

# JOÉ M<sup>c</sup>KEN MUSIC COMMISSION INFORMATION

Heya! I appreciate your interest in commissioning music from me. Before we begin, please take the time to read this document in full, as it contains everything you need to know about my process, pricing, refund & cancelation policy, licensing policy, and more. The information below may change over time, so check back periodically to stay up to date.

For more information about me and what I do, please check out [my personal website](#).

**Last updated:** August 22, 2025

## QUICK NOTES —

- » Please don't ask for freebies or discounts.
- » I currently write orchestral music only. (Some light synth elements and other non-orchestral instruments are acceptable, within reason.)
- » Payment is upfront via PayPal invoice. All prices are in [Canadian Dollar \(CAD\)](#).
- » I offer no estimates on how long the process will take, and I accept no deadlines. That said, I work hard to complete each commission in a reasonable timeframe, and as commissioner, you will receive regular updates to monitor progress.
- » My job is easiest, and the results are best, when you can clearly explain what you want. You must at least know the basic instrumentation and approximate length (to the minute) for pricing reasons, but the more detailed your instructions, the better. It especially helps if you can send examples of music that match the feel & tone you're looking for.
- » This isn't first come, first served. I choose which projects I accept, and in which order I work on them, at my discretion.
- » I reserve the right to refuse or cancel any commission, at any time, for any reason.

## PROCESS & UPDATES —

My composition process has three basic stages:

- » The **Sketch**, where I jot down ideas and stitch them together into a rough structure, in order to provide a proof of concept;
- » The **Draft**, where I flesh the piece out, complete the instrumentation and give it its final shape; and
- » The **Master**, where I add any remaining bells and whistles (such as special effects) and perform the final mixing and mastering.

It's best to voice concerns and request any major changes as early as possible; doing so later may require redoing previously completed work, which may incur extra fees.

I like to send clients frequent progress updates, including audio previews, to ensure they're satisfied with how the commission is coming along. This can be done via Discord (preferred), Steam chat, or email.

Once you are satisfied with the finished piece, the commission is complete.

Upon completion, you will receive:

- » A high-quality\* MP3\*\* audio file (suitable for playback on all media players and devices);
- » (Optional) A perfect-quality FLAC\*\* master audio file (for lossless editing); and
- » (Optional) A PDF of the score's sheet music.

\* Settings used: 240 kbps VBR, 24 bits, 48 kHz (see [Technical Notes](#) below for more details)

\*\* Other formats (WAV, AIFF, OGG, etc.) available upon request

## PRICING —

My pricing system is set per minute of finished audio ("audio-minute"), and each individual track is priced along three basic tiers depending on its scale and complexity:

- » **Simple tracks:** [\\$30/audio-minute](#) (solo instruments, very small ensembles, etc.);
- » **Moderate tracks:** [\\$60/audio-minute](#) (medium-sized ensembles, some special effects, etc.); and
- » **Complex tracks:** [\\$100/audio-minute](#) (large ensembles, complex parts, lots of effects, etc.).

Please note that this functions as a sliding scale, and that depending on the particulars of a project, I may set a price that falls between the listed prices. Additionally, extra fees may be added depending on other factors (such as if a project presents special challenges, or if it requires the purchase of new software, etc.).

All audio-minute estimates are rounded up to the nearest whole minute, with an added margin of 10 seconds. For instance, a track of 4:05 is priced as 4 audio-minutes, whereas a track of 4:25 is priced as 5 audio-minutes.

Please note that the above rules are a general framework only, and that the final price is ultimately at my discretion.

To illustrate all this, here are a few existing works and how they might be priced:

- » "[Music Box \(Credits\)](#)" (simple [1 instrument], 0:36 [looping]) = \$30 (extreme low example)  
\$30 × 1 minute
- » "[Medieval Melancholy](#)" (moderate [11 instruments], 1:52) = \$140  
\$70 × 2 minutes
- » "[Scars of the Past \(Theme of Scarlet Frost\)](#)" (moderate [7 instruments], 4:47) = \$300  
\$60 × 5 minutes
- » "[Xirxenlen's Theme](#)" (complex [20 instruments], 5:08) = \$550  
\$100 × 5 minutes + \$50 extra (purchase of pipe organ virtual instrument library)
- » "[Mare on Fire \(Rainbow Dash\)](#)" (complex [46 instruments], 6:56) = \$770  
\$100 × 7 minutes + \$70 extra (purchase of electric cello virtual instrument library)
- » "[Twilight Falls \(Climax\)](#)" (complex [45 instruments], 12:50) = \$1,500 (extreme high example)  
\$100 × 13 minutes + \$200 extra (syncing to narration & creating custom effects)

## PAYMENT PROCEDURE —

All payment is conducted through PayPal. (I do not currently accept any other method of payment, sorry.) Once we have agreed upon a price, I will send a PayPal invoice. The currency is Canadian Dollars (CAD), which PayPal will automatically convert to/from your currency of choice.

**The full amount must be paid upfront.** No work will begin until the invoice is paid in full.

**Sidenote:** When paying the PayPal invoice, you may be asked to provide your shipping information, including your address. This is an apparent feature of PayPal invoices that I can't figure out how to disable. I do not want or need your address, as nothing physical will be shipped. For privacy reasons, I suggest you provide a false address. (If you know how to remove the shipping info requirement from PayPal invoices, please let me know.)

## CANCELATIONS & REFUNDS —

**This is important.** You can of course cancel the commission at any time; however, refunds are conditional. What this means is:

As a general rule, I **only offer partial refunds during the Sketch stage**, with the precise amount to be refunded conditional on how much work has already been done.

**Once work has progressed onto the Draft stage or further, all payment is final and no refunds will be given.**

The only exception is if I am unable to complete the commission due to problems on my end (such as technical difficulties, personal issues, etc.) at any point, in which case I will offer a full refund.

I reserve the right to modify this policy on a case-by-case basis at my sole discretion.

## PUBLISHING —

By default, I post all my music, including commissioned works, on my [Bandcamp](#), [SoundCloud](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts, with additional plugs on my [Bluesky](#) and [Mastodon](#) accounts (I no longer use X/Twitter), all with credit to the commissioner. If desired, I can honor requests for anonymity or discuss not releasing the commissioned work publicly.

## LICENSING —

By default, all my music, including commissioned works, is licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial \(CC BY-NC\)](#). In short, this means anyone can share, use and adapt (remix, transform, etc.) my music however they like, with the only conditions being:

**a)** They must credit me as the original creator (just drop a line such as "<song> by Joé McKen" in

- the credits or description; a link isn't necessary, but is always appreciated); and
- b)** They cannot use it for money-making purposes *without my permission*. (My permission is easy to obtain, but I appreciate the courtesy of being asked.)

I am willing to discuss special licensing exceptions to the above, within reason.

Finally: **I retain all ownership rights to all original music I create (both the original composition(s) and the original recording(s) (aka the "master(s)"). This is non-negotiable.**

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To confirm that you have read and understood everything in this document, please message me (either at [joemcken64@gmail.com](mailto:joemcken64@gmail.com) or via a DM through [one of my socials](#)) with the phrase "Jerry Martin is the OG" in your message.

Hope to hear from you soon!

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## TECHNICAL NOTES —

Here are some behind-the-scenes details for anyone curious about my setup:

### Hardware:

- » CPU: Intel Core i9-10850K
- » RAM: 128 GB DDR4 3600 (4 × 32 GB G.Skill RipJaws V Series)
- » GPU: MSI GeForce RTX 3060 Ventus 2X
- » Motherboard: MSI MPG Z490 Gaming Edge WiFi
- » Storage:
  - » System drive: Samsung 970 EVO Plus 1 TB M.2 NVMe SSD
  - » Sound libraries drive: Samsung 860 EVO 4 TB SATA SSD
  - » Backups drive: LaCie d2 Professional 6 TB SATA HDD
- » Audio interface: PreSonus AudioBox USB 96
- » Speakers: IK Multimedia iLoud Micro Monitors
- » Displays: 4 × 1080p monitors
- » Chair: Humanscale Freedom ergonomic task chair (with headrest)
- » Potted plant: Surprisingly resilient English ivy I keep forgetting to water

**Software:**

- » OS: Windows 10 Pro (x64)
- » Music composition & recording application: Sibelius (mouse & keyboard input)
- » VST sound libraries: Check each track's description for list of VSTs used
- » Mixing & mastering tools: FabFilter Pro-Q & Pro-C, iZotope Ozone, Audacity

**Process & Settings:**

I use Sibelius to compose & record the music, and Audacity to add any final touches or to mix in sound effects.

- » Sibelius export settings: WAV, 32 bits/48 kHz
- » Audacity settings: 32-bit float, 48 kHz
- » Audacity export settings: FLAC, 24 bits/48 kHz
- » MP3 conversion settings: 240 kbps VBR, 24 bits, 48 kHz

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Short link to this document: [bit.ly/JMComms](https://bit.ly/JMComms)