

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

FOR COMPOSER EQUITY

Version 1.0
I. Statistical Trends



Universal Design for Composer Equity 2019 - 2024

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LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

The goal of this survey is to distill the inequitable forces at play within the composition opportunity ecosystem via statistical analyses of five hundred opportunities posted from September 2019 to May 2024. Opportunities analyzed include calls for scores, calls for proposals, competitions, residencies, and miscellaneous. The author recorded the following characteristics for each opportunity:

- Name of Organization or Ensemble
- Opportunity Type
- Instrumentation
- Entry Fee
- Award Systems
- Accommodations
- Attendance Requirements
- Age Restrictions
- Identity Restrictions
- Rate of Occurrence
- Miscellaneous Notes

All opportunities were randomly selected by the author to avert any potential biases. Selections originated from opportunity listing websites including the Alternative Classical Newsletter, American Composers Forum, Canadian Music Centre, Canadian New Music Network, Composer's Site, Composition Today, Musical Chairs, National Association of Composers/USA, New Music Engine, SCION (Society of Composers, Inc), Sound & Music, The Walden School, and Ulysses-Network. This survey is not an attempt at inflammatory journalism, but is oriented to directly expose inequitable frameworks and unethical policies that characterize the new music competition ecosystem.

Major and minor trends surface within each of the opportunity types and their characteristics. The numbers serve as evidential confirmation of anecdotal experiences at the survey's inception and through its development. However, the statistics are ancillary in the wake of the main concern: a hierarchical divide between composers and institutions designed around intersectional exclusion, with class at its center. This divide reveals unidirectional attitudes of excellence and experience constructed around social binary paradigms, covert social resistance, and pro forma allyship. Moreover, corporate-like entities retain the power to recondition the status quo, but shift the responsibility to a struggling creative population. No singular element is directly responsible, but the mixture of these notions disproportionately furthers disparities. The following survey provides an evidential basis for future research via statistical data and inquiry.

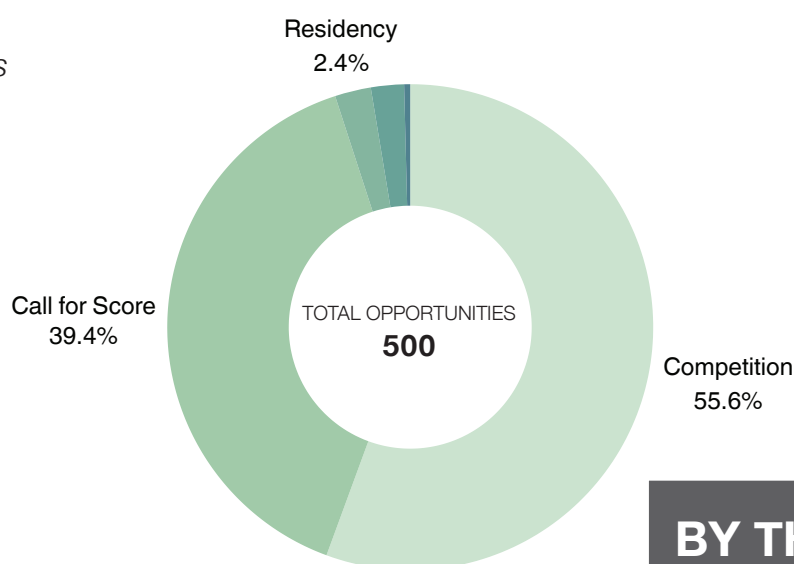
Recent Trends is the culmination of a five-year, multi-volume research project that was envisioned, developed, analyzed, and presented by yours truly. However, this report would not have been possible without the support of several individuals. I thank astrid hubbard flynn, Carolina Heredia, Oswald Huynh, and Tim Igel of the American Composers Forum for collaborating and publishing my work. I thank Juan Chattah, Melissa D'Albora, Ralph Lewis, Lansing McLoskey, and Hans Thomalla, who all have been meaningful advocates of my research. Finally, I give special thanks to George E. Lewis for his wisdom, grace, and countless hours conversing over his "New Music Decolonization in Eight Difficult Steps;" for without his encouragement, I would have quit after volume one.

Thank you for reading this report and I hope the community can come together on these issues and, as Lewis notes, redefine the new "we" to embrace "our" future.

Dr. Droki Ouro
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OPPORTUNITY TYPE

FIGURE 1.1
Five Opportunity Types



BY THE NUMBERS

Competitions: 278 (55.6%)
 Calls for Scores: 197 (39.4%)
 Residencies: 12 (2.4%)
 Calls for Proposals: 11 (2.2%)
 Miscellaneous: 2 (0.4%)

KEY POINTS

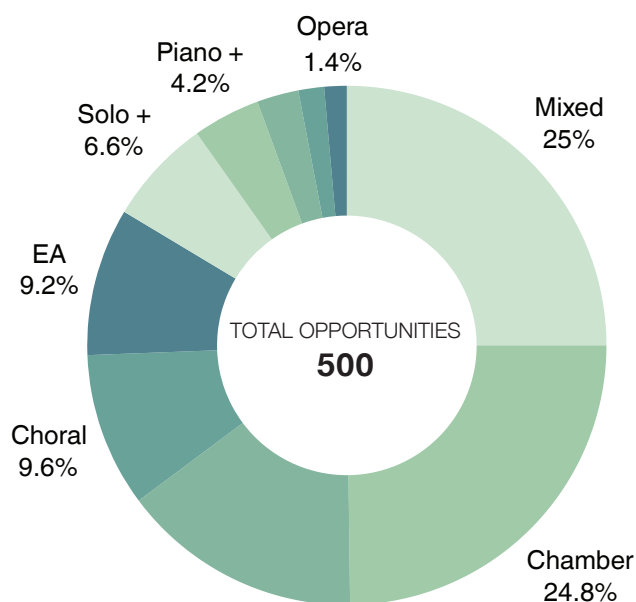
- Competitions and calls for scores made up 95% of the survey. Though many opportunities defined themselves as such, many were mislabeled or used the terms interchangeably. For the purposes of this report, the author reviewed these opportunities and documented them within their proper definition.
- Opportunities were selected from several listing hubs including the American Composers Forum, Alternative Classical, Canadian Music Centre, Canadian New Music Network, Composer's Site, Composition Today, Musical Chairs, MusicGorilla, the National Association of Composers/USA, New Music Engine, ReverbNation, SCION, (Society of Composers, Inc), Sound & Music, Ulysses-Network, and the Walden School. There are four main listing types, each with respective benefits and drawbacks.
- Curated listings feature opportunities that meet predefined institutional values. These listings are often vetted by a trained specialist whose goal is to eliminate exploitative practices. Given the potential difference in practices, variable allowances may occur across curated platforms. Regardless, fewer opportunities are featured. Membership listings may be considered a subcategory of curated listings, requiring composers to pay for benefits. However, nearly all membership listings have failed to provide significant contrasts between open and curated hubs.
- Host listings provide support for institutions via applications, adjudication, and limited public relations. Composers may find and apply to the opportunity on the listing itself and adjudicators send scores that are automatically compiled in the system, making for a quick and streamlined process. However, listings often require institutions to pay for services, gatekeeping those without significant backing. For those unbarred by fees, the site itself is barred by an institution's core values or lack thereof, and cannot prevent exploitative practices.
- Open listings provide unrestricted offerings and may include opportunities related to academic programs, awards, calls, collaboration, competitions, conferences, faculty positions, festivals, graduate assistantships, grants, lessons, loans, publishing, recording, residencies, services, and workshops. However, the popularity of these listings unintentionally normalize corporate-like, exploitative practices through the lack of limitations on what can be published.

INSTRUMENTATION

FIGURE 2.1

All Surveyed Instrumentation

Instrumentation I
Holistic Survey



BY THE NUMBERS

+ indicates additional solo(s) or ensemble(s)
- indicates a subset of a standard instrumentation

Orchestra: 36
Orchestra +: 2
String Orchestra: 7
Chamber Orchestra: 4
Pops Orchestra: 1
Concert Band: 17
Large Ensemble: 6
Large Ensemble +: 2
Chamber (2-8): 69
Large Chamber (9-15): 4
Single-Instrument Ensembles: 6
Solo Instrument (excluding piano): 30
Solo & Chamber Ensemble: 3
Solo Piano: 14
Piano +: 5
Piano Trio: 1

Piano Quintet: 1
Percussion: 7
String Quartet: 16
String Quartet +: 1
Pierrot +/-: 7
Reed Quintet: 1
Saxophone Quartet: 3
Film Score: 7
Multimedia: 4
Electroacoustic (EA): 39
Solo/Chamber & Electronics: 6
Laptop Ensemble: 1
Sound Art: 1
Synthesizer: 1
Choir: 37
Choir +: 4
Chamber Choir: 2
Art Song: 5
Opera: 4
Chamber Opera: 2
Opera-Theater: 1

Jazz Band: 7
Chamber Jazz: 1
Accordion +: 1
Cello +: 1
Clarinet +: 1
Organ +: 2
Trombone +: 1
Guitar+: 3
Handbell Ensemble: 1
*Mixed: 125

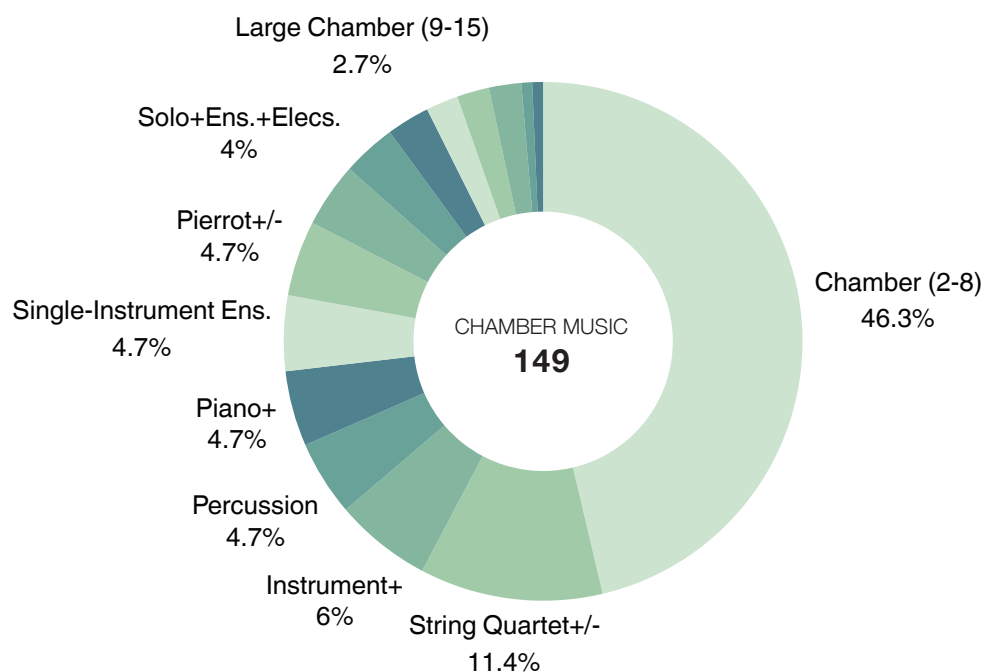
**Opportunities that accept two or more instrumentation categories such as festival calls, open competitions, and residency applications.*

INSTRUMENTATION (continued)

FIGURE 2.2

Chamber Music Instrumentation Count

Instrumentation II
Chamber Music



BY THE NUMBERS

Chamber (2-8): 69

String Quartet +/-: 17

Instrument +: 9

Percussion: 7

Piano +: 7

Single-Instrument Ensemble: 7

Pierrot +/-: 7

Solo, Ensemble, & Electronics:
6

Art Song: 5

Large Chamber (9-15): 4

Guitar +/-: 3

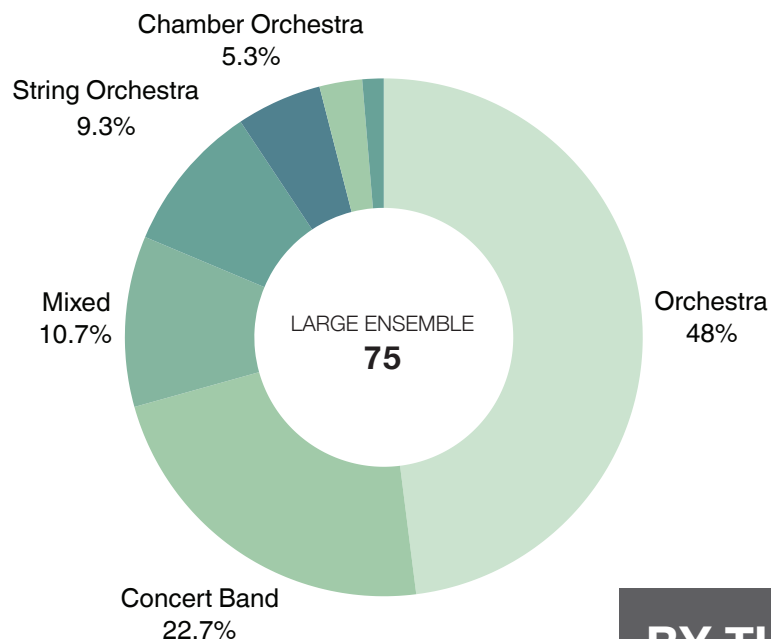
Saxophone Quartet: 3

Solo & Ensemble: 3

Reed Quintet : 1

Chamber Jazz: 1

INSTRUMENTATION (continued)

FIGURE 2.3*Large Ensemble Instruction Count*Instrumentation II
Chamber Music

BY THE NUMBERS

Orchestra: 36
 Orchestra +: 2
 String Orchestra: 7
 Chamber Orchestra: 4
 Pops Orchestra: 1
 Concert Band: 17
 Mixed: 8

RECENT TRENDS: INSTRUMENTATION

Application requirements such as work samples and recordings are similar across general instrumentation categories. Artistic statements are significantly more common in calls for proposals than any other opportunity type, per capita (81.82%). Organizers of the opportunities regularly cite non-musical components, such as a curriculum vitae or resume, biography, and previous awards as criteria for adjudication.

Calls for proposals contain similar applications across instrumentation categories, with the most common components including artist websites, project proposals, work samples, writing prompts, and either a biography, curriculum vitae, or resume. Artist statements, composition drafts, and production schedules are rarer. Though common in traditional grant applications, the three most common writing prompts include:

INSTRUMENTATION (continued)

- Why are you interested in writing for [ensemble]?
- How would selection for this call benefit your career?
- Please indicate how your proposal fits within the goals and/or themes of this call.

Mixed opportunities include academic events, conferences, festivals, and residencies, and are commonly reserved for composers between the ages of 18 to 35.

Electroacoustic archetypes dominate electronic music competitions, primarily via fixed media, solo and electronics, and more recently ambisonics. Like mixed opportunities, these events are primarily hosted by academic institutions.

Two common practices within choral and non-traditional ensemble calls were to request composers write a new piece to an uncommon theme or text and/or arrange a previous work for the call that has not received a premiere or recording. Both methods create a similar consequence: composers actively creating a new work in return for only the possibility of apt compensation, relinquishing any financial liability from the host organization. For those rejected, they are left with the fallout of free labor and a new work with limited programming applications.

Broad instrumentation categories also retained an underlying metagame, each with their associative baggage. Similar metagame attributes are present across instrumentation categories, especially with opportunities integrating multiple instrumentation options. However, a more nuanced and specialized approach is necessary in revealing the consequences of these trends.

For example, the orchestra and orchestra + categories regularly request applications that adhere to the following parameters:

- Duration limitations between either 3 to 5 or 8 to 10 minutes.
- Live or studio recordings.
- Scored for medium or large orchestra with optional piano and harp parts.
- Sonically “accessible” to both audiences, conductors, and performers.
- Transposing scores that are flawlessly notated and aesthetically elegant.

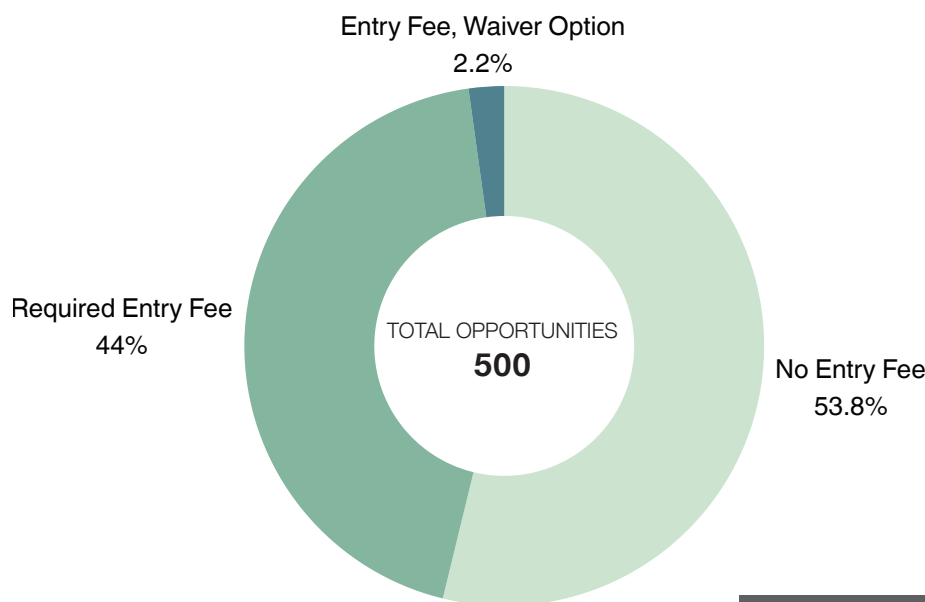
This criterion underwrites the formation of orchestral “competition music” in which selections largely fulfill the overture position in programming, are performance-ready in few rehearsals, and are relatively conservative in style or aesthetic. These parameters also imprint classist and privileged narratives in which access to standard notation software and pristine recordings are proxies for applicant quality.

ENTRY FEE

FIGURE 3.1

Three Entry Fee Types

Entry Fees I
Requirements



BY THE NUMBERS

No Entry Fee: 269
Required Entry Fee: 220
Entry Fee, Waiver Option: 11

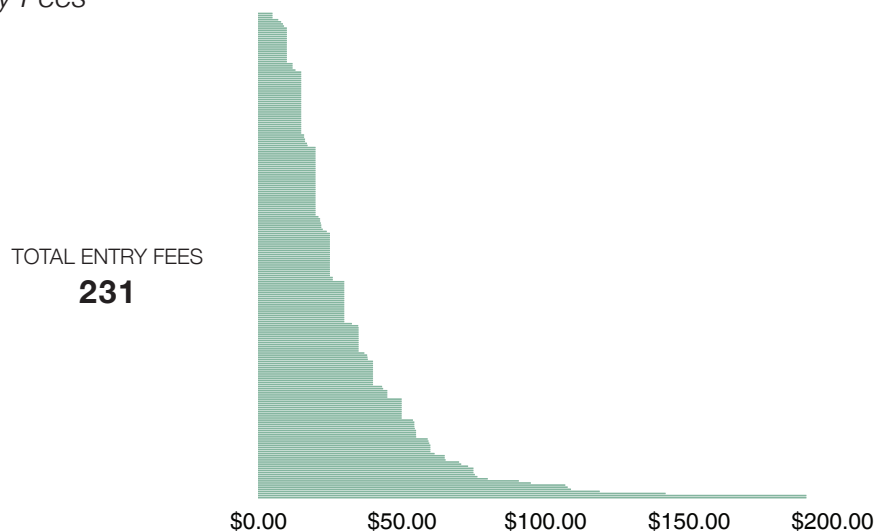
KEY POINTS

- Several non-profit organizations implement entry fees as tax-deductible donations, often with sliding scale rates and a suggested rate.
- Until 2022, entry fee waivers were relatively scarce. Though some were offered in good faith, several required proof of financial hardship via medical bills and pay stubs. Correspondence was primarily administered via email.
- Larger competitions often used tiered entry fee systems, often correlating them with additional awards and benefits such as adjudicator feedback and lessons with guest composers. Similarly, early bird, normal, and late registration fees were commonly used by organizations allowing for multiple score submissions.
- Numerous opportunities indicated no entry fee but require additional fees upon selection, not limited to registration, membership, providing performers, and unspecified administrative fees.
- Oftentimes the costs after acceptance were significantly greater than opportunities involving a one-time fee; the most common culprit being “calls” from a prominent few recording companies offering full production including professional recording, album cover design, marketing, project management, distribution, accounting, and label services. Online citations ranged from \$6,000 to \$10,000 for music between six to twenty minutes; one may question the co-opting of the “call for scores” qualifier given the obvious corporate-like exploits.

ENTRY FEE (continued)

FIGURE 3.2
Range of Entry Fees

Entry Fees II
Range of Fees



BY THE NUMBERS

Average: \$32.36
Median: \$25.00
Mode: \$20.00 (33)
Range: \$5.00 - \$191.00
Entry Fees Total: \$7513.21

KEY POINTS

- The fifteen most expensive opportunities comprise nearly 20% of all entry fees in the survey, of which eleven were based in Europe and seven were based in Italy. Only one offered an entry fee waiver.
- Opportunities involving orchestra, chamber (2-8 musicians), string quartet, and film scoring had proportionally higher entry fees per capita.

RECENT TRENDS: ENTRY FEES

Organizations commonly presented entry fees either at the forefront of an application or buried within pages of conditions. Calls accepting multiple submissions frequently set a rate per score, often with a diminishing rate of return. Open competitions regularly created categories based on age, “emerging” qualifiers, and/or career experience, demanding higher rates for perceived professional status. A handful also solicited additional fees to progress through various rounds or receive adjudicator comments.

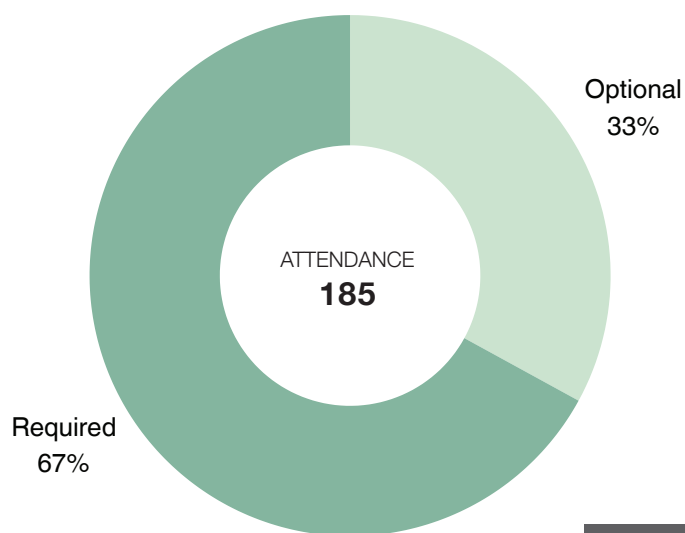
Other than choice competitions in film scoring and multimedia concert proposals, most organizations failed to provide literature regarding the use and justification of the entry fee. For those that did, the main function of entry fees was to pay for adjudication costs, subsidize the prize pool, pay for other events or opportunities within the organization, and fund unspecified administrative and processing fees.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

FIGURE 4.1

Surveyed Attendance Requirements

Attendance Requirements



BY THE NUMBERS

Required: 124

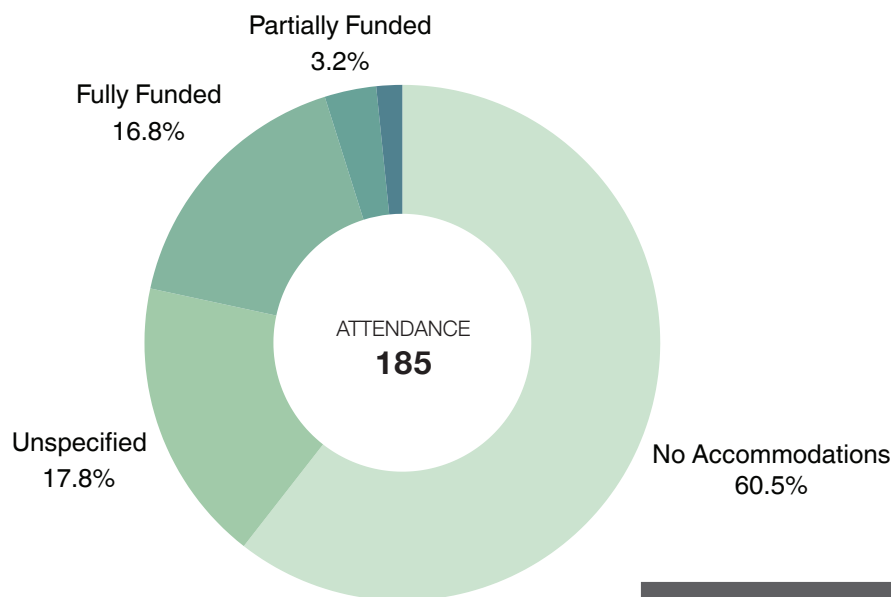
Optional: 61

N/A: 315

ACCOMMODATIONS

FIGURE 4.2*Surveyed Opportunity Accommodations*

Accommodations



BY THE NUMBERS

No Accommodations: 112
 Unspecified: 33
 Fully Funded: 31
 Partially Funded: 6
 Lodging Only: 3

KEY POINTS

- In conjunction with entry fees and accessibility barriers, the lack of accommodations or a funding apparatus continues to gatekeep low-income communities from participation. Costs related to selection may include transportation, lodging, meals, performer/recording fees, and other miscellaneous expenses.
- Organizations offering fully-funded opportunities and residencies were predominantly funded by international grants, non-profit donations, and various sponsorships.

RECENT TRENDS: ACCOMMODATIONS

The FDIC's Survey of Consumer Finances is a triennial cross-sectional survey that includes information on family balance sheets, pensions, income, and demographic characteristics, and is the most robust resource in the United States on intersectional class trends.¹ As of the publication of this document, the most recent survey reflects data from 2022. The average White family retained 600% more wealth compared to the typical Black family, 500% more compared to Hispanic families, and 62.8% more wealth compared to all other

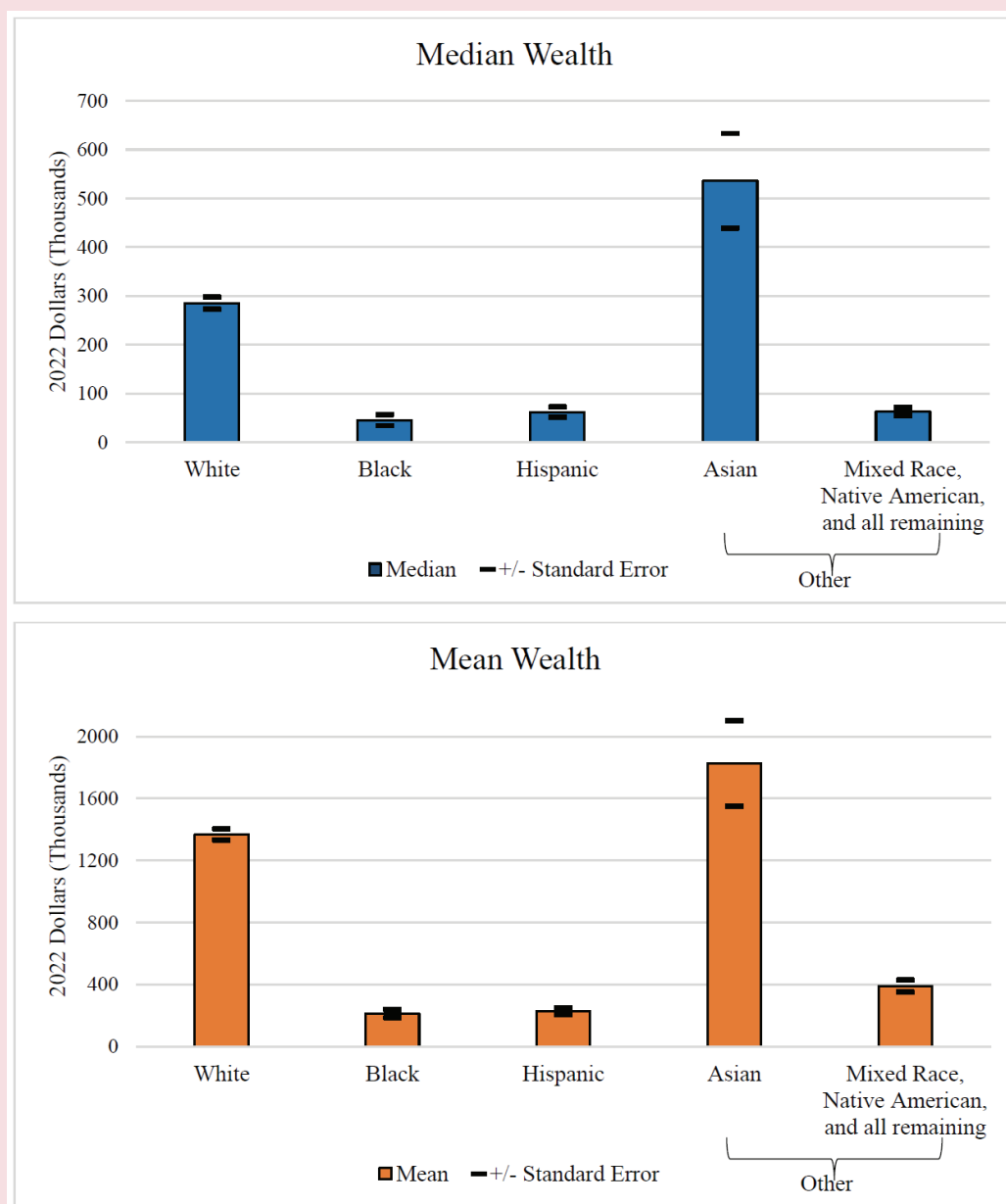
¹ "Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF)," Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, April 5, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.17016/8799>.

ACCOMMODATIONS (continued)

racial and ethnic markers. Though wealth ratios have narrowed since 2019, the real wages of non-white families stagnated. Further wealth disparity binaries were reported within age, education, housing status, and other identifiers.

FIGURE 4.3

Wealth Metrics by Race and Ethnicity, FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances²



² Aditya Aladangady, et al. "Greater Wealth, Greater Uncertainty: Changes in Racial Inequality in the Survey of Consumer Finances," FEDS Notes, Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, October 18, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.17016/2380-7172.3405>.

ACCOMMODATIONS (continued)

FIGURE 4.4

Average Financial Assets by Race and Ethnicity from 1989 - 2022, FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances³

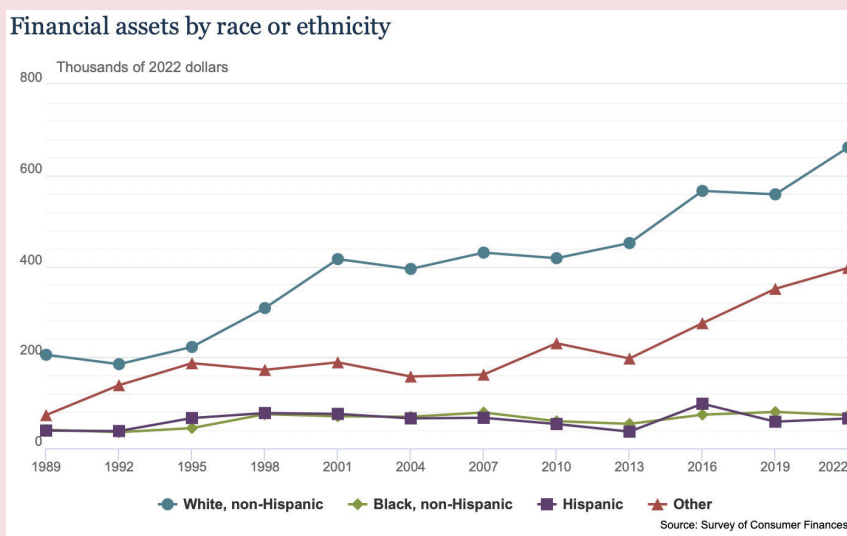
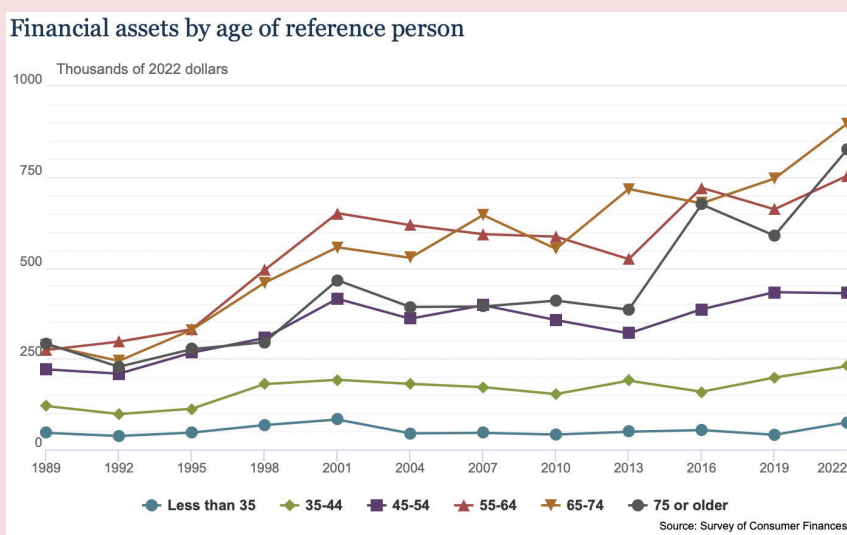


FIGURE 4.5

Average Financial Assets by Age from 1989 - 2022, FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances⁴



³ "Financial assets by race or ethnicity," Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF), Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, April 5, 2024, https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Financial_Assets;demographic:race-cl4;population:1,2,3,4;units:mean.

⁴ "Financial assets by age of reference person," Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF), https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Financial_Assets;demographic:agecl;population:all;units:mean.

ACCOMMODATIONS (continued)

FIGURE 4.6

Average Financial Assets by Education from 1989 - 2022, FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances⁵

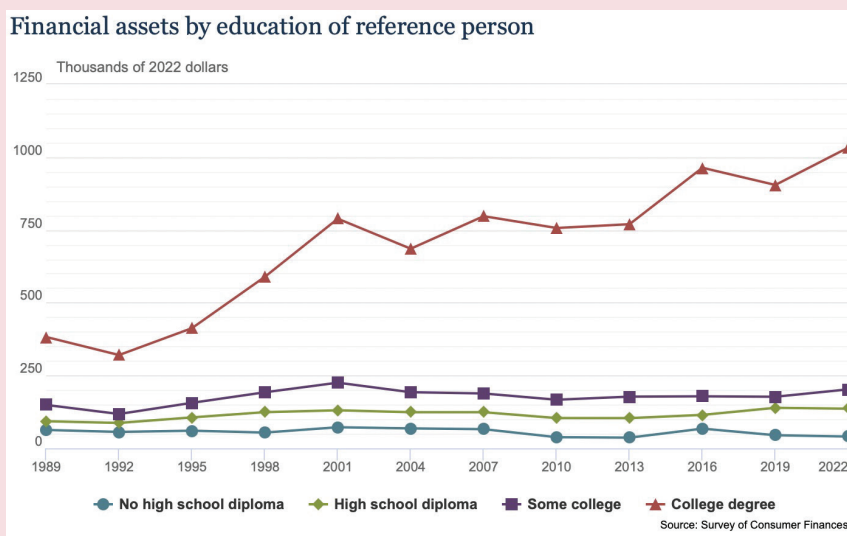
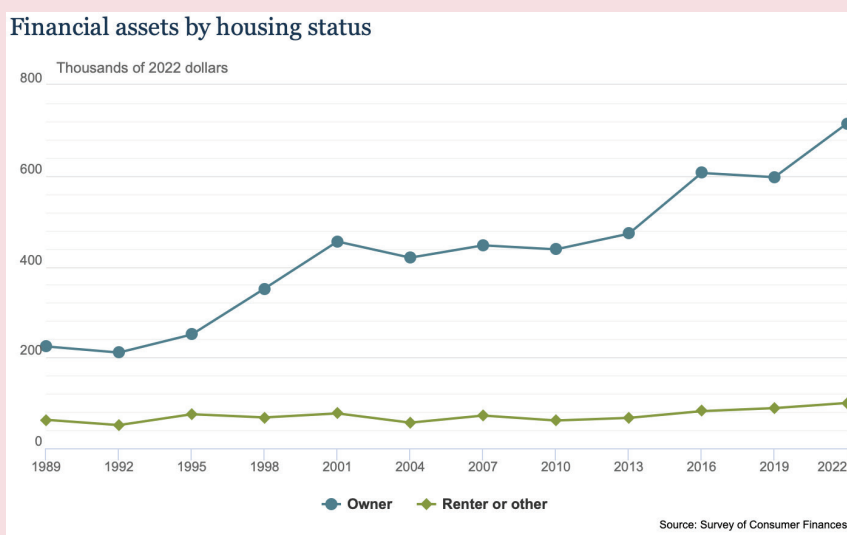


FIGURE 4.7

Financial Assets by Housing Status from 1989 - 2022, FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances⁶



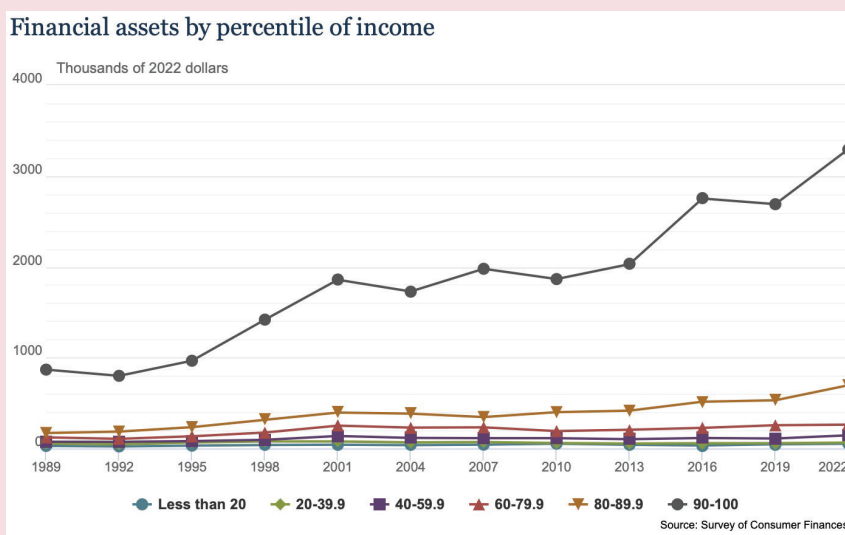
⁵ "Financial assets by education of reference person," Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF), https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Financial_Assets;demographic:edcl;population:all;units:mean.

⁶ "Financial assets by housing status," Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF), https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Financial_Assets;demographic:housecl;population:all;units:mean.

ACCOMMODATIONS (continued)

FIGURE 4.8

Financial Assets by Percentile of Income from 1989 - 2022, FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances⁷



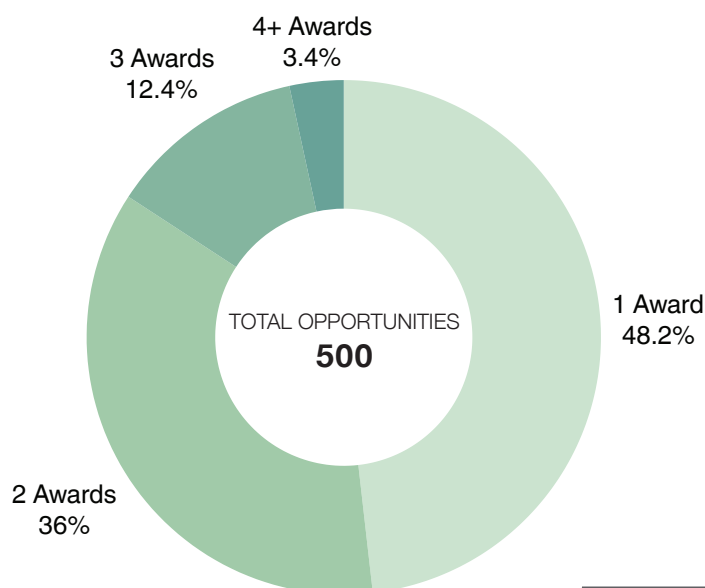
Opportunities may be lucrative in building credentials and forming connections as a professional, which may lead to future opportunities and job placements. However, the financial barriers presented at the onset often weigh heavily against the applicant, resulting in application pools dominated by financially affluent composers. Narratives surrounding wealth in the United States are heavily dependent on race, gender, age, disability, and education markers, as indicated in the most recent reports from the FDIC Survey of Consumer Finances. These national disparities reflect heavily in composition opportunity trends, most notably via class.

⁷ "Financial assets by percentile of income," Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF), https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scf/dataviz/scf/chart/#series:Financial_Assets;demographic:inccat;population:all;units:mean.

AWARD SYSTEMS

FIGURE 5.1
Surveyed Award

Awards |
Award Count



BY THE NUMBERS

1 Award: 241
2 Awards: 180
3 Awards: 62
4+ Awards: 17

KEY POINTS

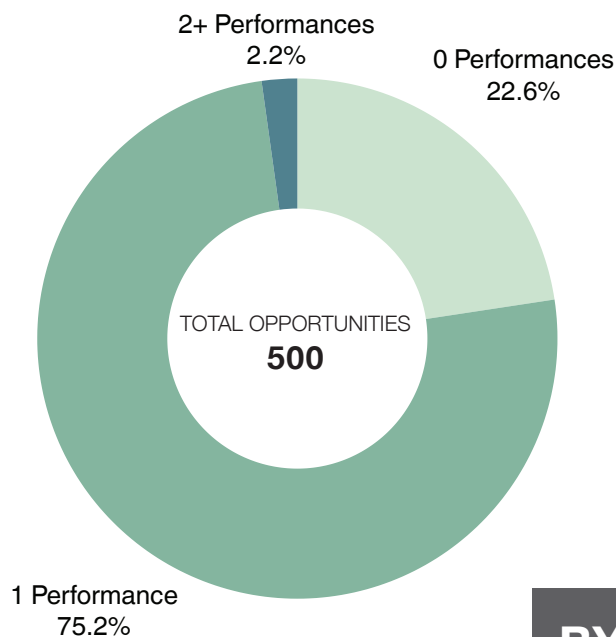
- The awards recorded in the survey include a performance, recording, certificate, commission, residency, cash prize, publication, reading, workshop, interview, and discography credit. The report does not intend to ascribe qualitative value markers to these awards, but simply creates a blueprint for developing comparative statistics and discussing equity.
- The five most common awards were one performance only (161), cash prize and one performance (107), cash prize only (36), one performance and a live recording (30), and a cash prize, one performance, and live recording (26).
- Across all surveyed opportunities, 376 (75.2%) included only one performance and only 11 (2.2%) included two or more performances.
- Houston-based new music ensemble Loop38 offered the “Will and Soul” Call for Proposals in 2022. It’s the only opportunity to offer seven awards: cash prize, commission, multiple workshops, an interview, AV recording, residency with partial funding, and a world premiere at the Rothko Chapel. Their proposal system established a direct relationship with the composer while dually investing in the long-term sustainability of the composer’s music. Loop38’s funding for the project was strictly based on local and state sources from the City of Houston Through Houston Arts Alliance, Texas Commission on the Arts, and Poets & Writers, rather than the typical national grant associations. Their proposal model is both financially and creatively attractive but is an anomaly within the report.

AWARD SYSTEMS (continued)

FIGURE 5.2

Programming Awards

Awards II
Programming



BY THE NUMBERS

0 Performances: 113
1 Performance: 376
2+ Performances: 11

KEY POINT

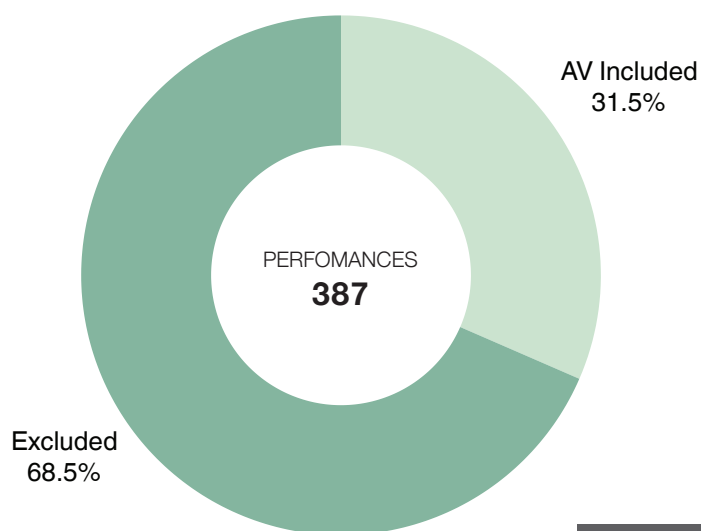
- Award systems without performances were primarily residencies, monetary- and certificate-granting competitions, interviews, and publishing. Some commissions did not guarantee a performance.

AWARD SYSTEMS (continued)

FIGURE 5.3

Audio and Visual Recording Awards

Awards III
AV Recording



BY THE NUMBERS

AV Included: 122
AV Excluded: 265

KEY POINTS

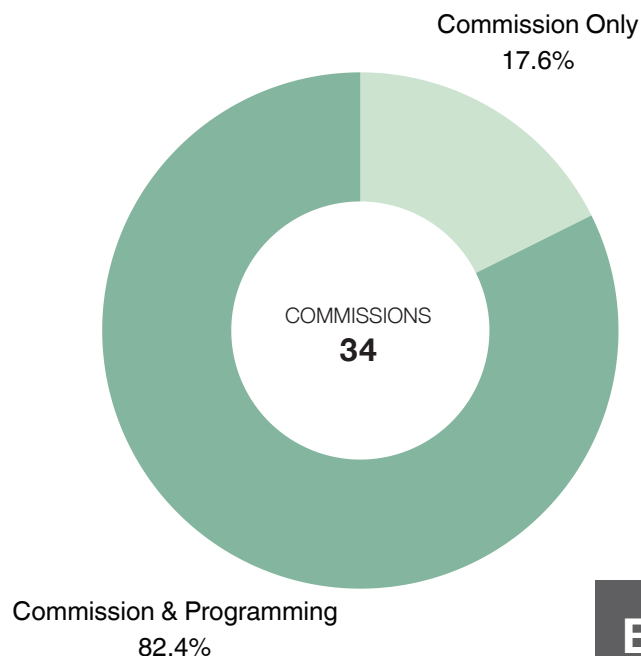
- AV documentation continues to be a rarity amongst opportunities with live performances, especially for conferences, festivals, and events involving orchestral, string quartet, choral, and electroacoustic music. Oftentimes, organizations used entry fees to subsidize the costs of recording and performance space rentals.
- Opportunities including recordings primarily used stereo pair area mics for large forces and a combination of close- and area-micing for smaller settings. Awarded recordings were primarily limited to archival use, but some granted free use.
- Video production often engaged multiple camera angles and audio inputs. Organizations often presented videos as a professionally edited video or as a package of source footage and unedited audio stems.

AWARD SYSTEMS (continued)

FIGURE 5.4

Commissioning and Programming Awards

Awards IV
Commissions & Programming



BY THE NUMBERS

Commission, Performance: 28
Commission Only: 6

KEY POINT

- Instead of performing the new commission, the six commission-only opportunities compensated composers through fully subsidized international travel and accommodations for an in-person residency (1), partially subsidized travel and accommodations for an in-person residency (1), collaboration and mentorship (2), commission fees well below minimum rates (1), and “exposure” (1). Though still a rarity, one may question the “commission” status of an opportunity that fails to provide a public premiere.

AWARD SYSTEMS (continued)

RECENT TRENDS: AWARDS

Awards function as a career currency for many composers, but are often not feasible given the liabilities inherent to the opportunity ecosystem. Though entry fees are common gatekeepers, they may be minor in comparison to the costs of participation. Reports on national income and consumer data provide greater nuance for these phenomena.

According to annual reports from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the average round-trip domestic economy flight from the seventy-five most active airports in the United States ranges from \$272.07 to \$532.17, with an overall average of \$386.43.⁸ The average round-trip international economy flight is \$1217.00. The average daily rate (ADR) includes meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) and daily lodging rates, excluding taxes. The current national ADR is \$178, but urban cities with more robust new music scenes such as New York City or Boston retain an ADR of \$342 and \$349, respectively.⁹

The most recent Consumer Expenditure Survey from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the 2022 average annual expenditures of the first quintile, the bottom 20% of the sample population, is \$32,612 with an average pre-tax income of \$14,191; a 229.81% differential. The expenditure-to-income differentials for the second (20%-40%), third (40%-60%), fourth (60%-80%), and fifth quintiles (top 20%) is 127.29%, 94.35%, 75.38%, and 57.64%, respectively.¹⁰

FIGURE 5.5

Quintiles of Income and Average Annual Expenditures, Adapted from Statistical Table 2 of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2022 Consumer Expenditure Survey¹¹

Item	All consumer units	Lowest 20 percent	Second 20 percent	Third 20 percent	Fourth 20 percent	Highest 20 percent
Number of consumer units (in thousands) ¹	134,090	26,860	26,830	26,698	26,893	26,810
Lower limit	n.a.	n.a.	\$25,807	\$50,092	\$83,696	\$140,363
Consumer unit characteristics:						
Income before taxes						
Mean	\$94,003	\$14,191	\$37,441	\$65,659	\$108,730	\$244,025
SE	1,231.08	263.36	295.71	434.91	723.16	3,829.19
RSE	1.31	1.86	.79	.66	.67	1.57
Income after taxes						
Mean	83,195	16,337	39,300	63,676	99,891	196,794
SE	960.32	299.35	313.22	449.66	754.72	2,889.49
RSE	1.15	1.83	.80	.71	.76	1.47
Average annual expenditures						
Mean	\$72,967	\$32,612	\$47,657	\$61,950	\$81,957	\$140,654
SE	902.42	891.57	1,567.86	1,011.94	1,090.65	2,196.01
RSE	1.24	2.73	3.29	1.63	1.33	1.56

⁸ "Average Domestic Airline Itinerary Fares by Origin City for Q1 2024," Average Domestic Airline Itinerary Fares, Washington: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, <https://www.transtats.bts.gov/averagefare/>.

⁹ "Per diem rates," U.S. General Services Administration, <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

¹⁰ Shane Meyers, et al, "Consumer Expenditures in 2022," Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Washington: Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 1, 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/consumer-expenditures/2022/>.

¹¹ Ibid.

AWARD SYSTEMS (continued)

The average duration of all surveyed festival-like events is 2.8 days; three days as the most common. Accounting for inflation differences between 2022 and 2024, in combination with statistical and survey data, the average cost for three days of domestic events ranges between \$806.07 to \$1579.17. The average minimum cost for three days of international attendance is \$1751.00. Miscellaneous expenses including emergency funds, flight insurance, performer fees, and registration, or remunerations such as performance royalties, professional development allocations, and travel grants are excluded from this data set.

TABLE 1

The Percentage of Yearly Income Deficits for a Single Attendance-Based Event between Income Quintiles from the 2022 Consumer Expenditure Survey

Quintile	Low	High	International
Q1	5.68%	11.13%	12.34%
Q2	2.15%	4.22%	4.68%
Q3	1.23%	2.41%	2.67%
Q4	0.74%	1.45%	1.61%
Q5	0.03%	0.06%	0.07%

TABLE 2

Reconciling the Average Cost of One Domestic Event, Pre-Tax Income, and Average Annual Expenditures with Consequent Income Differentials between Income Quintiles from the 2022 Consumer Expenditure Survey

Quintile	Financial Differentials
Q1	238.22%
Q2	130.48%
Q3	96.17%
Q4	76.48%
Q5	57.69%

AWARD SYSTEMS (continued)

Receiving career benefits or awards via in-person attendance wholly inhibits composers in the first and second quintiles and severely limits third quintile populations to two events a year. Conversely, composers in the fourth and fifth quintile may attend up to twenty-one or nine-hundred and forty events a year, respectively.

The main source of inequity stems from class-based, post-admittance gatekeepers. Consequently, competition pools are geared to those with modest wealth. First, second, and third quintile populations may find support via crowdfunding, donorship, state development programs, and travel grants, but these solutions are extremely competitive and largely unsustainable.

While the perceived benefit of “prestigious” awards may have positive consequences that cannot be qualified in a vacuum, few opportunities offer sustainable accommodations and awards. Inequities within the adjudication process simply add to the fire. In their 2020 open letter, Dr. Kurt Rohde divulges a rather sinister pattern that emerges during the selection process of many “prestigious” competitions in which committee members often overlook candidates in favor of qualities that align with the committee’s non-musical biases. Having served on the selection committees for several prestigious fellowships, commissions, competitions, and awards, Rohde cites three types of applicants: *Not Suitable*, *Promising*, and *Deserving*.¹²

Candidates that are *Not Suitable* are eliminated early on, often due to application preparation. *Promising* are those whose work has made an impact on the committee, but who are often affiliated with a less prominent institution, studying with someone the committee does not know, and/or composing music that the committee is unfamiliar with. *Deserving* applicants are considered “career track” composers and are almost exclusively from a privileged affiliation, in which perceived institutional prestige is impossible to separate from their music. For Rohde, prestigious affiliation and its privileges become proxies for applicant value; a highly problematic metric when juxtaposed against an inhibiting network for the *Not Suitable* and *Promising*.

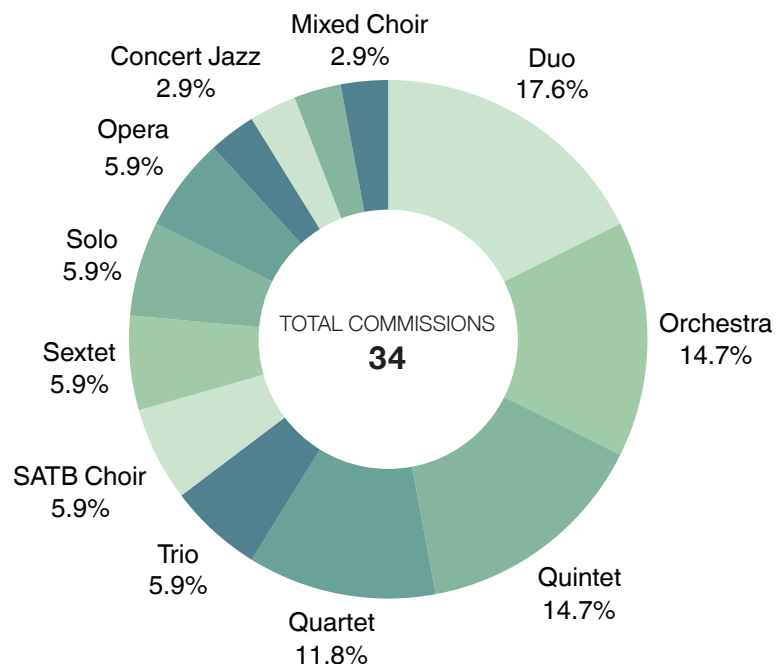
¹² “Kurt Rohde, “An open letter to all those in institutionalized positions of power in the new music community,” unpublished letter, in the author’s possession: 2.

COMMISSIONS

FIGURE 6.1

Commissions via Instrumentation

Commissions
Instrumentation



BY THE NUMBERS

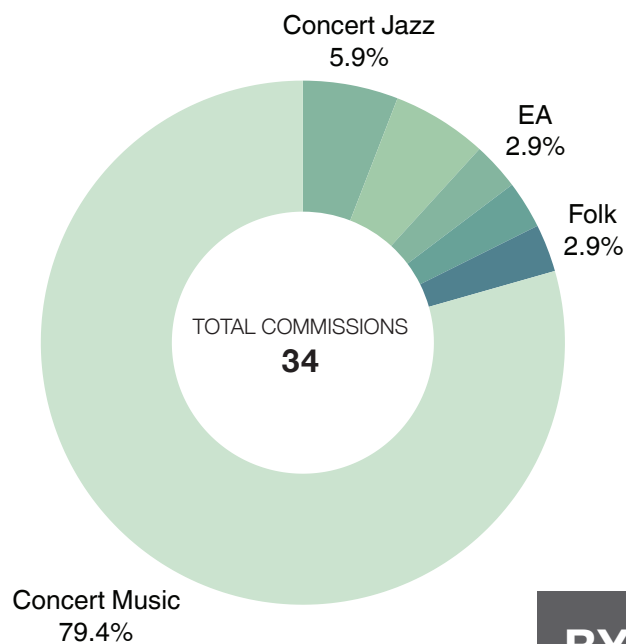
Duo: 6
Orchestra: 5
Quintet: 5
Quartet: 4
Trio: 2
SATB Choir: 2
Sextet: 2
Solo: 2
Opera: 2
Concert Jazz: 1
Concert Band: 1
Large Chamber: 1
Mixed Choir: 1

COMMISSIONS (continued)

FIGURE 6.2

Commissions via Genre

Commissions
Genre



BY THE NUMBERS

Concert Music: 27
Concert Jazz: 2
Opera, One-Act: 2
Electroacoustic: 1
Experimental: 1
Folk: 1

KEY POINTS

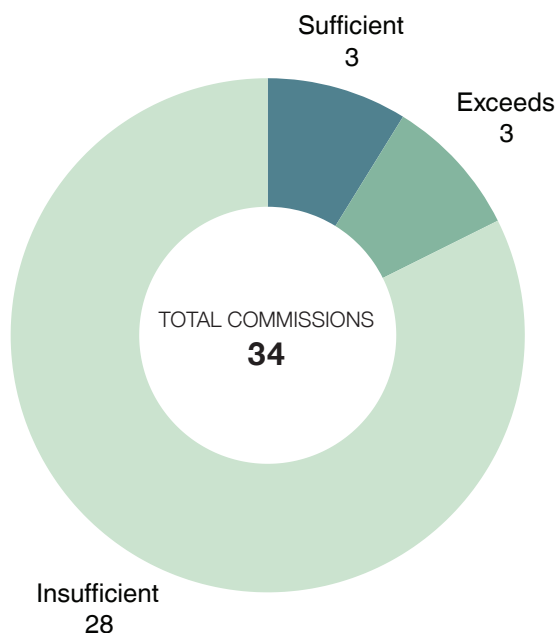
- Commissions offered through competitions and calls for proposals were predominantly for concert music, likely due to the set of opportunity listings' heavy focus on the new music scene.
- None of the thirty-four commissions were structured as a collective consortium.

COMMISSIONS (continued)

FIGURE 6.3

*Commission Fees
Compared to the Canadian
League of Composers
Schedule of Minimum
Commissioning Fees, 2023*

Canadian League of Composers
Commission Fee Threshold



BY THE NUMBERS

Average: 78.45% of Threshold
Median: 39.42% of Threshold
Mode: 40.78% of Threshold
Range: 4.12% (Solo) - 613.87% (SATB Choir)

KEY POINTS

- The Canadian League of Composers (CLC) sets a schedule of minimum commissioning fees based on the proposed duration and ensemble size. This survey references the CLC minimum rates effective January 1, 2023 and a 6.9% inflation increase since September of 2022.¹³
- Six commissions meet the CLC's fee threshold requirements. Three of these commissions provided substantially higher composer fees:
 - Young Concert Artists (205.76%, flute and piano duo)
 - San Francisco Conservatory of Music's Emerging Black Composers Project (207.41%, orchestra)
 - The Azrieli Commission for International Music (613.87%, SATB Choir).

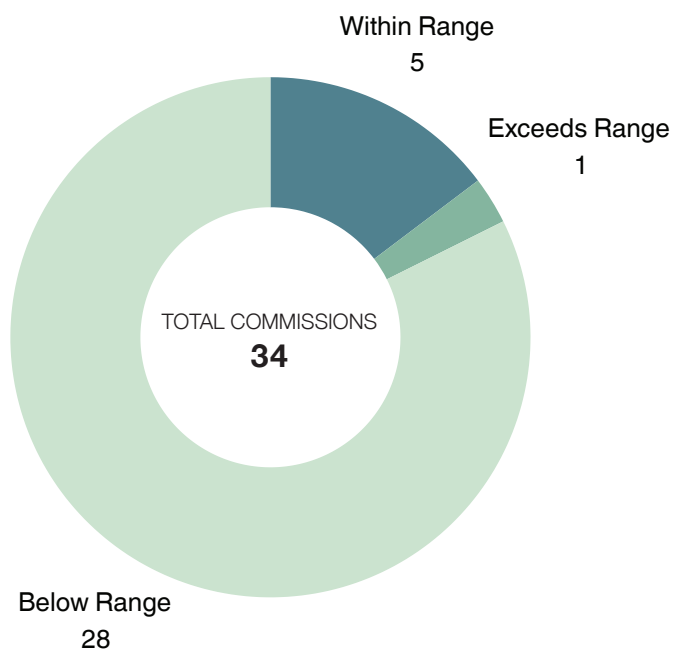
¹³ "Schedule of Minimum Commissioning Fees," Toronto: Canadian League of Composers, January 1, 2023, <https://www.composition.org/prod/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/CLC-Commissioning-Rates-2023-English.pdf>.

COMMISSIONS (continued)

FIGURE 6.4

*Commission Fees
Compared to New Music
USA's Commissioning Fees
Calculator, 2016*

New Music USA Calculator
Commission Range



KEY POINTS

- New Music USA's Commissioning Fees Calculator¹⁴ presents a basis for fee negotiation, of which figures do not include the costs for music copying, musicians, production, or recording.
- Five commissions offered through competitions were within the range of the Calculator.
- Only one commission exceeded the range set by the Calculator, The Azrieli Commission for International Music. The Azrieli Foundation is a registered non-profit that is the primary beneficiary of founder David Azrieli, a real estate developer, architect, and philanthropist with an estimated net worth of \$3.1 billion dollars.

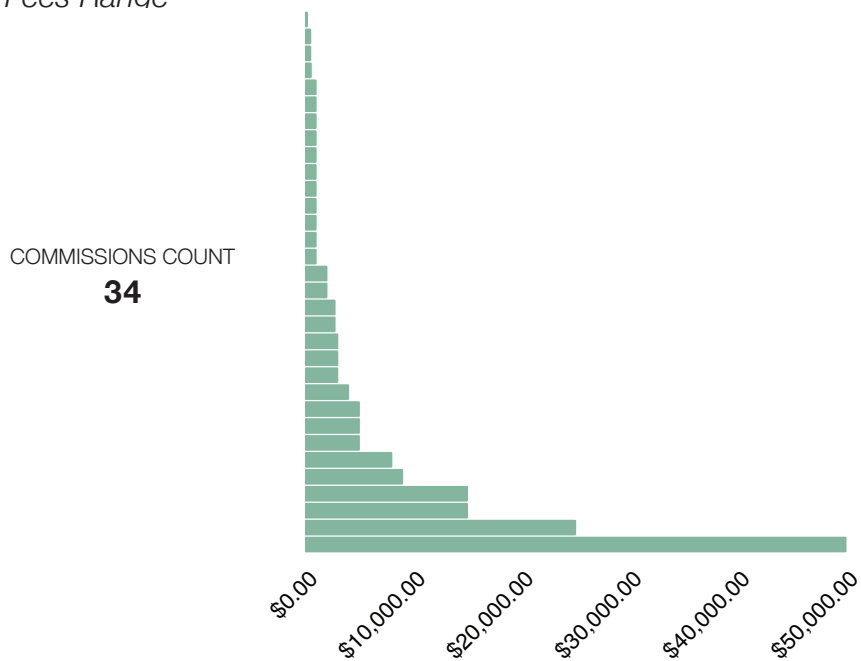
¹⁴ "Commissioning Fees Calculator," Newmusicbox, New York: New Music USA, April 12, 2016, <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/commissioning-fees-calculator/>.

COMMISSIONS (continued)

FIGURE 6.5

Commission Fees Range

Commissions
Compensation Amount



BY THE NUMBERS

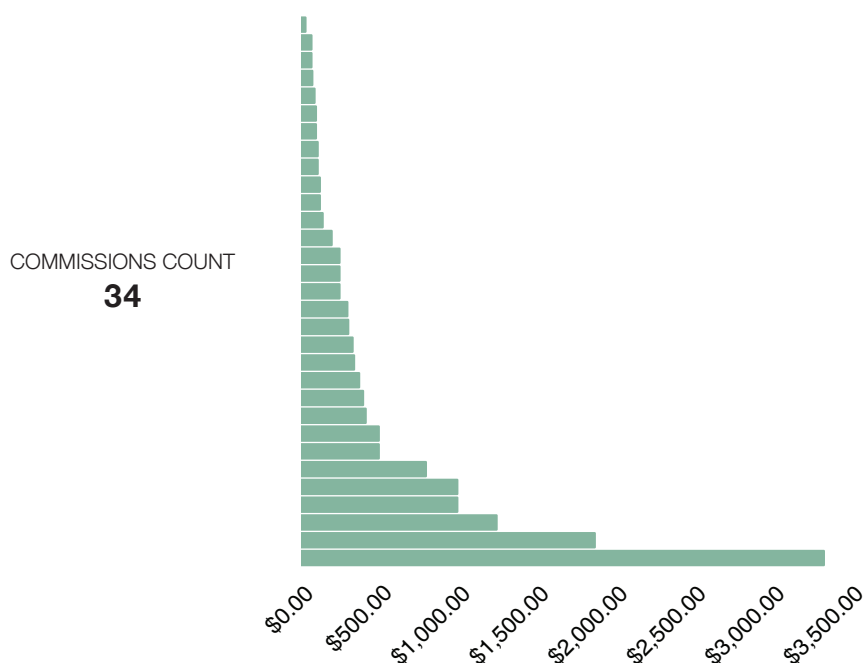
Range: \$200 - \$50,000

Average: \$5382.74

Median: \$2,000

Mode: \$1,000 (11/34)

COMMISSIONS (continued)

FIGURE 6.6*Commission Rates per Minute of Music*Commissions
Pay per Minute

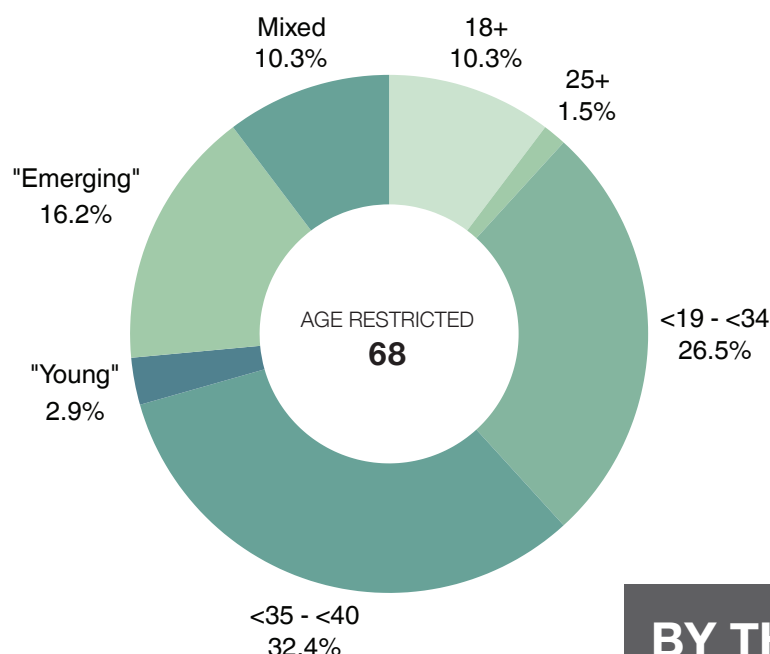
BY THE NUMBERS

Range: \$33.33/min - \$3,333.33/min
 Average: \$478.74/min
 Median: \$250.00/min
 Mode: \$250.00/min

RECENT TRENDS: COMMISSIONS

Commission rates within the survey were regularly below minimum rates set by both the Canadian League of Composers (2023) and the New Music USA Calculator (2009; 2016). Fees ostensibly offset a net loss, where composers may not accept or apply to competition-commissions based purely on low-income status. Of course there are outliers, such as the Azrieli Commission, but these tendencies simply magnify the inequalities between composers and the competition network. Moreover, composers with significant financial and social securities may be more likely to apply and accept poor commission rates.

IDENTITY RESTRICTIONS

FIGURE 7.1*Identity Restrictions via Age Markers*Identity Restrictions I
Age Restrictions I

BY THE NUMBERS

<35 - <40: 22
 <19 - <34: 18
 18+: 7
 25+: 1
 Mixed: 7
 "Emerging:" 11
 "Young:" 2

KEY POINTS

- Opportunities involving numerous age restrictions often established two or three categories: "Emerging" and Open Competition; and under 18 (pre-college), 18 to 35 (university), and 35 and older (professional status).
- "Emerging" composer competitions typically specified an age between 18 to 39, self-defined as student or non-professional status, were "a young composer," or simply remained unspecified. The term often conflates age with professional development, leading to an unclear bifurcation concerning transitory credentials between emerging and professional status. Moreover, these age ranges may be inextricably linked to the average age of post-doctoral graduates¹⁵ and/or first-time lecturers and assistant professors.¹⁶

¹⁵ "The Current Population Survey (CPS)," Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, Table 18b, Washington: Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 29, 2025, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18b.htm>.

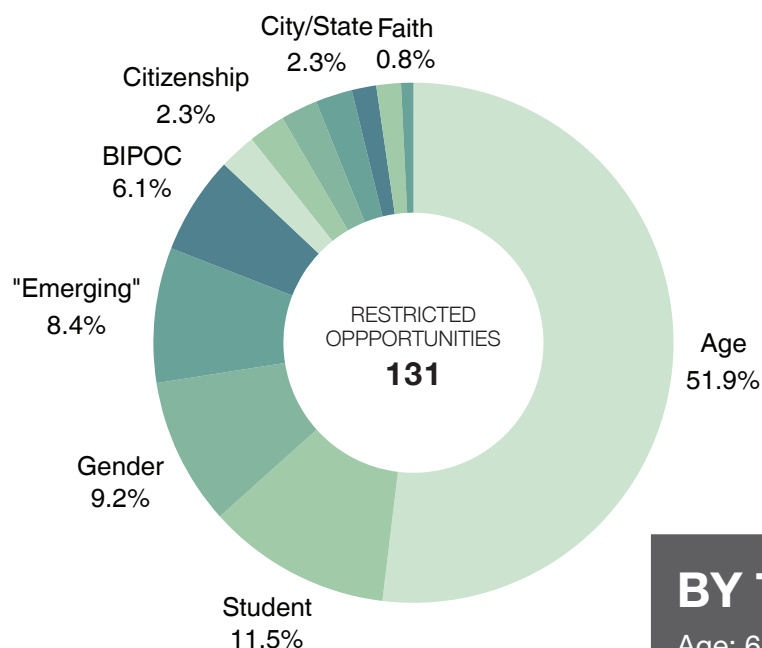
¹⁶ Jacqueline Bichsel and Jasper McChesney, "The Aging of Tenure-Track Faculty in Higher Education: Implications for Succession and Diversity," Knoxville: College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, January 2020, <https://www.cupahr.org/wp-content/uploads/CUPA-HR-Brief-Aging-Faculty.pdf>.

IDENTITY RESTRICTIONS (continued)

FIGURE 7.2

Identity-Exclusive Opportunities

Identity Restrictions II
Restricted Only



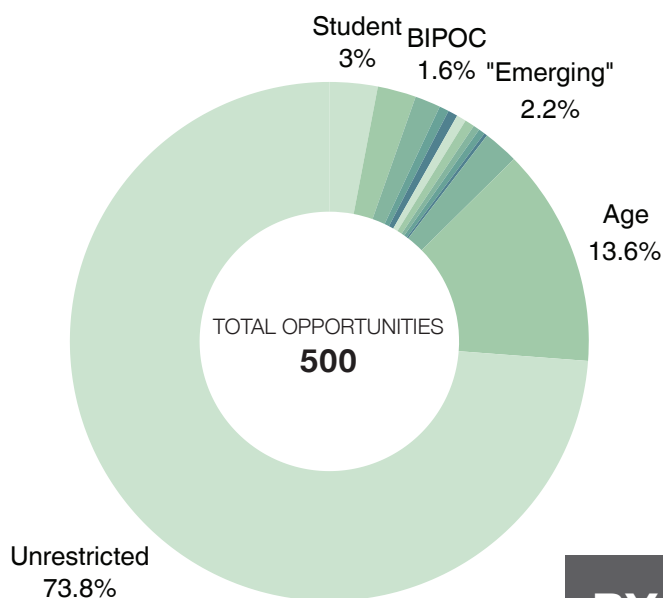
BY THE NUMBERS

Age: 68
Student: 15
Gender: 12
"Emerging": 11
BIPOC: 8
City/State: 3
Citizenship: 3
HEG: 3
Sex: 3
Intersectional: 2
Sexuality: 2
Faith: 1

KEY POINTS

- Opportunities often utilized dated literature when discussing identity and social status. Common examples included using LGBT instead of the inclusive LGBTQIA2S+ acronym, POC instead of BIPOC, and confusing disability with neurodiversity. Similarly, organizations may also be simply unsure of their target population or be generally ignorant of current DEIA practices.
- Many opportunities encouraged BIPOC composers to apply or mentioned interest in supporting their work but remained largely unrestricted. Often the language surrounding the inclusion of works from BIPOC composers remained largely othering; a likely symptom from pro forma diversity and inclusion statements from 2020-2022 and the absence of sincere commitment from senior leadership teams.
- Restrictions regarding childcare status, class, disability, specific ethnicities, language, marital status, neurodiversity, physique, political affiliation, spirituality, tribal affiliation, and veteran status were not present within the survey. It's not to say that these restrictions don't exist, but they are uncommon.

IDENTITY RESTRICTIONS (continued)

FIGURE 7.3*Identity Restrictions, Holistic*Identity Restrictions III
Holistic Survey

BY THE NUMBERS

Restricted: 131
Unrestricted: 369

RECENT TRENDS: IDENTITY RESTRICTIONS

Many opportunities define groups without systemic privilege as historically underrepresented and historically unrecognized. These terms largely place the blame on the neglected population, pressuring them to overcome the system that failed them. Privileged populations often cite a model minority to reinforce a societal narrative based in equity and meritocracy. Consequently, certain populations need to achieve more to be recognized within the system. However, underrepresentation and a lack of recognition are symptoms, not the problem.

The term historically excluded group, HEG hereafter, offers language that recognizes populations not as the agents, but as victims of systemic exclusion. The label then shifts the focus to parties that retain powers to recondition the status quo; institutions and their senior leadership. Variations on HEG such as historically marginalized groups have also become mainstays. The only opportunities to utilize this type of literature stem from the Boston New Music Initiative, Kinds of Kings, and Thompson Street Opera.

Of the unrestricted opportunity data set, 169/369 (45.8%) eliminated entry fees, provided adequate accommodations, and devised alternative models of participation. The data comprises primarily state and regional opportunities, with many stemming from rising non-profits and ensembles. A select few may be perceived as nationally reputable in the composition community, intrinsically holding powers in preserving or challenging the status quo. Such powers yield a greater responsibility to remain versed in the cultural zeitgeist.

CONCLUSION

Institutions of power are not inherently corrupt, but a nuanced examination is required to reveal deeper trends. The survey above provides a evidential basis for upcoming literature on career profiling, inequitable gatekeeping, institutional solutions, instrumentation and genre metagames, long-term sustainability, and ultimately a universal design of composer equity.

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APPENDIX A

Recommended Readings

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APPENDIX B

Surveyed Opportunities, Institutions, and Ensembles List

113 Collective
21st Century Guitar
360 Jazz Initiative
a very small consortium
Abbey Road Film Competition
ABLAZE Records
Academia-Musica, musikschule
AcquaTroupe
Alexander Kastalsky
Alexander Zemlinsky Prize
Alfred Schnittke
American Bandmasters Association
American Composers Forum: Philadelphia
American Composers Orchestra (3)
American Guild of Organists: Chattanooga
American Prize
And We Were Heard
Appassionato Ensemble
Arcady
Areon Flutes
Arizona Wind Symphony
Armenian Little Singers
Ars Electronica
Art of Energy
Artex Helsinki
Arts Letters & Numbers (2)
ARTZenter
ASCAP Morton Gould (3)
Asian Classical Music Initiative
Association for the Promotion of New Music
Atemporanea Festival
Atlanta Chamber Players
Aucourant Records
Austin Classical Guitar
Azimuth Virtual Orchestra
Bantam Winds
Basel Competition (2)
Bassoon Chamber Music Composition Competition (2)
Belvedere Chamber Music Festival, Luna Nova
Ensemble
Benjamin Cohen Peace Conference
Berks Youth Chorus
Berlin International Film (2)
BGFest
Biennale College Musica
Black Sheep Contemporary Ensemble
Blue Mountain
BMI Student Composer Award (2)
Boston New Music Initiative (2)
Brace New Music
Brazosport Symphony Orchestra Composition
Contest (2)
Brian Ellis
British Double Reed Society
Brixworth Music Festival (2)
Calliope (2)
Camerata Strumentale Citta di Prato
Camerata Strumentale Citta di Prato and the
Florence Philharmonic Orchestra
Canadian Music Centre
Canadian University Music Society
Canticle Singers of Baltimore
Capital Hearings
Carl Orff Competition
Carlos Guastavino
Cerddorion Vocal Ensemble
Chaosflote
Chicago A Cappella
Chiswick Choir
Chopin and Friends Festival & New York Dance &
Arts
Choral Project Rachel Moore
Chorosynthesis
Christian Fellowship of Art Music Composers
Cincinnati Camerata
Citta di Barletta
Citta di Udine
Civitasolis Reed Quintet
Classic Pure Vienna
Composer's Toolbox
Concurso Fidelio
Consulate General for Canada in New York
Contemporary Music for All
Contemporary Music Group of Lisbon
Cornwall International Male Choral Festival
Cornwall International Male Choral Festival (2)
Costa Rica Artists Colony
Counterpoint International Competition
Country Radio Seminar, inc.
CreArtBox

APPENDIX B (continued)

Surveyed Opportunities, Institutions, and Ensembles List

Croatian Radiotelevision	Festival Mujeres en la Musica Nueva
Cube Fest	Festival Osmose
Cultural Association Polifonie	Fidelio via the Internet (2)
Cum Laude Music Awards	Fivebyfive Ensemble
Da-sh	Florence String Quartet
Daniel Rodriguez's Fortet Project	Florida State University Biennial Festival
Davidson Wind Ensemble (2)	Flute New Music Consortium (3)
De Institutione Musica (2)	Flying Carpet Festival
Destellos	Frame Dance
Devilish Publishing	Franco Evangelisti International Competition
Diversify the Stand	Friday Morning Music Club Foundation
Donald Sinta Quartet	Future Symphony
Dot the Line	Garth Newel
Dresdner Blaserphilharmonie	Gay Men's Chorus
Dublin Sound Lab	Gilgamesh ICC
Durward Ensemble	Gino Contilli
Earplay	Golden Key Competition
East Chamber	Gong Projekt
Echofluxx	Grawemeyer Award
Ecos Urbanos	Gregory Wiest
Edition49	Guild of Carillonners (2)
Education Through Music	Harelbeke Competition
Efferent Verb	Hartford
Eight Strings and a Whistle	Hearing Orpheus Today
Electroacoustic Barn Dance	Heartland Symphony
Electronic Music Midwest	Henri Lazarof Competition
Emory University String Orchestra	Hertzbreaker: Sound Spaces
Ensemble Altera	HerVoice
Ensemble Blank	Hill's Studio
Ensemble de la Belle Musique	Hillcrest Wind Ensemble (2)
Ensemble Ipse	Hot Air Music Festival
Ensemble Nuove Musiche	Houston Grand Opera
Ensemble vim	Iannis Xenakis International Competition (2)
Ensemble x.y	ICEBERG New Music
Epiphany Singers & Wildflower	Il Centcelles Award
Eric Stokes Fund (2)	Illinois Music Education Association
Espacios Sonoros	Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
EstOvest Festival	Impronta Ensemble
Ethan Nylander	Impulse New Music Festival (2)
Eunmi Ko, MUTED	In.Nova Fert Ensemble
Evan Erickson	Indiana State University
Federation of Choirs of the Valencian Community	Indie Film Music Competition (2)
Fem Festival DiAmat	inner sOUNdsapes
Festival At-Maako	Inno Della Valcamonica
Festival Expresiones	Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology

APPENDIX B (continued)

Surveyed Opportunities, Institutions, and Ensembles List

Interactive Traces	Line Upon Line Percussion
International Alliance for Women in Music	Loadbang
International Arts Educators Forum Competition	Loghaven Artist Residency
International Clarinet Association	London Mozart Players Samuel Coleridge Taylor Prize
International Computer Music Conference	Look + Listen Competition
International Confederation of Electroacoustic Music	Loop38
International Federation for Choral Music (2)	Lotano Quartet
International Percussion Premiere	Louisville Orchestra Creators Corps
International Society for Contemporary Music	Lucerne
International Society of Bassists (3)	Luciano Casalino
International Trombone Festival	Luigi Nono 10th Edition (2)
International Trumpet Guild	LunART Festival (2)
Intimacy of Creativity	Malta International Choir Festival
Inversion Ensemble, Sandra Fivecoat Memorial Contest	Marvin Hamlisch Award
Ise-Shima Art Committee International Popular	MATA Festival
Music Competition (3)	Matan Givol Competition
ISU Festival	Matera Intermedia, MA/IN (2)
Italian Society of Contemporary Music	Maurice Gardner Competition
Ithaca College (2)	Meitar Ensemble
Iwona Glinka	Metropolitan Youth Orchestra
Jaca Duo	Miami International GuitART Festival
Jack Stone Award	Mid America Freedom Band
James Madison University Contemporary Music	Midsummer Music
Festival	Midwest Graduate Music Consortium
Joan Guinjoan	Minor Symphony Orchestra
JoULE Laptop Ensemble	Minute of Music
JPerez Music	Miquel Llobet Composition Contest (2)
Juan Carlos Narvaez	Mirror Visions
Juventas New Music (2)	MISE-EN
K'Arts International Composer Competition	Mivos/Kanter Competition
Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra	Moab Music Festival
Kaleidoscope MusArt	Molinari String Quartet
Kazimierz Serocki	MOSAICfest
KC VITAs	MPLS
Kesem Ninio	Muestra Internacional de Musica Electroacustica (2)
Keuris Composers Contest	Music by Women
Kinds of Kings, Bouman Fellowship	Music Worth Sharing
KLANGArten 2021	Musica Nova
Krzysztof Penderecki (3)	Musica Sacra Nova
Kyle Pearl	Musica Viva
La Prime Lûs	Musinfo
Lake George Music Festival	Musiqa (3)
LAWM	National Association for Music Education
Left Coast Chamber Ensemble (2)	National Association of Composers/USA (6)
Lesbian & Gay Bay Apple Corps	National Association of Teachers of Singing

APPENDIX B (continued)

Surveyed Opportunities, Institutions, and Ensembles List

National Band Association (2)	Philadelphia Young Orchestra
National Commission for Culture and the Arts	Phoenix Boys Choir
National Federation of Music Clubs	Phonoskopius (2)
National Flute Association	Pittsburgh Jazz Composers Concert
National Guild of Piano Teachers	Please Yourself Competition
National Music & Global Culture Society	Potries Music Fest
National Young Composers Challenge	Prairie Center of the Arts
NED Ensemble (2)	Prelude Camp
New Ariel Recordings	Princeton University, Hodder Fellowship
New Music Café	PRISMS Festival
New Music on the Bayou (2)	Proyecto Dualitas Buenos Aires
New York City Contemporary Music Symposium (3)	Quey Percussion Duo
New York City Contemporary Piano	Radiophrenia
New York City Electroacoustic Improv Summit	Random Access Music
New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival	Ravinia Steans Music
New York Composers Circle	Red Cedar
Nief-Norf Summer Festival	Red Sound Bench
NODUS Ensemble	Remus Georgescu
North American Saxophone Alliance	Renee B. Fisher Foundation
North Dakota State University	Reno Pops Orchestra (3)
North/South Consonance	Research on Contemporary Composition Conference (2)
Northern Neck	Riverside City College
NoteFlight	RMN Classical
Nouveau Classical Project	Robert Avalon International Competition
Novalis	Rodrigo Landa-Romero
NueBo Festival	Rome Prize
Nuova Consonanza	Ruth Inglefield
O/Modernt Chamber Orchestra	Sacramento University Annual Festival of New Music
Ohio Federation of Music Clubs	Saint-Sulpice
Omni Music Publishing	Salvatore Martirano
One Found Sound	Samobor Music Festival's New Note International
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis	Composer Competition
Orange Chorale	San Francisco Choral Artists
Oratorio Society of New York	San Francisco Conservatory, Emerging Black
Oscar Navarro Music	Composers Project
Osmose Intermezzo	Score Follower (2)
OSSIA New Music	Seattle Symphony
OTICONS FACULTY	Seattle Women's Orchestra
Overtone Vision 23-24	SHE LIVES
Pacific Chamber Orchestra (2)	SLAM Festival
Palimpsest	Society for Ethnomusicology (2)
Pancho Vladigerov	Society of Composers and Lyricists (2)
PARMA Recordings (3)	Society of Composers, Inc. (6)
Percussive Arts Society (3)	Society of Electroacoustic Music in the United States
Petrichor Records (2)	Songs of Sustainability

APPENDIX B (continued)

Surveyed Opportunities, Institutions, and Ensembles List

Sonus Foundation	Veridian String Quartet
Sound Silence Thought Competition	Vienna Classical Music Academy
Sound Spaces Competition	Vigevano Soundscape
Sounds of Silences	Virginia Bronze Handbell Ensemble
Sssociazione Ensemble	Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (2)
String Quartet Smackdown	Virginia Tech School of Music
Studio Channel	VLAMO Fanfare
Suzanne and Lee Ettelson	Vox Novus (4)
Sydney Contemporary Orchestra	Wave Farm: The Cutty Strange
Sydney International Concert	We-Choir
Symphonia A	Weiger Lepki-Sims
Symphonic Jazz Orchestra Annual George Duke	West Fork New Music Festival
Commission	Westminster University
Symphony in C	Westside Chamber Players
Synchrony	Willa Lentza
T.U.X. People's Music Publishing	Willapa Bay AiR Residencies
Tampa Bay Symphony	Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra
Tania Sikelianou	World Association for Symphonic Bands &
Tempo Ensemble	Ensembles
Tennessee Valley Wind Ensemble	World Projects
Tesla Quartet	Wurtz-Berger Duo
Texas Tech University	XIV Int. Schnittke Competition
Thailand International Composition Festival	Young Composers Forum
Thailand New Music	Young Concert Artists
The Contemporary Piano	Zepick Modern Opera
Thompson Street Opera	Zodiac Music Festival
Transient Canvas	
Tribeca New Music	
Trio Taco	
TURN UP Multimedia Festival (2)	
Tusen Takk Foundation Residency	
Twisted Spruce Music Foundation Symposium	
U.S. Navy Band Alton Adams Award	
ULJUS	
Un-American Blackbox	
University of Illinois	
University of Notre Dame (2)	
University of Tennessee (3)	
University of Vermont	
Unsung America	
UPISketch	
Urutsolmann.fi	
US Army Band	
Vancouver Chamber Choir	
Verdant Vibes	