

## Working with us:

Many directors and producers are more worried about commissioning music than anything else. A script – you can look at words on the page and argue over sentences and phrases; a shot - you can look through the viewfinder; a graphic - there's something on paper to point at. But music is so much harder. Some producers and directors lack the language to comment technically on the music and often feel at the mercy of the composer.

So here are a few points to consider when discussing your project with us

1. **It's OK Not To Know What You Want.** You're not ordering a carpet or a new car. The music is something creative that has to evolve with your production. If you don't know, feel free to be honest with us. You'll find us sympathetic and creative, and together we will find the answer.
2. **Use Examples Rather Than Words.** Phrases like "cool and contemporary", "uplifting", "subtle", "mysterious" and exhortations to "think outside the box" really don't help to be honest. If ten directors said that, then they would be hearing ten different things in their head. Please find an example that you think has something of the quality you want. But be specific by making clear what is right about the example and what is not.
3. **The Written Brief.** The more we know about the project the better. Please give us some context. If we can fully grasp the ethos of your project, we can imagine it in music. What are you trying to say? Not just the superficial stuff on the screen but the fundamentals, the big picture. The music should reflect that probably even more than what you see on screen
4. **A Picture:** You may well not have a finished movie but you might have some examples of finished artwork. That's really useful. We are surprisingly visual people.
5. **Logistics:** Half the job is delivering exactly what you want on budget and on time. Please let us know the full scope of the project, the time scale and schedule as early as possible. For example if you are considering live orchestra, studios sometimes have to be booked many months in advance, sometimes before your composer has been appointed. Please see below "Allowing Time".
6. **Music Supervisors:** These wonderful people can be very helpful for translating what you are after into terms we (the composers) will understand. The choice of whether or not to appoint a Music Supervisor is entirely yours. Please feel free to appoint your own Music Supervisor, or if you prefer we work with several very gifted people that we can recommend. If you are thinking of incorporating any commercial or pre-recorded music a Music Supervisor is absolutely vital.
7. **The Composer's Work:** If there are aspects of our work you love (or don't love) then let us know. It's always good to know why you chose us and if there are any points you are not sure about, let us know that as well. Just like actors, we composers do get typecast – it doesn't mean we are not equally at home with a romance or a gore-fest.

8. **Musical Language:** even if you are musical person, avoid musical terms. Stick to what you want the music to achieve not how to achieve it.
9. **Do You Really Need A Brief?** A long conversation with us, or a joint viewing of the Rough Cut will do great. Let us see what you've got, script, storyboard, log lines, whatever it might be. When it comes to composing, though, we prefer to create music to the Fine Cut, with no temp tracks.
10. **Let's See What They've Got:** Some producers choose not to brief us in any detail in order to let us come up with our own solution. That's fine but if you have any real red lines, you need to make that clear. If there are particular instruments, approaches or styles that will send you running for the hills, it's good to be clear about that up front.

#### 11. Other Things:

##### **Allowing Time:**

This is the real-life break-up of time required, so please schedule sufficient time to take into account the following:

It is only possible to write 2 to 3 minutes of quality music per day, especially for orchestra.

Orchestrating or arranging requires 1 day per 4 to 5 minutes, which can sometimes be carried out simultaneously with the writing process and sometimes not

Parts prep can usually be completed in 1 to 3 days

If an external studio is required, a typical recording session is 3 or 4 hours maximum, including musician's breaks, per day

If an ensemble or orchestra is required, a maximum of 15 (no more than 20) minutes of music, depending on complexity of the music, can be recorded in a 4-hour session

Mixing, depending on the complexity of the music and the number of tracks, a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes of music can be mixed per day

Mastering, we take care of most mastering which will take 1 to 2 days, but if an external mastering service is required please allow 7 days depending on availability

If your deadlines are shorter than this, it is still possible to fast-track but production costs for musicians and studios etc will increase.

##### **Budgets:**

We are happy to provide a detailed quote, please first provide a Scope including at least:

Duration of your film projects (in minutes)

If possible, the estimated duration of music required (in minutes)

Type of score required eg. orchestral, rock, ensemble, electronic, a combination of any of these etc – production, and therefore costs, for each vary significantly

Style of music. As mentioned above it helps if you can refer us to specific films or music that you feel have a similar element or style that resonates with your vision of the music for your film.

Deadline – please see “Allowing Time” above

We are happy to assist you in planning your Music Budget, which should be part of your overall Film Budget

Mixing to 5.1 or greater requires a special mixing venue and a special mixing engineer, which will need to be considered in your budget

Finally, we can't work for free (can you?) so please don't ask

If our quote is accepted (thanks very much) we will provide a Contract that clearly lays out each party's rights and responsibilities.

**Some final points:**

In the case of orchestral scores we are happy to provide mock-ups for approval before we book any facilities and musicians

For orchestral scores we only use studios with a track record in recording film scores

We always retain the copyright in our own music

We will provide a completed cue sheet at the end of each project, and we will ask you (the Producer) to submit the completed cue sheet to APRA (by email). We will supply contact details.