

WHAT IS MUSIC PUBLISHING?

INTRODUCTION

When you do something day in, day out, it's often easy to forget that those around you don't understand your profession to the level that you do. I'm not suggesting you'd expect your Dutch flatmate to understand the intricacies of your daily routine; but quite often they might not even know the slightest bit about what you do for the eight hours a day when you're not at home invading his personal space and leaving dirty dishes unwashed.

I've been a music publisher for near on the best part of a decade now and my parents still have no idea what it is I actually do. They know it's about music and that every so often I write these bloggy things that they read and don't fully understand (and that's no insult to you dear parents, I know you couldn't give a shit about Metadata, but I love you for reading them anyway), but something happened to me the other night which made me realise I actually needed to do this post you currently find yourself reading.

If you don't need to know about music publishing then I wouldn't expect you to, but if it directly had an impact on your career (i.e. if you're an artist), then in my ignorant, rose tinted world I kind of expected you'd at least know **a bit** about it. However, I went to see a friend perform at an open mic night and was chatting to the promoter who told me he giggered three times a week. Doing what I do, I went to confirm that he must make "a nice bit of pocket money from the PRS then?"

start confused face

"eh?"

end confused face

And so this post was born. You may already know all of this, and if you do then fair play to you, let's be friends yeah? If you don't then please read on and send it on to any other person you know who makes music and might be blissfully unaware of the money they could be making.

SO WHAT IS IT?

WHAT IS MUSIC PUBLISHING?

It's essentially your songs.

That was easy eh?

It has nothing to do with your recordings. This must be remembered.

As a music publisher I look after your songs. Songs that YOU'VE written.

Just by writing the song you've created a copyright; a piece of intellectual property that can be exploited to generate income.

(On a side note; the word 'exploited' in this usage doesn't carry the negative connotations you may think it has when you read it elsewhere. To 'exploit' in this sense is to simply extract the intrinsic value of something – and your music, no matter how brilliant or rubbish, has value)

You have to learn that music publishing and record labels are very different things.

It is important that the people who look after your publishing rights
and master recording rights have a good relationship,
but I'll come onto that later on.

How do you make money from your music publishing rights?

There are three main ways your music publishing rights can earn you money:
Performance Royalties, Mechanical Royalties and Synchronisation.

PERFORMANCE ROYALTIES

Performance royalties are generated when your music has done just that; been performed.

This can be either live or a recorded version of your music. The money is collected by an organisation called the [PRS for Music](#) which is who we here at Sentric liaise with in order to collect and administer all of your income. The three main types of performance income are from live performances (gigs), radio airplay and TV exposure.

Gigs

Pretty much any gig you play generates income. Here at Sentric Music we're home to tens of thousands of artists and around 70% of the money we distribute is from live performances so it's incredibly important you remember that each gig = £££.

The smallest gig can be worth around £5 and then it increases from there depending on several different things including attendance, ticket price, number of bands on the bill etc.

Some example figures here:

Small Venues - around £5 per gig

Barfly-esque Venues - Sentric artists have previously received upwards of £19 per gig.

O2 Academy's - Sentric artists have previously received upwards of £100 per gig.

Shepherds Bush Empire - (example of a mid-scale venue) - Sentric artists have previously received upwards of £392 per gig.

Leeds/Reading Festival - (example of a festival venue) - Sentric artists have previously received upwards of £1,500 per gig.

Arena - (as an example of a large venue) - Sentric artists have previously received upwards of £1,600 per gig.

Football Stadium - (as an example of a stadium concert) - Sentric artists have previously received upwards of £8,500 per gig.

It's important to note that this money doesn't come direct from the venue to you. Ergo; you're not going to be upsetting anyone by claiming this money – they probably won't even know you've got it. We've had artists in the past worry that by claiming this money for them it will stop them getting booked in the future. NOT TRUE. It should also be noted that this is completely separate from the money you might get direct from the venue/promoter for playing the gig. That money has nothing to do with your publishing or master rights; that's simply just 'touring income'.

The money you can collect for performing at the venue comes from the license fee the venue pays the PRS for Music. So how does that work? Well for small venues the PRS for Music will charge them an annual fee in order to attain a license that gives them the right to have music playing in their venue and your money simply comes from that. For larger venues the performance royalties are generated by the PRS for Music taking a small percentage of the ticket sales (around 3%).

Radio

When your song is played on the radio it also generates performing income. Again; depending on several different things including length of the song, audience share of the station, audience share of the show, time of day etc can affect the amount of money you receive. Some BBC Radio example figures here (as of December 2013 based on an average 3min 30sec song):

BBC Radio 1 - up to £52.
BBC Radio 2 - up to £76.
BBC 6 Music - up to £13.
BBC 1Xtra - up to £11.
BBC Regional Stations - up to £4.
BBC Asian Network - up to £16.

Hopefully by now you'll be starting to realise the value of your publishing rights. I firmly believe that the majority of emerging artists will make far much more money from their publishing than any other income stream until they become more established. For example; if you had your song played on BBC Radio 1 by Huw Stephens and also supported someone at your local O2 Academy in the same week; you might be looking at £150 in your back pocket. To make the same amount of money from iTunes sales you'd need to sell just over 300 tracks (if you went through an aggregator who gave you 49p per sale).

TV Exposure

Just like radio airplay – when your song is on the TV, performance royalties are generated. Again, the amount of money you receive will depend on the channel, time of day, length of the track etc.

Some example figures here (all figures shown per minute as of December 2013):

BBC 1 - £91.91 primetime / £49.36 non-primetime

BBC 2 - £23.24 primetime / £12.48 non-primetime

Channel 4 - £22.66 primetime / £12.16 non-primetime

Channel 5 - £9.82 primetime / £5.27 non-primetime

Note that these figures are for everytime the broadcast is shown. So therefore if you manage to get your music onto something that is shown often then you're going to earn decent cash. We've got a good relationship with Channel 5 here at Sentric and in the past we've had artists on a station ident who've earned thousands in royalties due to the amount of times it was shown. Also, thanks to our relationship with Lime Pictures we're currently getting our artists' music on primetime UK TV on a daily basis, one artist having four tracks in one episode alone. This quickly adds up and results in substantial income.

MECHANICAL ROYALTIES

Mechanical royalties are collected by an organisation called the MCPS who are now part of the PRS for Music umbrella, but who collect a different type of income. The MCPS collect money from various sources for when your music is basically 'put on' something; be it a CD, TV programme, DVD etc. If a record label wants to release your music on CD, they have to pay a license fee to the MCPS in order to get them produced - so in essence they're paying for the song to be duplicated.

The majority of the MCPS income we collect here for our artists comes from those who are signed to large indie labels or major labels who have 'pressed' several hundred copies or more of the artist's songs. We've also had artists receive thousands of pounds for being featured on covermount CD's for magazines such as The Word, Rock Sound and Classic Rock. When you're music is placed on TV, you also receive MCPS money as well.

This is different from the money you receive from the PRS for the same programme though so don't get these two confused:

Money from PRS for being on TV = this is for the actual broadcast of the programme live on TV and therefore money will be generated every time the programme is repeated.

Money from the MCPS for being on TV = this is for the 'committing of the music over the visuals' during the production of the programme and therefore is a one off payment.

SYNCHRONISATION

Synchronisation is the act of placing an artist's music over a visual; be it an advert, a TV programme, a film, a video game etc.

Adverts/Games/Films etc

Let's say big car company X wants to use your song for their new advert. To do this they need to get the 'OK' from two copyright holders; the person who looks after the recording (stereotypically the record label) and the person who looks after the song (stereotypically the publisher). When the big car company says they have £10,000 to spend on the music for the advert, that means this money is to be split evenly between the two copyright holders. So if you have a 'traditional' 50/50 split with both your publisher and record label then the money would go as follows:

Artist: 50% of the publishing fee + 50% of the master recording fee = £5,000

Record Label: 50% of the master recording fee = £2,500

Publisher: 50% of the publishing fee = £2,500

So if you're an artist who owns their own recordings then you'd obviously keep the entire half of the master recording fee which would bump your figure up to £7,500 if we here at Sentric Music landed you a sync worth £10,000.

You remember earlier on when I said it's important that the people who control your publishing and master recordings have a strong relationship? This is why right here: In the past we've had artists miss out on syncs worth tens of thousands of pound due to the master rights owners pricing themselves too highly and ultimately scaring the client off who wanted to use the track who then went on to use something else.

Syncs can be worth anything from a few hundred pounds to hundreds of thousands of pounds. The majority of syncs we deal with here at Sentric Music range between £1,000 - £20,000. The fee is usually dictated by what 'media' it is intended to be used on, for how long can they use it and in what territories can it be used amongst other things.

UK TV

In the UK the PRS for Music and the MCPS have blanket licenses set up in order for production companies and TV stations to use whatever music they wish without seeking prior permission from the publisher (there is a similar blanket license set up for the master rights owners by a company called the PPL). On initial hearing you may think that sounds like a negative thing, but on the contrary it means an artist's music has a higher chance of getting used and they'll still receive remuneration via the collection societies.

Other TV

Different territories operate in different ways. In the US; every song used needs to be cleared in the same way I described above for the car advert and fees can range from a few hundred to thousands of dollars depending on the status of the song (is it really famous?), the scene it's placed in (is the music prominent and very important to the scene?) and various other factors.

So if you've made it this far then well done; you're a better person than the guy who stopped three paragraphs in (and I can say that knowing I won't have offended him because he won't have read that last sentence will he? Of course not – he's a tit).

Music publishing isn't simple to get your head around at first, that's why it is somewhat still a mystery to emerging artists. That's why we're here – all that stuff you just read about? We do all that for you. It's free to join and we take a 20% cut for all our troubles. If you want to come on board with the tens of thousands of other artists we help out then simply go to www.sentricmusic.com and sign up there. You can leave whenever you want and retain your copyright; it's astonishingly artist friendly – that's why we've won awards and been recommended by some of the best in the business.