

Fear No Music

Young Composers Project

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The Young Composers Project is here to provide students with the opportunity to explore composing with professional musicians at their disposal, and to help them develop their creativity and skill in working with the multiple instruments of a classical ensemble. Below are some frequently asked questions and answers about the workshops.

Q: How are the workshops scheduled?

I schedule the students in 1-hour groups. Usually there are 3-4 students in each group. We encourage students to stay and listen to other pieces that are being prepared. You can learn a huge amount from listening to other works.

Q: How much music am I expected to prepare for each workshop?

A: There are three workshops held during the school year, and the goal is to complete a composition by the third workshop for performance at the final concert. The first two workshops are designed so that students can experiment, hear their pieces in progress, and rewrite and develop their pieces so that it's finished by the third workshop. We don't expect you to have your piece completed at the first two workshops, but the more that you have written the more we can help you with your piece.

Here are some examples of how much you should try to have done for

each workshop.

Workshop I –Bring in the beginning of a work (preliminary sketches, melodies and harmonies to be developed), or a partially completed work for the ensemble. For students who are participating for the first time, they may find it best to work on orchestrating a piano piece that they have previously written. Professional musicians will perform the works-in-progress. During the workshop students will have the opportunity to hear their music tried on different instruments, in different instrumental combinations, experiment with new colors, special effects, etc. The musicians provide instruction to the students about the instrument ranges and problems with individual instruments, notation, etc. We will record the workshop, so that you have that recording to refer to when you rewrite.

Workshop II: Students bring a partially completed work. The musicians will continue to work with the students to develop and improve their pieces. Students will focus on making changes in instrumentation, dealing with specific problems that may arise (balance between instruments, ensemble coordination, etc.), and making final decisions about the form and character of their piece. We will record this workshop, so you have it as a reference as you complete your piece.

Workshop III: The pieces need to be completed two weeks before the final workshop, and sent to Jeff Payne, who will go over them before the final workshop. At the final workshop, we will be preparing pieces for the final concert. We will discuss accuracy of dynamics, articulations, tempo marks, etc., and to discuss any final interpretive problems that arise.

Final concert: We perform all of the complete works on two concerts. We record the concert, and provide you with a copy of the performance. We don't video the concert, but people are welcome to set up their own cameras, iphones, etc., and record it. We also provide information about competitions that you might want to enter your piece in, and festivals where you might want to submit a score. How far you pursue your passion is up to you, and we're here to help you any way we can.

Q: I like to write my own music, but I mainly improvise at the piano. Do I

need to write all of the notes down for the musicians?

A: It is important that you have basic notation skills so that the musicians can read your music at the workshops and concert. If you don't have a lot of experience, or are having trouble figuring out how to write a difficult rhythm or chord, we are here to help you with mastering skills like that.

Q: What is expected of my final product?

A: For the final concert, you need to have individual parts for the musicians to play and a full score for the conductor to use. We can help you with that process if you haven't done it before.

Q: I don't own a composing software program. Is there a program YCP recommends I purchase?

A: Music software programs are not required, but most of the students use them. The two programs that we recommend most frequently are Finale or Sibelius. There are different versions of those programs available, depending upon how complicated your scores are. We're happy to talk to Young Composer participants and help you find a version that best suits your level.

Q: Will I receive a recording of my piece from the concert? How can I use the recording to further my passion for composing?

A: Everyone who finishes his or her piece will receive a CD copy of the concert. You're welcome to use that in any way, and we hope that you will use it to promote your music to other musicians and composers. We provide information about competitions that you might want to enter your piece in, and festivals where you might want to submit a score. How far you pursue your passion is up to you, and we're here to help you any way we can.