



Licensing your music for TV & Film

If you are interested in licensing your music for use in TV & Film, you have made a good choice! Not only is this a great promotional tool, but can also be highly lucrative in the right hands. Many producers and musicians don't even approach this side of the industry because they feel it's only done by big executive producers at the studios of the Film/TV Channel...well it isn't...atall.... in fact, the large majority of music for films and television is from producers like you! This may seem unlikely, because all the songs you may be able to think of are ones you know...but that proves my point! All the other songs whether on Adverts, Films, TV, Games are produced by like-minded music producers. If you feel you have tracks ready for TV & film, then its worth putting in the effort.

So how do I get my song on a Film for example? I hear you asking. Well, in principle, it's actually quite easy! We are going to look at the 'agency' approach...

Make sure:

- You own 100% of your music
- Your tracks are of professional quality
- Your tracks are professionally mastered
- You have legally cleared all the samples you have used in your music (if you are not using royalty free loops/samples!)
- You have a CV of your music experience

If you tick all of the above, the next stage is to apply, or get in contact with the appropriate agencies.

Applying to these agencies is very similar to applying to a record label, and can sometimes be easier! If you want more info about this it would be worth checking our 'Exposure to record labels' tutorial found on our [website](#).

When a Director (for example) is searching for music for TV, Film & adverts, he will generally find it through music agencies, either directly through music agencies A&R, or searching online on the music agencies website, where he can generally find a huge directory of music, and will most likely find what he is looking for there.

So you would be applying to the agency, not directly to a film company for example...maybe an obvious thing to say, but its worth pointing out anyway to save any confusion!

Whether you're applying by email or by post...

Make sure you:

- Write a brief and concise cover letter
- Include 3 or more finished tracks, or excerpts of your music
- Include your contact details
- Follow up on your application

Applying to the agency of your choice is not like applying for a job at Macdonalds! You are simply getting in contact with this agency to let them know that you have music that you feel would be well suited to their music archive.

If you feel your music is well mastered, suitable for film, TV, advertisement, etc, then why not give it a go? There are many music agencies out there who will happily accept your music if it is of good quality and it fits well into their archive.

Licensing Agreements

When licensing your music don't just go for any company that responds to you, make sure you feel you trust the company, and can see its worth your time and effort applying. A good music agency should have a list (online, or upon request) that shows credits of what they have licensed their composers & music producers music to.

Make sure:

- The music agency is big enough for you to see some return (yes money!) for your music
- They are a legitimate company
- They are licensing musicians music for a reasonable amount (for example, not \$10/£5 a track)
- They have a good selection of music
- They have a good website, and good customer service
- If you want to aim high, see if you recognise any of the other artists represented by this agency

Once you have sent your demo or showreel, cover letter (or email) and, if you're lucky, you will receive a reply! Depending on the company, and the quality content of your music, if they get back to you (this may take a while)

they may ask you for more info, they may want to discuss more details via email or over the phone regarding experience, possible other companies, labels, royalty free music companies etc you are/have worked for, and other info about you. Make sure you give them all this info, your one step away, and your main aim now is to secure an agreement, or contract with the company to license your music.

Once you get to the stage where you, and the company feel it is in both or your best interests to sign an agreement licensing your music, and you receive the agreement, below are some guidelines on what to expect/look out for, these are just guidelines, be sure to have any contract/agreement checked out with a legal representative before signing, and make sure you are prepared to commit, and undertake anything lined out in the contract.

Make sure:

- The agreement is official, and legally legitimate, if you are not familiar with contracts and agreements, it is advised by anyone in the music industry to seek legal advice at this stage. It's up to you whether you do, and solicitors (especially good music solicitors) can cost a lot, even to have them look over a contract, unfortunately, there is no way round this, it's just the way it is!
- You fully understand every aspect of the contract/agreement
- You are a member of a musician's royalty collecting agency like PRS/MCPS (UK), ASCAP (USA) or a similar organisation in your area
- You know what you can, and can't do, for example, how long will the company be licensing your music for? Can you sign with other similar companies, or are you signed exclusively to this company, if you are, make sure it's worth your time.
- You can verify the person who you are signing the contract with and for. The best way to do this is to have the agreement sent via post/mail, with a return address.

So...If you are happy you fully understand the agreement/contract, it's up to you whether you sign it, and send it off. Be sure to have a signed copy sent back to you (so you have a version with both your signature and the company's representative's signature on it)

And that's it, you may well be hearing your song in the next advert you watch, or be half way through a film at the cinema and have a big surprise...who knows!

Good Luck!

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