



Mini-Lesson: The Commissioning Process

OVERVIEW

Commissioning is an important process in the world of music and an interesting concept to discuss with students as the band is learning a commissioned piece.

LEARNING GOAL

Students will learn about commissioning – the meaning of the word and the process.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- (optional) Dictionaries or internet for research

PROCESS

Prepare: write the word 'commission' on the board

Ask students to:

1. Share what they know or speculate about how new pieces of music come to be created using these questions:
 - Where do new pieces come from?
 - Who creates them?
 - How do they get created?
 - Do they cost money?
2. Consider the word "commission" and what it might mean. Use a dictionary, student prior knowledge, or look it up on the web. The main idea to communicate is that music can be created in many ways. Sometimes it is by a composer who has been commissioned by someone else to create the music. Here are some definitions of the word:
 - (noun) an authorization to carry out a particular task, duty, or service; an assignment; the fee paid to someone for providing a service (EX: a real estate commission to the realtor); an order for an art work (portrait, piece of music, play, etc.)
 - (verb) place an order; authorize

Share the following information with your students:

1. Anyone can commission a new piece of music. People have been doing it for centuries. A new piece of music is a way to celebrate important milestones, commemorate accomplishments or simply support a composer who needs a chance.
2. The cost for a commission can run from several hundred dollars to thousands, depending on the size and scope of a project. The two primary costs are the fee for the composer and copying costs for printing the music itself. The bigger the project, the more it costs.
3. A simple song for Mom's birthday might take as little as a few days. A large work for a symphony orchestra might take two years.