

CLC ARRANGING RESEARCH PROJECT

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

OVERVIEW

This report summarizes my findings on rates, industry practices, and general concerns among professional arrangers and orchestrators within Canada. 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, informal online guidelines compiled by freelance arrangers, and individual rates from the interviewees who took part in my survey. Part 2 synthesizes the answers from these participants into relevant categories for examination. Finally, Part 3 presents a series of recommendations and initial steps toward the formation of a national standard set of fees. This proposed template acknowledges diverse factors such as international rates versus current practices and expectations, artistic criteria, the wide range and scope of arranging projects, as well as the many challenges facing professional arrangers today.

PART 1: DATA COLLECTION OF EXISTING FEE STRUCTURES

A. INTERNATIONAL ORCHESTRATION/ARRANGING FEES

Firstly, I collected orchestration and arranging fee templates from several international musicians unions and organizations. I edited the selection down to three major organizations:

- The American Federation of Musicians (AFM 2021)
- Music Arrangers Guild of Australia Incorporated (MAGA 2012)
- The Musicians Union of the UK (MU 2021)

(See **APPENDIX I A** for complete fee templates)

The AFM Music Preparation Rates Charts (2021) dealt primarily with orchestration and music copying services for electronic media agreements (TV/Film/Televised live and/or pre-recorded theatre), but provided a valuable metric for pricing services by bar and/or line of music. Using a 4-bar/line (10 lines or fewer/page) standard base fee, additional fees were added for:

- Each additional line of music
- Revoicing a score
- Adding lines to a score
- Adding a piano part
- Orchestrating the parts without score

As the calculated AFM rates varied for multiple disciplines (Live TV, Cable TV, Public TV, Public Radio, etc) – none of which were directly relevant for this research project – I calculated an average fee of the different modalities and distilled it into the following formula:

PROJECT SIZE	FEE (PER PAGE)
4 bars page, 10 lines or fewer	\$32.50
Each additional line	+ \$1.34
Revoicing a score	+ 16.15
Adding lines to a score	+ \$1.71
Adding a piano part	+ 10
Orchestrating the parts without score	Standard fee (\$32.50) + \$30

Next, I consulted the MAGA (2012) proposed price index. It was a much simpler formula based on a set price per bar, based on number of lines (1 line = 1 instrument, harp and piano = 2 lines).

Number of Lines	Price per bar
1 – 6 lines	\$6.50
7 – 12 lines	\$11.50
13 – 18 lines	\$15.00
19 – 24 lines	\$19.50
25 – 30 lines	\$24.00

over 30 lines is negotiable on pro rata of six lines

The MAGA 2012 price index also included a suggested arrangement fee of \$90/hr with a 3-hour minimum.

Finally, I examined The MU (2021) fee guidelines for arranging, music preparation and orchestration. Their proposed fee structure was an hourly rate, with additional fees based on size of ensemble.

Standard hourly rate (9am to 9pm)	£57.07 per hour
CATEGORY A (up to 6 players)	£4.91 per bar
CATEGORY B (7 - 14 players)	£5.72 per bar
CATEGORY C (15 – 27 players)	£7.36 per bar
CATEGORY D (28 - 60 players)	£8.17 per bar
CATEGORY E (60+ players) conventional ensemble (e.g. symphony orchestra)	£9.86 per bar
CATEGORY F (60+ players) compound ensemble (e.g. orchestra & choir) or unconventional line-up	£10.62 per bar

MU 2021 also included provisions for original compositional material added to an arrangement and working evenings and holidays (both at a 100% extra fee).

The chart below illustrates the comparison of each Organizations' proposed fee, using a 2020 orchestral arrangement commission I received by the National Arts Centre Orchestra:

“Holy Ground” by Sarah Slean

Original: piano, guitar, strings, drums, bass and vocals

Orchestration arrangement: Orchestra 2*2*22 / 2211 / t +2p / hp / cel / strings (10/10/6/6/4)

Number of bars: 90

Duration: 4:05

My price	\$1500 CAD
AFM	\$1243.80 USD (approx \$1559.17 CAD)
MAGA	\$2160 AUD (approx \$2013.86 CAD)
MU	£887.40 GBP (approx \$1540.88 CAD) per line rate only
	£1458.10 GBP (approx \$2528.57 CAD) hourly rate + per line rate

B. INDIVIDUAL ORCHESTRATOR/ARRANGER PRICING

After examining the above fee structures, I collected individual pricing lists from other orchestrators and arrangers. Some price lists were collected online, via personal websites (see **APPENDIX I B**), and some were provided by colleagues on the condition of anonymity.

In some cases, the international orchestrators/arrangers quoted prices that reflected their country's union/musicians organization, with provisions made for extra requests (rush orders, additional performers, etc.). Some individuals provided currency conversion rates and additional services of conducting, producing and/or engineering for an additional fee.

In other instances, some arrangers provided prices at far below the proposed union rate. For example, two US-based arrangers quoted a string quartet arrangement at \$250 all-inclusive (score/parts/no royalties collected), whereas the AFM rate would be closer to \$550, not including royalties. This price discrepancy was likely a result of competitive pricing due to heavy saturation of the market (high supply/low demand).

B.I. FLAT FEES

Many orchestrators/arrangers I interacted with preferred to quote a flat base fee for orchestrations and/or arrangements.

The chart below summarizes the fees provided to me by several respondents. These fees were charged per assignment; while the particular parameters of each project varied and were not always disclosed, overall they seemed to include songs of a 3 to 5 minute duration. Where a range of value is expressed in the fee, the lower number indicates the lowest fee shared among the respondents; the highest number indicates the highest fee. This chart shows the variability in arranging fees either charged by the artist or offered by the client.

Instrumentation	Flat Fees (CAD)
Full Orchestra	\$1300 - \$2000
Big Band (15 pc.)	\$1500
Small Ensemble (9 – 12 players)	\$700 - \$1000
Small Ensemble (up to 6 players)	\$1200
String orchestra	\$500
String Quartet	\$200 - \$1100

B.II. VARIED PRICING

Other individuals (including myself) do not have a set rate, but rather vary their price based on each individual project. Many of the above criteria factor into the decision to base rates on a per-project basis.

One respondent often bases their fee on “number of staves and number of 4-bar pages” (similar to the AFM model). Another respondent says their fee “generally comes down to a \$/per minute of music fee, or sometimes a \$/per song fee”, depending on the type of show it is. In both of these cases, the additional factor of whether there is an existing relationship with the commissioner (or the likelihood that such a relationship could develop) played a significant role (long-standing relationships got better pricing than first time or one-time clients).

Volume also contributes to pricing for some respondents. From one respondent: “My per chart rate will go down if there are multiple charts” and from another: “a bulk rate can apply, i.e. a band wanting 10 charts will get a better per-song rate than a band wanting a single chart.”

B.III. PAYMENT PREFERENCES

All individuals I corresponded with preferred a 50/50 payment split. 50% upon signing the contract/agreement and 50% upon completion (I go into further provisions and complications of this payment method in **PART 2 – D.V. SPLIT PAYMENTS**).

In conclusion, there were a wide variety of individual prices, depending on geographical location and demand for services. I found that individual rates were consistently lower than the calculated fees proposed by the above organizations, and often included additional services (conducting/producing/recording/engineering) not outlined in the organization fee templates.

C. SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE INFORMATION

In addition to both international organization rates and individual pricing lists, I researched various online forums and groups discussing orchestration and arranging prices.

I found a few relevant Facebook arranging groups (all US-based) that offered practical pricing suggestions for individuals at the start of their professional careers, as well as tips for getting return clients, relevant technology and making industry connections.

Reddit also had some pertinent discussion forums on both orchestration and arranging (both US and UK-based). The three discussion threads I examined detailed many personal price lists (past fees individuals had been paid for work), suggestions on pricing for various projects, and challenges facing free lance arrangers in the US and UK.

Most groups on both Facebook and Reddit advocated for a per-hour rate, but I as I could not independently verify these accounts, and based on my above interactions with experienced industry professionals, I am considering these online groups anecdotal and have not included their data in my final report.

PART 2: QUESTIONNAIRES

SUMMARY

I used my research from above, as well as my own orchestrating and arranging experience to design a brief questionnaire that I hoped would help me gain insight into the individual processes of other professional orchestrators and arrangers. After speaking with a few colleagues in varying formats (phone, email and video conferencing), I modified my questionnaire into two different versions (see **APPENDIX II A**), in order to maximize participants' areas of expertise.

I contacted eleven individuals, all currently working as composers/orchestrators/arrangers in a professional capacity. I received eight responses (see **APPENDIX II B**) -- six fully answered questionnaires, one partially answered questionnaire and one phone interview. The majority of respondents requested anonymity. I have compiled their answers into relevant categories.

A. INCOME PERCENTAGE

Orchestration and arranging projects made up a wide range of respondents' income.

Two respondents estimated that orchestration and arranging made up 10% or less of their total income. Two respondents had orchestrating and arranging projects as 30 – 40% of their income. And the final two respondents said 60% or more of their income came from orchestrating and arranging.

100% of respondents did additional work outside of orchestrating and/or arranging. The majority of respondents identified primarily as composers (either for concert music, musical theatre, or film and TV), and reported orchestrating/arranging projects as supplemental income. Other respondents provided services such as producing, engineering, recording, conducting and performing in addition to orchestrating and arranging.

B. TYPES OF ORCHESTRATION/ARRANGING

There was a wide variety of orchestration and arranging commission types reported by respondents.

One respondent worked primarily in Musical Theatre. Three respondents reported working on orchestrations for films (but of these, two mentioned doing so only on occasion or in the past.) Many have done arrangements for string quartets and string orchestras, as well as wind or brass ensembles and/or jazz and big bands.

The majority of respondents worked with orchestral arrangements of pop* songs and charts. Within this type of orchestrating and arranging, individuals provided classic arrangements with parts, orchestration for backing vocals, adding choral or additional vocal parts, adding orchestration to already-existing rhythm sections, Christmas or Holiday shows and piano reductions and/or notations.

*This includes: pop, rock, folk, country, jazz, Celtic, R&B, and the following cultural styles: Chinese, Middle Eastern, Spanish and North American Indigenous.

C. CRITERIA

Listed below are the respondents' cumulative criteria for accepting commissions:

- Artistically worthwhile collaboration
- Years of experience
- Visibility of the project
- Size of commissioning organization
- Size of performing group
- Time (both time involved and turnaround time)
- Additional services needed (copying, producing, conducting, etc)
- Possibility of repeat engagement
- Ease of transaction with client (transparency of workload, prompt payment, timely communication)

D. PRICING CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES

D.I. FAIR WAGES

Most respondents cited concerns about low initial offers from commissioners, and pressure and/or lack of clarity around negotiating for a higher fee. From one respondent: “I think the rates right now offered for arranging are horrifically low. I do the arranging because I actually enjoy doing them. I think that realistically speaking, it’s not financially sustainable to do this as a living for the standard going rates out there right now.” Another response from a different arranger: “In the music business, there has always been a general rule of, the crappier and more commercial the work is, the more it pays...and conversely, the more artful and meaningful the work is...the less it pays, to the point of it sometimes actually costing you money to do something you really love.” This respondent also expressed skepticism that a set of guidelines would be able to enact real and lasting industry change: “You can have all of the guidelines you want, but people will always work for whatever they can get, based on either the desire to break into the business and gain experience or build a reputation or do someone a favour or just do something for the pure love of creating.”

Respondents also mentioned flexibility in both acceptance of projects and pricing when getting opportunities to work with personally sought-after groups and/or individuals. One respondent noted: “I’ll also consider the job itself; if it’s a job I especially want to do, I’m more likely to be flexible in terms of fee.” Another respondent said: “...I almost always am orchestrating or arranging for an artist I am interested in...so I am willing to work for a lower fee.”

Two respondents indicated that pricing was of a lesser priority. Respondent A listed 3 main criteria for taking on an arranging project. In order of importance, the criteria were:

- 1) Interest in the project: “The most important criteria is a good artistic match.”
- 2) Time: “I am busy. It takes me from 1 - 4 weeks to write a creative arrangement, working a few hours a day. If I am too busy with other commitments (commissions and teaching), then I decline.”
- 3) Money: “...if 1 and 2 are good, only then is it worth discussing money.”

Respondent B: “The money is often a secondary consideration, as arranging is not my main source of income.”

D.II. ORCHESTRAL OFFERS

All respondents expressed difficulty in quoting and/or receiving a standard price for their work. There was considerable frustration in getting widely varying offers for similar projects. For example: Orchestra A and Orchestra B are of similar size and visibility. Orchestra A offers \$1500 for an arrangement of a pop song while orchestra B offers \$550 for the same (or comparable) arrangement. Respondents felt that when dealing with established orchestras, there was not much room for negotiation of fees. “With orchestras there’s really not much of a negotiation process, is really what they give you.”

D.III. PARTS AND MUSIC PREP

There was also frustration at the expectation that parts and music prep be included as part of the orchestrating/arranging fee, whereas with composition, that fee is most often separate and additional. “I know that usually these days copying is included in the orchestrator’s job, but it’s always worth at least inquiring if there’s a budget for it (or separating the music prep as its own line item in your quote), if only to reinforce that it is a critical and skilled (not to mention time-consuming) part of the process.”

Commissions that involve transcribing the original song or chart (original piece has no score) create a lot of additional time demands on the orchestrator, and are often not reflected in the fee (amount paid vs. time spent).

Additionally, large commissions with a short time frame might require additional personnel (most often a copyist), sometimes unexpectedly. For example: Orchestra X hires Arranger Y to orchestrate four pop songs for an upcoming concert (1 week timeline). In the initial consultation, all four songs are described as ‘standard’ and a fee is set. Upon delivery of the materials, Arranger Y discovers that all four songs require transcription, key changes to accommodate the vocalist and extensive additional instrumentation. Given the condensed time frame, Arranger Y must hire a copyist to help at the market standard rate of \$40/hr. Arranger Y is now responsible for paying the copyist out of their own fee.

D.IV. ELECTRONIC SOUND FILES

Another concern when dealing with orchestras was the request for MIDI, which requires (sometimes significant) additional time to prepare well, but is not reflected in the fee. There was also considerable hesitation on the part of respondents that the MIDI did not accurately reflect their work. “One thing I never do...is show ANYONE an output of the Sibelius file. It just sounds too hideous!”. “I can’t bring myself to give the terrible sounding Finale mockup of my arrangement, so either myself or my assistant ends up working a fair bit with samples to give the conductor/artist a working version.”

D.V. TIME CONCERNS

Time constraints occupy a significant portion of pricing concerns. The quicker the turnaround time (time from commission to submission), the more expensive the quoted fee will be. Said one respondent: “[Depending on] how much time has been allotted for the project – rush jobs always cost more.” There can also be pressure to accept a ‘standard’ fee for a rush job.

Balancing the time demands with notes from the artist/commissioner becomes tricky when faced with lots of last minute changes at a point where the majority of the work has already been done (and the fee has already been earned/exceeded). “Sometimes you get notes late into the game and the fee is really so low that it really doesn’t justify going back for notes, but you want to make the artist happy.” “Getting a sense of how much involvement the artist wants in the creative process can inform your estimation of how much time the work will take or how the approval process will develop.”

D.VI. SPLIT PAYMENTS

While respondents preferred a 50/50 payment split (outlined in **PART 1 – B.III. PAYMENT PREFERENCES**), it is not without its challenges. Some respondents noted a significant delay (up to several months) in receiving the remainder of their fee after final score and parts had been submitted. One respondent has implemented the following practice for orchestral arrangements in order to facilitate prompt payment:

“[I] require the entire balance to be paid upon delivery of the string parts (and/or other significant materials...), and then only deliver the remaining materials once full payment has been received (i.e. this means the library won’t get held up and can get started on bowing and other prep, but also ensures you will get paid in a timely manner).”

D.VII. INTERNATIONAL BILLING

Some respondents noted a few significant challenges when dealing with International orchestras and/or organizations.

Firstly, there is the issue of currency conversion and making sure that is factored in to the proposed fee. Since conversion rates fluctuate constantly, it is possible that the initial fee may end up being less at the time of final payment.

Secondly, it is very important that US and international orchestras who commission Canadian orchestrators know the correct tax forms to send/submit (and conversely, that Canadian orchestrators know the correct forms to ask for/anticipate). “They [US orchestras unfamiliar with paying Canadian orchestrators] will inevitably send you the wrong IRS forms and one needs to be very proactive to avoid having them withhold at source. Getting an ITIN (or any dealings with any US government/tax entities) can be a headache, and can be costly at tax time if you don’t know what you’re doing upfront (i.e. at the time when you’re negotiating, doing the work, and billing for it).”

E. COPYRIGHT AND ROYALTY ISSUES

Several respondents detailed concerns when dealing with copyrighted material.

Most respondents who have dealt with copyright material prefer for the commissioning entity to obtain licensing arrangements for the material in advance. When done this way, the license fee will not be subtracted from the orchestrator’s fee.

If the individual has to obtain licenses for material, most respondents itemize a separate and additional licensing fee (on top of their base orchestration fee). One respondent also includes an additional administration fee (on top of orchestration fee and licensing fee) when they are tasked with obtaining licenses. Their reasoning for this is that when commissioners/clients see these two additional fees, they usually opt to obtain the licensing fees themselves, thereby saving the respondent from time-consuming admin work and leaving more time to focus on orchestrating and arranging.

Another respondent always attempts to negotiate a royalty for their arrangements that are recorded, as well as “build[ing] in an upfront extra fee if I feel the arrangement is going to be marketed on digital platforms.”

Some additional copyright situations/concerns arose when other organizations, ensembles or individuals wanted to use an arrangement made for someone else. Since arrangements are done under contract, most stipulate that no one else may perform that arrangement for a set amount of time, thereby resulting in the loss of prospective income (depending on the commissioner, this may sometimes be negotiable).

One way that additional income may be generated from a single arrangement is when that arrangement can be re-purposed/re-imagined for different instrumentation (a situation that a few respondents have encountered). Sometimes “the arrangement may be re-purposed for a different sized ensemble, so you are often the person doing the re-purposing and you can earn an additional fee that way.” Additionally, if the original arrangement was written for a single live show that is then later converted to a recording released for sale “there may be an additional fee generated that way, but it is usually [an honorarium], ie a few hundred dollars.”

Finally, one respondent expressed concerns about an American licensing corporation ostensibly seeking to compensate music creators for arrangements created and performed without proper

licensing. According to this respondent, the corporation has a history of launching lawsuits against a variety of performing organizations -- from orchestras to drum corps to high schools -- for breaches of copyright, and arrangers have occasionally been liable. The respondent added that the corporation's practices were "predatory" and had created a chill among American arrangers who were turning down gigs out of fear of legal action. Upon further research, I discovered that the corporation had recently lost a high-profile lawsuit against a high school. The Courts not only ruled in favour of the high school, but additionally made the corporation pay for the school's attorney fees -- a decision intended to discourage "copyright bullying" by all licensing entities, especially within educational, non-profit, and other fair use contexts.

This research suggests that this corporation may not be as urgently relevant to our current discussion as I previously thought -- particularly as its jurisdiction seems limited to the United States at this time. Furthermore, no other respondent cited the fear of legal liability as an overriding concern. However, this research may serve to highlight the importance of ensuring that the client/commissioner has obtained the appropriate license when arranging a work that is under copyright, particularly if the context is one that is highly visible and commercial in nature.

F. OTHER CONCERNS

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

- Lack of mentorship for career guidance and craft improvement
- Lack of communication/availability from the commissioner/client
- Lack of clarity from commissioner/client about project goals
- Last minute additions to project, not previously noted in contract (with this comes pressure to be 'non-confrontational' and not decline additional requests)
- Lack of information regarding other professionals' fees

PART 3: PROPOSED FEE STRUCTURE

The following is a draft summary of recommended arranging rates, based on the above research.

A. CREATIVE ARRANGING FEES

A.I. BASIC FEES (EXCLUDING MUSIC PREPARATION FEE)

Number of Staves	Standard Song (3 – 5 min)	Over 5 min.
Under 5	\$760	+ \$180 / additional min.
5 – 8	\$960	+ \$235 / additional min.
9 – 12	\$1180	+ \$290 / additional min.
13 – 17	\$1400	+ \$330 / additional min.
Above 17	\$1600	+ \$375 / additional min.

A.II. FEES WITH MUSIC COPYING ADDED (15% OF TOTAL)

Number of Staves	Standard Song (3 – 5 min)	Over 5 min.
Under 5	\$874	+ \$180 / additional min.
5 – 8	\$1104	+ \$235 / additional min.
9 – 12	\$1357	+ \$290 / additional min.
13 – 17	\$1610	+ \$330 / additional min.
Above 17	\$1840	+ \$375 / additional min.

A.III. ADDITIONAL FEES

Type	Standard Song (3 – 5 min)	Over 5 min.
Transcription Fee (when no original score is provided)	\$225	+ \$80 / additional min.
Piano Reduction (fully notated)	\$225	+ \$80 / additional min.
Rhythm section (fully notated)	\$200	+ \$60 / additional min.
Audio (MIDI) mock-up	\$75	N/A

B. NEGOTIABLES**B.I. WORKS OVER 10 MINUTES**

Fees for arrangements exceeding 10 minutes in length should be negotiated on an individual basis.

B.II. BULK PRICING

The client and artist may consider a lower rate per song if multiple songs are being arranged ('bulk' pricing.)

B.III. REVISIONS

If substantial revisions and/or rewrites are expected, the arranger may request a higher rate.

C. EXPLANATION FOR PROPOSED RATES

In arriving at the proposed rates, I have done my best to reflect the many factors described in **PARTS 1 AND 2** while drawing upon my own experience as an arranger. No doubt adjustments will have to be made as more research follows (see **PART 3 – SECTION E**) For now, what follows is an explanation of the above rates broken down by various criteria.

C.I. MEASUREMENT

Finding a unit of measurement to standardize fees was one of the more challenging aspects of this proposal. The international guidelines researched in **PART 1** used notation as a primary measurement tool; thus, an arrangement would be costed by the bar, or the page (which was usually defined as having four bars). This form of measurement suffers from one major drawback: in the majority of cases arrangers do not know how many bars (or pages) their arrangements will be in advance, and thus would only be able to bill their clients after completing the work (the situation is somewhat different with transcriptions -- see **SECTION E.I. FEES FOR TRANSCRIPTIONS** for further details). Furthermore, at least one respondent complained that the per-bar rate did not accurately reflect musical variables like meter, tempo, etc., and preferred a broader metric.

In this regard, measuring rates by the minute seemed more reasonable, as this would allow both the client and the arranger to assess and agree upon the fee before any work has begun.

However, charging by the minute also seemed to produce a variability in outcome that was not reflected in my interviewees' responses (rates for 3-minute songs were too low, while 5-minute songs became prohibitively high for clients). Because much of my research focused on adapting standard songs for various instrumentations, I proposed a base fee, based on a 4-minute song:

Under 5 staves	\$190 per min.
5 – 8 staves	\$240 per min.
9 – 12 staves	\$295 per min.
13 – 17 staves	\$350 per min.
Above 17 staves	\$400 per min.

This fee would then be applied as an umbrella fee to songs within the standard range (3 – 5 minutes). Songs above 5 minutes would then be charged with an additional per-minute rate, scaled down for feasibility. (The CLC may wish to consider this per-minute guide as an alternative to the more general metric I outlined above.)

Finally, I chose to omit measurements of labour (ie. hourly rates) from this guide. While I came across anecdotes online from those who charged by the hour, I could not find any evidence of such practice among either artists or clients.

C.II. DATA FROM RESPONDENTS

The primary criteria I used to generate the above rates was derived from the data from my respondents. I used the figures that were provided to me to assemble a rough constellation of 'common' fees. For example, although prices for orchestral arrangements of standard songs ranged from \$1200 to \$2000, most of these figures clustered around \$1500-\$1600, regardless of project duration. I then 'pinned' this figure and reverse-engineered an appropriate per-minute rate which I could then scale down from to generate rates for other ensembles.

On top of these basic fees, I have added a list of additional fees which reflect typical musical responsibilities that increase labour and add to the complexity of a job -- such as transcribing a piece of music from scratch (without the aid of the original score), creating a fully-realized piano reduction, creating a fully-realized rhythm section (for classically-trained percussionists), and generating a strong audio mock-up.

These fees -- when totaled -- probably skew toward the 'ideal' rather than the 'average'. Many of my respondents spoke of accepting lower wages for the sake of an artistically worthwhile experience, a practice which certainly all artists are familiar with. But that awareness in itself assumes a 'true' wage, which I hope the numbers I have calculated above will begin to reflect.

C.III. DATA FROM INTERNATIONAL RATES

When calculating the above fees, I was influenced in particular by the AFM and MAGA rates. The AFM rate—despite being somewhat cumbersome to calculate—seemed to accord with my own experience, while the MAGA rate, while perhaps more idealistic, was still supported by the responses of one or two of my interviewees. I employed these rates largely as a compass to ensure that my own calculations accorded roughly with international standards.

The MU rate presented a dilemma in that it seemed to recommend both a notation-based rate and an hourly wage. Totaled together, the MU rate far exceeded the other international rates, as well as the rates that any of my respondents had experienced. The MU rate thus became an outlier in my research.

C.IV. MUSIC PREPARATION FEES (COPYING)

The issue of not having a separate fee for music copying was a contentious issue among several of my respondents. Some expressed frustration that copying costs were not part of the arranging

fee, despite being standard for composing commissions. In attempting to address both the concerns of these arrangers—while also recognizing the absence of a separate copying fee in most conventional arranging contracts—I created a secondary table that lists arranging fees with an additional copying fee included at 15% of the basic rate (see **PART 3 – A.II. FEES WITH MUSIC COPYING**). The CLC may wish to adopt this table as the standard rate for both artists and clients.

C.V. OMISSIONS

Although I have tried to reflect the concerns of all my respondents, there were some that I could not reasonably incorporate into my fee structures. One has already been mentioned: labour (hours worked). Another is the time frame given to the arranger by the client to deliver the project. Although multiple interviewees stated that they would raise their fee if the timeline was too tight (or, in one case, reject the job altogether), I chose to omit this consideration from the standard guideline, as I believe it would constrain clients while encouraging artists to overwork themselves for higher pay.

D. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Conducting this research revealed several other areas in which I believe the CLC can assist both arrangers and clients. Among these might be recommendations for payment schedules (most respondents prefer to receive payments in 50/50 installments, see **PART 2 – D.VI. SPLIT PAYMENTS**), resources for dealing with international fees and tax forms, recommendations on licensing practices (in general, arrangers should not be responsible for the acquisition of licenses for copyrighted works), and guidance on determining royalties for arrangements of music in the public domain.

E. LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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

E.I. FEES FOR TRANSCRIPTIONS (REDUCTIONS AND EXPANSIONS)

Thus far, this report has focused primarily on standard song arrangements. However, ‘arranging’ is a term that encompasses a spectrum of practices. At least one of these probably requires a category of its own: the transcription, which is when an arranger takes an existing score and either *reduces* or *expands* it to a different instrumentation. The chief distinction between these two categories is that arranging is essentially creative, while in a transcription the arranger is expected to remain faithful to the original score (in terms of harmony, voicing, register, etc.)

While most of my interviewees did not bring up this distinction in their responses, we should consider the possibility that transcription requires a separate fee structure, for two reasons. First, it is (in my experience) significantly less labour-intensive. Second, transcriptions of longer works are much more common and often requested (for example, by an orchestra programming a work with slightly different forces), and to commission a transcription using the recommended arranging fees might be prohibitively expensive.

Only one of my respondents alluded to this distinction between these two modes of arranging, but her response was telling; she spoke of being paid “\$700 for something of a straight transcription for different instruments, \$1500 for a very original take on a song or piece.” With this in mind, I propose the following all-inclusive per-minute rates for transcriptions:

Number of Staves (of transcription)	Rate
Under 5	\$135 / min
5 – 8	\$175 / min.
9 – 12	\$220 / min.
13 – 17	\$260 / min.
Above 17	\$300 / min.

These figures were arrived at in part by scaling down the fees outlined above, and in part by intuition, and may need further research to fully justify. However, I believe that a fee structure that addresses transcriptions as a separate category is worth considering. This table may also be consulted as an alternative fee structure when an arrangement is commissioned for a social event (i.e. wedding) rather than an artistic or commercial one. Furthermore, because transcriptions are based on existing scores, the CLC may consider reverting to a per-bar measurement tool for calculating transcription fees. In this case, I recommend a \$5 per bar for the minimum category (under 5 staves) and a \$12 per bar rate for the maximum category (17 staves and above).

E.II. FILM MUSIC ORCHESTRATION

Although some of the interviewees I approached worked in film, very few referenced their experiences with orchestrating film scores directly. Only one respondent addressed the subject of film orchestration: “For orchestrating a feature film, it is usually an ‘all in’ deal, so it could be anywhere from \$4,000.00 to \$10,000.00 for the entire film, depending on the number of minutes of music that needs to be orchestrated and the size of the orchestra.”

The lack of strong data on film orchestration within this report could result from a lack of emphasis on the subject in my questionnaire; or it may be that the particular interviewees I selected did not themselves have a significant history with film orchestration. A wider pool of interviewees and a more targeted questionnaire may yield more research in this area. A third possibility is that independent orchestrators (as distinct from composers) may be somewhat of a rarity in Canada; one respondent, a professional and active film composer, considers orchestration a part of his scoring duties, and I believe his example is typical. In any case, orchestration fees in film -- as with composing fees -- are subject to a wide variety of budgets, depending on the production involved, and may lie beyond the scope of this report.

E.III. RESEARCH ON CLIENTS

The respondents interviewed for the purposes of this report were all arrangers -- artists supplying work to their clients. I did not interview anyone commissioning arrangers. A comprehensive guide to arranging fees may benefit from feedback from commissioners -- especially artistic administration, who may have a unique perspective on the fees they have offered artists in the past.

E.IV. FURTHER INTERVIEWS

Several respondents provided answers that I would be interested in following up on and exploring in more depth. Likewise, some of these respondents expressed support for this initiative and were enthusiastic about the possibility of contributing further. Should this take place, I would like to recommend an honourarium for the interviewees selected for further participation, in part as an incentive to investigate particular topics (such as pricing, arrangements vs. transcriptions, film orchestration, etc.) in more detail.

Similarly, there was at least one respondent who was not able to provide answers in time for the delivery of this report, but who conveyed interest in doing so at a later time.