

BUCKTHORN MUSIC PRESS

- Competition Policy Essays –
1. Boycotts (property destruction and anonymous risk)
 2. Age Discrimination

POLICY 1 (Contest Boycotts) :

Buckthorn Music Press is pleased to stand with the best, the brightest, and the cutting edge American music publishers and professional composers today who, in reaction to the increasing growth of scams and antiquated amateur participant formats, **boycott** writing competitions, calls for scores, and prizes which, whether by intent or sad ignorance by their organizers, misguidedly attempt to force **economic and legal hardships** on their composition contestants through a **requirement to deface** their expensive music manuscript publications (their own intellectual property) - to cut off or paint out all identifiable marks of authorship and copyright, on all covers and page by page, **as requirement for entry**.

This sort of music score mutilation is simply not allowed, nor condoned, by incorporated or sole proprietor publishing firms (run by the best composers alive today) and will not be done by a professional composer acting upon her own manuscripts. It is also cost-prohibitive to the poor composer and there is no guarantee of security of this mutilated material. (Even police can't always manage their "chain of custody.") Such a request reveals a lack of knowledge or outright callousness toward the economics of the current state of publishing, and, a lack of concern for global protection of intellectual property. It implies invitation to only the amateur or academic. It is also a most amazingly rude request – what a thing to ask of a living composer!

It is the strong recommendation of *Buckthorn Music Press* along with other **boycotting contemporary composers and publishers** that any legitimate contest board of directors which feels that its judging panel cannot be trusted to render a fair, expert and unprejudiced award decision in the presence of the entire score artifact placed before them need **merely to replace that panel** with one more suited to such a position of power. This is an internal ethics problem which is not the burden of the contestants to solve.

On behalf of ourselves and our professional colleagues who are under legal obligations to their estates (and their self-respect) and so decline to participate in such opportunities which have been so constructed, we announce a call for the **immediate cessation of this disturbing requirement** by contest organizers world wide. *Buckthorn Music Press* and her allies will continue to object to this practice through our contest boycotts and speaking out on behalf of writers' interests.

POLICY 2 (Contest Age Discrimination) :

In service to the best in Arts and Letters, *Buckthorn Music Press* will speak out for the rights of freedom of artistic expression for individuals **regardless**

of chronological age, and for unprejudiced access to arts-funding and support for all American composers based upon the **merit and quality** of their musical craft.

At a time when the hope and dream of each writer for active participation and access through perseverance and overcoming life's obstacles, especially for women, might seem to be coming into a golden period of opportunity due to the lengthening of life-span and the proliferation of affordable writing technologies, there has been a spike in newly-created funding for **age-based, novice youth prizes and commissions** at the lowest and highest levels of arts institutions and private foundations **without corresponding increase in opportunities** for **quality-based** prizes and programs. For culture's sake, and on behalf of our shrinking audiences and shrinking funding, now is the time to bring forward good art without the gimmicks and narcissism – including those devices and programs meant to reward just the "in-the-know" stage parents of coddled, precocious whelp (even 25-year-old whelp).

As the viability of the economic middle class is fading away and we return to just the poor and the wealthy, the arts now move to reward two classes of composer: the untested novice youth (whose well-connected guardians are positioned to discover the competition and posture for it), and the overly-lauded celebrity adult (and why should this adult have to be born after any particular **birth date**?). The middle-class of composer ranks is not without talent or genius – those within it have survived the test of youthful whimsy and hard-won dedication of middle age and are merely without celebrity branding – and therefore, opportunity (celebrity qualifiers can be purchased – it is not to be assumed an indication of merit).

To all those who hold precious arts production resources at their disposal: *Buckthorn Music Press* and her associates call on program directors to: open the doors to consideration of all voices **regardless of birth date**; seat panels who value honest review (are aware of but **unimpressed by celebrity**); look at the whole and fully-disclosed score materials; and finally choose the composer's music which most satisfies the purpose and aesthetic of that panel.

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Dr. Lynn Job (ASCAP), a composer member of the American Music Center, serves as an arts consultant for individual composers, associations, music contests and commissioning programs as part of her service to the industry. She applauds the free-market opportunity to run contests for various purposes and outcomes, but strongly advises against the two conditions above, along with charging entry fees (also the position of the board of the American Music Center). Contact her at info@buckthornstudios.com | www.buckthornstudios.com

Find out more about her at www.buckthornstudios.com/bio.htm

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