

## 2017/18 Rates Initiative: SCGC Endorsed Composer rates

### INTRODUCTION:

The SCGC has been examining composer rates for a number of years now, both by way of national surveys, and more informally, through the Discussion List, and personal conversations between composers. What has been missing, in many members' eyes – in a view shared by a majority of SCGC board members – is a range of composer rates that the SCGC is willing to stand by as an organization.

In aid of that effort, your Rates committee has been interviewing active composers who represent different areas of the work spectrum, in order to find commonality, and narrow the range of rates to what might be considered a professional standard in each category. In order to achieve this end it was necessary to throw out the lowest known numbers if they did not meet the standards of the board, and at the same time allow for much higher rates for composers who have broken through to a higher pay grade, without placing an unreasonable expectation upon the rest of the composing community and the industry at large. Thus, we are presenting a range that falls “in the middle”, where most successful composers are plying their trade.

A few notes on the information that follows:

- These numbers and publishing scenarios are meant as a general guide for members who may be entering into a work situation for the first time and want to get the lay of the land. They may also be useful for experienced composers who just want a quick “check in” on what their colleagues have been charging.

- PLEASE NOTE: *All rates given – unless otherwise stated – are for electronically produced (ie MIDI) scores with possibly one or two live players paid out of the composer budget.*

This document is solely concerned with the composer side of the equation, and does not concern itself with the costs of hiring a significant number of musicians. There are other organizations like the CFM which can provide information in that domain.

*But we have also found that the vast majority of scores being delivered are in fact self produced by the composers themselves, are covered by an “all-in” contract, and created using largely electronic means.*

- This document is a fluid document, and will be subject to additions and changes as they occur in the marketplace. Consider it a snapshot in time that we hope you will nonetheless find useful!

## **Some findings (and SCGC recommendations) to date:**

### **One Hour Drama Series (45minutes):**

Ranges from 6500/ep at the “very low” end, up to 12-13K/ep (exceptions: upper end at 15-20K)

8K to 10K per episode is the most common range. Publishing is not normally kept, but there are exceptions, particularly if the composer is a “name” composer working on a show that can’t meet their ask.

*The SCGC endorses 8 – 12k as a mid range for One Hour Dramas, and encourages its members to keep publishing in the picture as they negotiate.*

### **Television Movies (83 - 84 minutes):**

Mid range is 9.5K – 16.5K. Exceptions exist, particularly when there has been a budget added for players. Publishing generally not kept, but even here, there are exceptions.

*The SCGC endorses a narrower range of 11k – 16.5k for a Television Movie score*

### **Animation (22 minutes):**

#### **Model #1**

Most common range in this model is 5K – 7.5K per episode, with the composer kept on to handle music for the full episode run. As a matter of course, the composers start reusing cues, at least unofficially, after a few episodes, to keep the workload manageable. Publishing not usually retained.

*The SCGC endorses 5k – 7.5k for 22 minute animation in this model.*

#### **Model #2**

In this model – more common in Toronto than Vancouver – composers are contracted to provide a certain number of minutes of score as part of creating a music library for the series.

Examples: 120 minutes at 350 - 500/min, with an additional 60 – 90 minutes often requested as a second package.

Music editorial, if handled by the composer, is often done for an additional fee (example 1,000/episode) – but some animation companies choose to have music editorial done by in-house editors.

*The SCGC endorses the rates exemplified above by this model of Animation contract.*

## **Half Hour Comedy Series:**

4K is the de facto standard fee for ½ hour comedy series. Publishing is negotiable, and composer retention of full or split publishing is not uncommon.

*The SCGC endorses a rate of 4k for ½ Hour Comedy Series, and encourages members to negotiate on the publishing side, starting with retention of full publishing, as per the SCGC model contract.*

## **One Hour Documentary (eg., CBC):**

8K – 13K Publishing negotiable, and often retained by the composer.

*The SCGC endorses 8k – 13k as a rate for one hour documentaries, and notes that composers should generally negotiate to retain publishing, as there is much in the way of precedent in this area.*

## **NFB Feature Length Docs**

Range from 16K to 25K. Publishing not generally retained, due to NFB policy.

*The SCGC endorses 16k – 25k as a range of rates for NFB Feature Length Documentaries.*

## **Indie features:**

Independent feature composer rates tend to be generally lower, at 8K to 20K (publishing often kept by composer), and are often based on existing friendships, or on relationship building.

*With the appropriate caveats regarding “relationship building”, and particularly if publishing is retained by the composer, the SCGC has no problem endorsing 4k – 20k as a range of rates for Indie features.*

## **Features:**

The widest range was found here, running from 10K to 80K, and even higher, and often the higher fee accommodates the hiring of an orchestra (not always in Canada, it should be noted!)

Publishing generally kept at the lower fee range.

*Note: because of the wide range of rates paid for music on features, it is harder to suggest or endorse rates. There is also a general sense that features are more “upscale”, and that an agent’s services in negotiating should be considered more of a “must”.*

## **IMAX:**

Quite a wide range here, from 50K to 250K, and almost always involve hiring an orchestra, either at home or abroad.

*Again, the SCGC recommends that composers seek representation, at least by way of a good entertainment lawyer in negotiating an IMAX contract. The range of known rates is too great to make a more narrow endorsement.*

## **Themes – standalone, or as part of a Theme and Bumper package:**

### **Sports and News Networks:**

15 – 30K for Theme and Bumpers

*The SCGC endorses a range of 15k to 30k for this type of Theme and Bumper package.*

### **Animation:**

Model #1: 5 – 7.5K (with real players –publishing not often – if ever – retained)

Model #2: 10K (Nelvana’s rate for opening - usually 30 or 45 seconds - and a closing alt mix or variation -30 seconds. Nelvana keeps publishing and 75% of mechanicals)

*The SCGC endorses 5 – 10k as a range of rates for Animation Theme/Bumper packages, with the caveat of being aware of what a company is accustomed to paying, so as to not inadvertently undercut the market.*

**Lifestyle:** 5K is common for Opening and Closing Theme (all other music from Producer’s choice of music library)

*The SCGC endorses a rate of 5k for Lifestyle Opening/Closing Theme packages.*

## **Themes – with limited track package:**

**Lifestyle:** 10 – 15K for Opening and Closing Theme, plus 10 – 15 2 minute tracks

**Lifestyle (lower budget):** 4 – 6K for Opening/Closing Themes and Bumpers with a negotiable number of tracks. Some publishing retained, and rights ownership often reverting to composer a certain number of years.

*It should be noted that Lifestyle Themes in particular, and Themes in general see a lot of play and – as Themes - also pay at the highest royalty rate through the various PRO's*

*The SCGC endorses 4k -15k as a range of rates for Lifestyle Theme & Track packages, with the caveat that composers make themselves aware of what level of production (low or higher budget) they are dealing with.*

## **Station ID's:**

Example 15K (for 7 – 10 versions of the ID)

*Note the SCGC Rates Committee and Board do not consider that they have a broad enough sample of Station ID's to make a recommendation at this point.*

## **Advertising:**

DEMO FEE: \$250 - 300 per track, assuming a 0:30 spot, but with diminishing returns as they go longer. At 3:00 you might see \$500.

You may not be dealing with demos if you're being selected individually as a composer - but the guideline could apply to some sort of revision clause.

COMPOSERS FEE: \$1000 - 2500, again assuming a 0:30, with diminishing returns as length increases. In our source's experience, anything longer than a 0:60 tends to not be intended for broadcast, so back-end payments shrink or disappear, and the initial fee should compensate for that (assuming the budget to do so is available).

ROYALTIES/BACK-END: The houses tend to balance the number of contract points they offer against the composers fee - some pay more up front (composers fee) and others give more points on the contract (royalties). In either case, the broadcast location is a huge factor - American commercials are worth significantly more money than Canadian, simply due to the exposure. Additionally, the number of spots your track is going to appear on and the number of 13-week ad cycles it's going to run for will make a huge difference here.

*The SCGC endorses the rates shown here, and particularly encourages its members to insist on being paid demo fees, as there is much precedent in that regard.*

## **CLOSING NOTES:**

The Rates committee is grateful for the fulsome participation from the vast majority of composers interviewed. It would appear that this effort is welcomed in most quarters.

We also hope that the information presented here helps members better understand some of the working landscape and aids them in conducting their own negotiations. It was our intention to create a simple and straightforward reference document that can be added to over time, so check back periodically for updates, and don't forget to utilize the SCGC New Model Contract as another of your business tools!

SCGC Rates Committee

Chair: Graeme Coleman  
Mike Shields  
Michael Neilson