

**SCGI Submission to Arts and Culture taskforce.
Friday 2nd October**

Introduction and Context:

This submission is prepared by SCGI on behalf of SCGI members. It aims to identify areas of support which will enable composers for screen to survive the current crisis as brought about by COVID19 and with a view to supporting this sector in the future.

Screen Composers Guild of Ireland is an industry organisation which represents professional composers for screen based in Ireland.

Music is a key creative element in the creation of audio-visual content, composers for screen are music creators who are skilled at composing bespoke musical score which works as a creative element within audio visual productions and collaborates with other elements to deliver narrative, uniqueness and quality. Screen composers originate from the music industry but face and work primarily within the audio-visual industry.

Composers for screen create original work which carries IP, creates cultural and economic value for their home economy. Composers are responsible for the production, recording and delivery of their creative work and in doing so hire music performers and music production service personnel up to and including orchestras.

SCGI was formed by 21 composers for screen in 2017 following a recommendation included in the IMRO/MCPSI Music for Screen report. The aim of the guild is to give this creative craft and the composers who work in this area representation and visibility. Through participation in industry and stakeholder conversation SCGI helps close the knowledge gap around music as an element of audio-visual production. SCGI is also active in promoting creative talent working in this area in Ireland and promoting Ireland as a destination for music department internationally. SCGI currently has 70 full and associate members. SCGI is funded by members subscriptions, IMRO and Screen Ireland, with additional funding for delivery of training from BAI and Screen Skills Ireland.

SCGI has 5 specific requests of the task force:

1. Funding for creator representative organisations – SCGI
2. Support for access to work for composers for screen.
3. Suggestions for immediate and continued support for creator careers.
4. Recognition and support of value of cultural creator IP.
5. Investment in capital infrastructure for music for screen.

1. Funding for SCGI/ Representative Organisations.

Creators in the audio-visual industry have organised themselves into representation organisations or guilds. These organisations are critical to the survival of the sectors they represent.

Immediate Action:

- **SCGI funding secured in the short to medium term, allowing guild members subscriptions to be put on hold for the period of the crisis and to cover shortfall in funding accessed from industry.
Euro amount: €25,000 funding for 2021.**

Medium term Action:

- **Specific funding for creator organisations and guilds delivered from Arts budget.**

2. Support for access to work for Composers for Screen.

Composers for screen can continue to work during COVID, provided they can attract work. All audio-visual content created in Ireland represents an employment or earning opportunity for composers for screen and Irish music creators through commissions, licensing and royalty returns.

SCGI consider that too much content accessing public funding here does not deliver this opportunity to Irish music composers and creators, this is as a result of over reliance on international library production music as an alternative source of music and international co-productions tending to go elsewhere for music. We would estimate that only 25% of productions accessing Section 481 funding hire Irish based composers or other music elements and only 40% of BAI funded productions do, however without data collection we can only estimate.

Immediate Action

- **Establishment of a ringfenced music budget matching fund to support hiring of Irish based composer and live performers during COVID.**

To incentivise productions currently filming to hire composers and to fund the hiring of live performers we suggest the development of a music budget voucher which would allow productions to access match funding which is ringfenced for music department up to a certain cap to be spent on Irish based composers. This will stimulate work for composers for screen and protect against erosion of music budget from increased and unforeseen Covid related production costs. Delivered through Screen Ireland, Cost: €250,000.

- **Encourage/condition Irish producers receiving state support for creation of Irish content to use Irish composers and Irish music in their productions. (RTÉ, other broadcasters and content producers)**
- **Expansion of Section 481 cultural test to include music through addition of 9th point relating to music.**

Medium to Long Term Actions:

- **Ensure audio-visual funds have measurable targets and deliverables which support the development of local creative careers including composers for screen.**
- **Collection of data on how many productions include Irish music elements measuring how funds support music creators and performers.**

3. Support for Creators Careers.

Creators careers have unique characteristics as identified by our members experience and require specific supports streamlined to these characteristics. Composers for screen build success through years of investment into developing skills required to specialise in this area, building profile and visibility and investing in equipment and technology to deliver to industry expectations. Composers for screen work according to demand, they need to be responsive to work opportunities and survive through periods of low demand. Composers for screen are self-employed either registered as sole traders or as limited companies.

Actions for immediate and continued support to reflect the needs of self-employed composers for screen and other creators:

- **Reduce/waive prelim tax liability for 2021.**
- **Financial support to cover fulltime preschool childcare.**
- **Changes to maternity benefit for freelance artists allowing it to be accessed according to creators needs rather than in one lump sum immediately after birth.**
This would allow creators to work according to demand and access the benefit and leave at different periods over the first three years of child's life.
- **Allow sharing of maternity/paternity benefit between parents where both are self-employed artists or freelancers, allowing parental leave to be shared according to which of them are working.**
- **Access to subsidised work spaces managed by local authorities in different regional areas.**
- **Artist exemption to cover musical works composed for use in advertising (currently excluded from scheme).**
This work plays an important part in the economic ecology for composers. The music produced is original and has artistic and sometimes cultural merit. Furthermore, the creative process is the same as composing for any other AV production.
- **Artist exemption to be balanced over a number of years.**
This will help offset fluctuating demand and earnings for composers and creators allowing creators to carry forward over a three to five year period.
- **Identify obstacles to creative careers specific to women and minority groups and engage in delivering support to overcome these obstacles both at entry level and each stage of development.**

4. Recognition of the value of cultural creator IP.

Creators work carries copyright, the resulting revenue from the exploitation of this copyright plays an important part in funding a creator's career, allowing them to share in the success of their work over years and maintaining income during periods of low work. Copyright remains one of the most valuable assets for composers.

Music for Screen copyright and the value of royalties is currently under attack, producer/distributor platforms such as Discovery and Netflix and music libraries such as Epidemic Sound have communicated openly their desire to remove royalties through direct licensing and buying out of all composer rights. This will have a hugely damaging effect on the structure of a composer's livelihood, and we fear will result in a loss of value as seen in recorded music.

The implementation of the copyright directive will go some way to help protect against this erosion, but we feel it requires concerted government understanding and support to help composers enforce their rights. As individual's, composers have very little power to withstand malpractice and coercion from powerful distributors and producers.

Immediate Action:

- **Creation of an IP specialist role within the Department of Culture to specifically work with cultural IP in the run up to and following the implementation of copyright directive.**

This role would provide support to organisations and creators, to measure and challenge industry mal and unfair practices and to quantify the loss in value to creators and the economy of copyright erosion.

5. Investment in capital infrastructure.

In order to attract high value music for screen work to Ireland and assist in developing of creative talent, there is a need for investment in recording infrastructure in order to create capacity.

Currently there are only two existing recording facilities in Ireland (and on the Island of Ireland) which can accommodate a full-sized orchestra; they are Studio1 in RTÉ radio centre, home to the National Concert Orchestra and Windmill Lane studio now home to Pulse College. Both of these facilities have fallen into disrepair and require significant investment to achieve world class standard and a business plan to make them commercially viable.

Short term action:

- **RTÉ studio 1 to be recognised as an asset for the music industry in Ireland and access to be given in the short term to this facility for composers and productions at preferential rates or via a vouchered system to help create work.**

Long term action:

- **Commission and fund an investment case report into RTE Studio1 to ascertain the best course of action for this facility for the wider music industry.**
- **Commission and fund an investment case report into the viability of building a new facility either as stand alone or as part of an existing capital build in the arts.**

Thank you for giving this submission your consideration and we welcome the opportunity to feed our members experience into this process. SCGI remains at your disposal to contribute further or in more detail on any of above.

For further information please visit www.screencomposersguild.ie

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