another participant had this to say about the invisible impact that poor music preparation has on the performers, which leads to the final product suffering:

“Musicians are used to reading poorly-prepared material. They are also trained to never complain to management. Only the most egregiously copied work will stop rehearsals. Producers generally don’t care about quality of life issues for performers - all they care about is that the performance happens. Copyists are never in the room when projects are discussed. We need to make allies of those who would fight for us: composers and music directors. They are of course famously terrible at advocating for themselves, let alone anyone else.”

C.III. COMPLEXITY OF MUSIC, POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION OR MULTIPLE-USE

Frame rates and page rates are practical for most ‘commercial’ music preparation settings, but less so for concert music, especially in ‘contemporary’ or ‘new music’ settings since the complexity of the notations and their ease of achieving in major scorewriting softwares (e.g. Sibelius, Dorico) can vary quite drastically. In such cases the amount of time required to do a proper engraving job can be very case-dependent and introduce new variables. For instance the engraver may need to hire out to generate custom graphics or bespoke title pages (in e.g. InDesign), and/or spend several hours preparing

extensive front matter (performance notes, diagrams, etc.). This may require the engraver to hire a 3rd party graphic designer which is generally paid out of their end.

Several participants spoke to the grade of their product and even offered different pricing tiers for e.g. single-use Vs. multiple use (rental parts) Vs. publication grade (replication and distribution). This demonstrates that frame or page rates are not always an effective means of determining compensation. One participant offered this perspective:

”For me, using a frame or page rate doesn’t make sense. It’s such an arbitrary metric [...] I consider much more the density of music and the amount of labour it might take me to produce the results desired by the client.”

C.IV. TIME CONCERNS, HEALTH, WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Time constraints and added physical and mental stress occupy a significant portion of pricing concerns. 46% of participants expressed the need to charge a “rush fees” multiplier (generally in the vicinity of 1.5X) for working overtime (daily or weekly) to compensate for the added physical and mental stress of a faster turnaround. Only 20% expressed the need to add a comparable surcharge for working on a statutory holiday (though, some did express that they would refuse this outright). These figures are glaringly incongruent with provincial and federal labour laws in Canada, in which case a 1.5X surcharge is mandatory for overtime and stat pay on a federal level (precise guidelines vary by province/territory, though a general guideline of 1.5X pay for working hours in excess of 8 hours/day or 40 hours/week is recommended at the federal level). 28% of participants said they would consider working overnight (12am–8am) for a modifier of about 200-300%, though many expressed that they would refuse overnight work for health concerns and/or to avoid disruption of their regular routine. It should also be noted that such modifiers are also recommended (or depending on the situation, mandated) per CFM, AFM, and MU guidelines.

C.V. SPLIT PAYMENTS, INTERNATIONAL BILLING

Some participants noted challenges in processing payments from international organizations. Several requested an extra surcharge for international currency transactions (e.g. via PayPal, Wise), generally of 2-4%. One mandated a flat charge of \$17.37 CAD to cover SWIFT transfers and currency conversion fees. One participant also expressed the need to add 2.5% compounding monthly interest in the case of late fees. These are ultimately fairly incidental concerns but should be covered in advance where possible, especially on larger projects.

D. OTHER CONCERNS

In addition to the aforementioned barriers and challenges, the following concerns were noted by respondents:

- Lack of information/open dialogue regarding pay and working conditions;
- Lack of solidarity with the freelance market and with the union;
- Lack of public outreach/education illuminating our vocation;
- Last minute revisions not previously noted in contract;

Participants expressed the need for more communication and transparency between professionals in the music industry. While admitting that organizing seemed “daunting,” one participant did believe it could benefit not only individual workers, but the industry generally. Another participant suggested seminars or classes on music notation that could be aimed at musicians so as to better communicate the careful work of engravers. Finally, it was suggested that these kinds of workshops be integrated into the curriculum for student composers who could benefit from a holistic understanding of the industry:

“Music preparation is often a very solitary career, and I find it difficult to have open communication with others in similar positions. The idea of organizing sounds very daunting given the fact that I don’t have any coworkers who I see in-person. For this reason, I’m very interested in others’ ideas. I think organizing music engravers would benefit everyone in the profession and in the greater music industry. Given the state of the housing crisis and the economy, workers need solidarity.”

“I feel that this job is misunderstood by most musicians, composers and clients. They don’t really understand what we are doing, why and how complex the process is. Maybe if there are more seminars or classes about music notation, musicians will better understand the effort we have to put into every page.”

“Raising the awareness of the composers of what our job entails and the degree of quality and attention to detail, knowledge, experience is also very important. Organizing workshops for student composers would be one way of sensitizing them to our practice.”

PART 3: PROPOSED FEE STRUCTURE

The following is a summary of recommended music engraving/copying rates as of July 25th 2024, based on the research above (union minimums for comparison, all prices CAD):

A. MUSIC PREPARATION FEES

Basic Fees

Hourly/Bench Rates	CLC	AFM	CFM	MU (UK)
Music Engraving/Copying	\$57.67	\$57.91	\$26.70	\$73.82
Proofreading	\$56.49	\$55.08	\$26.65	N/A
Transcription from Audio	\$65.22	N/A	N/A	N/A
Piano Reduction for Rehearsal	\$59.92	\$53.32	\$27.94	N/A
MIDI Import Cleanup	\$62.64	N/A	N/A	\$118.89
Printing & Binding	\$52.82 (+materials)	\$46.52	\$26.70	N/A
On-Site Librarian Services	\$54.80 (or union min.)	\$46.52	\$26.70	\$74.59
Private Lessons/Consulting	\$73.49	N/A	N/A	N/A

Page Rates	CLC	AFM	CFM	MU (UK)
Octavo / 6.875 X 10.5" (choral score)	\$15.81	N/A	N/A	N/A
9 X 12" part	\$9.92	\$18.54	\$6.98	\$12.39
9.5 X 12.5" part	\$10.85	\$18.54	\$6.98	\$12.39
10 X 13" / B4 part	\$11.77	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 X 14" score	\$34.43	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 X 17" / A3 score	\$47.44	N/A	N/A	N/A

Frame Rates	CLC	AFM	CFM	MU (UK)
Music (per voice)	\$0.42	\$0.46	\$0.17	\$0.31
Lyrics (per layer)	\$0.16	\$0.26	\$0.06	\$0.10
Text (each)	\$0.16	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chord Names (per layer)	\$0.12	\$0.12	0.06	\$0.10
Graphics (each)	\$0.25	\$0.20	0.06	\$0.10

Printing (by page)	CLC	AFM	CFM	MU (UK)
Octavo / 6.875 X 10.5"	\$0.65	N/A	N/A	N/A
9 X 12"	\$0.77	N/A	N/A	N/A
9.5 X 12.5"	\$0.81	N/A	N/A	N/A
10 X 13" / B4	\$0.85	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 X 14"	\$0.96	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 X 17" / A3	\$0.96	N/A	N/A	N/A

Additional Surcharges

Type	CLC	AFM	CFM	MU (UK)
Overtime (daily or weekly)	150%	125-150%	N/A	N/A
Rush Pay	150%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Holiday/Stat Pay	150%	200%	200%	200%
Overnight	200%	150%	200%	200%

The chart below illustrates the comparison of each organizations' proposed fee, using a 2024 opera engraving commission I received by the Edmonton Opera/Against the Grain Theatre:

“Indians on Vacation” by Ian Cusson

Chamber Orchestra 1111 / 1110 / 1 perc / pno / hp / str

Number of pages: 900

Number of frames: 17777

Duration: ca. 95 min.

My price	CLC	AFM	CFM	MU (UK)
\$7150*	\$7533.47	\$7528.30	\$3471	\$9596.60

*Flat project rate.

B. NEGOTIABLES

Large Projects

It may be advisable to negotiate larger projects spanning multiple work weeks (e.g. symphonic, opera, film score, textbook) on a flat/per-project basis.

Bulk pricing

The client & artist may opt to negotiate a lower rate per piece if multiple pieces are being processed.

Revisions

If substantial revisions and/or rewrites are expected, the engraver/copyist may request a higher rate, additional padding, or some type of cutoff for free revisions.

C. EXPLANATION FOR PROPOSED RATES

In arriving at the proposed rates, I have worked to reflect the many factors described in Parts I-III while drawing upon my own experience as a music engraver/copyist. Adjustments may have to be made as more research and/or collaboration follows (see Section E). For now, what follows is an explanation of the above rates broken down by various criteria.

C.I. MEASUREMENT

Finding relevant units of measurement to standardize fees was largely based on my own practical experience working as a music engraver/copyist for 15+ years. The international guidelines researched in Part 1 generally used page rates or time rates as a primary measurement tool for all tasks, and all offered proposed modifiers in the case of holiday/stat pay, overnight/premium time – but not rush delivery or overtime.

As this project is geared toward classical/concert music composers and orchestrators, a concerted effort was made to use the term “page rate” to apply to a literal full page of music, rather than the traditional Hollywood or Broadway jargon for e.g. “4 bars of orchestral score” or “40 measures of a part”).

Qualitative tasks such as proofreading, transcription from audio, printing & binding by time, writing piano reduction by time, and cleaning/decoding data (MIDI/XML) transfers were deemed to be too case-dependent to accurately gauge by any metric other than time, though the sourced union minimums did in some cases try to measure these tasks by the page or frame.

This form of measurement (open-ended/hourly) suffers from one major drawback in that the client/commissioning body will only have a general idea of cost, but also ensures that the engraver/copyist is always paid fairly.

It is to be noted that “frame rates” (a measure of score that is not empty; extra voices/graphics/text objects count as additional frames) are generally relegated to Hollywood and Broadway circles only, and are generally becoming a relic of the past. Only one surveyed participant chose to work exclusively by a frame rate, though many did find this method (along with page rates) useful for sourcing estimates.

C.II. DATA FROM RESPONDENTS

The primary criteria I used to generate the above rates was derived from the data from my participants (all of whom worked freelance to some degree, and based their answers on their freelance rates only). I used the figures that were provided to me to assemble a mean average for each task, broken down by hourly, page, and frame rates (the 3 most common ways that music engravers/copyists/librarians work, outside of flat project rates). As working by a frame rate is quite rare outside of Hollywood/Broadway circles, I in some cases resorted to reverse-engineering appropriate frame rates from existing page rates using the industry-standard multiplier of 40 frames per page.

In the name of securing proper compensation vis-à-vis federal/provincial labour laws, I polled my participants for data on common modifiers such as overtime work (labour outside of regular daily/weekly hours), rush delivery, overnight/premium time (12am–9am), and holiday/stat pay.

These fees—when totalled—skew toward the “ideal” rather than the “average,” especially for the Canadian market (which is lacking a metropolitan area with cost of living comparable to that found in e.g. New York City, Los Angeles, London U.K.). Several of my participants also spoke of accepting lower wages for the sake of a professional development opportunity (the chance to work with a particular artist or org), or offering a batch discount in the name of increasing job security.

C.III. OMISSIONS

Ultimately some survey results were omitted on the basis of being vague (e.g. giving loose ranges instead of concrete data, providing too many contingencies and incidentals). Others did not meet the baseline 50% of income barrier for entry and were not otherwise deemed worthy of exception in this area.

D. LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While this report aims to shed light on common music preparation fees, practices, and concerns within the music industry, it is by no means a comprehensive survey. Below I outline what I believe to be the main gaps in my research, as well as provide some recommendations for further research and exploration.

D.I. RESEARCH ON MUSIC ORGANISATIONS AND COMMISSIONING BODIES

The participants interviewed for the purposes of this report were all music engravers/copyists, music librarians, and printers—artisans supplying labour to composers and publishers. I did not interview anyone commissioning such services (e.g. composers, performance orgs). A comprehensive guide to music preparation fees may benefit from feedback from commissioners—especially those in artistic administration—who may have a unique perspective on the fees they have offered for music preparation in the past.

D.II. FURTHER PROJECTS, COLLABORATION

Several respondents expressed enthusiasm for this initiative and were interested in the prospect of attempting to organise globally. A major pillar of the music preparation community in the United Kingdom was especially interested in pursuing a similar venture to this project. It may be worth keeping in contact with leading figures in major music preparation hubs such as New York City, Los Angeles, Nashville, and London (UK) to discuss ongoing outreach initiatives and to keep an active dialogue regarding rates and labour standards.

Unfortunately, urgent turnaround is fairly common in music preparation as performance orgs/ commissioning bodies can be extremely unforgiving as it pertains to late delivery. Music engravers/ copyists often feel the need to execute unhealthy lifestyle patterns (working odd/inconsistent hours, overtime, holidays, overnights) in order to protect both their reputation and that of the composer, which can result in professional burnout. Qualitative research on this subject could be germane in terms of a greater research project on toxic working conditions in the music industry, particularly in the “commercial music” sector where these practices are especially normalized.