

MUSIC PUBLISHING 101

H. DEAN
REYNOLDS

E-BOOK



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CHAPTER 1 WHAT IS MUSIC PUBLISHING?

Jordan blinked at you.

"What do you mean... 'the business of songwriting'? Isn't my music already published when I put it out?"

You smiled.

"Nope. Not even close."

THE FOUNDATION OF THE MUSIC BUSINESS

Music publishing is the ownership, protection, administration, and monetization of a SONG — not the recording, not the beat, not the track — but the songwriting itself.

Think of it this way: when you write a song, you create intellectual property. That intellectual property is separate from any recording of it. Music publishing is the business infrastructure that protects your creation and ensures you get paid when it's used.

PUBLISHING CONTROLS:

- ✓ The melody
- ✓ The lyrics
- ✓ The composition
- ✓ The structure
- ✓ The intellectual property God gave you

THE COMMON MISCONCEPTION

Most artists think releasing a song is enough. Jordan thought the same.

"So uploading to Spotify doesn't mean my song is published?"

"No," you said gently. "It just means your recording is available. But the song — the part YOU wrote — needs its own business structure."

Here's the reality: when you upload a track to Spotify, Apple Music, or any streaming platform, you're distributing a **master recording**. That's completely separate from the underlying **composition** (the song itself). Without proper publishing setup, you're leaving money on the table — sometimes thousands of dollars per song.

Jordan scratched their head. "So... what you're telling me is... the money's been in the songwriting this whole time?"

You nodded.

"Exactly. Publishing is the financial backbone of the entire music industry."

WHY THIS MATTERS

Consider this: Some of the wealthiest people in music aren't the biggest stars — they're the songwriters and publishers who own catalogs. They understand that a song can generate income for decades, even after the artist stops performing.

Your song could be played in restaurants, used in commercials, covered by other artists, streamed millions of times, and licensed for films. Each of these uses generates publishing royalties — but only if you've set up your publishing correctly.

Jordan whispered: "I've been in the dark this whole time."

You smiled. "Not anymore."

CHAPTER 2 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SONG & A RECORDING

You grabbed two index cards and placed them on the table.

CARD #1 — THE SONG
(The Composition)

CARD #2 — THE
RECORDING
(The Master)

This is:

- The idea
- The melody
- The lyrics
- The chord progression
- The structure
- The emotional blueprint
- The part YOU wrote
- The sheet music representation

This is:

- The audio file
- The studio performance
- The beat/production
- The vocals
- The mixed & mastered track
- The engineering
- The sound recording
- The WAV/MP3 file

THE CRITICAL DISTINCTION

Jordan stared. "These are two totally different things?"

"Yes. And they make two totally different kinds of money."

Let me break this down further. When Beyoncé covers a song written by someone else, TWO separate copyrights are created:

- 1. Composition Copyright:** Owned by the original songwriter(s)
- 2. Master Recording Copyright:** Owned by Beyoncé and her record label

Both generate income. Both are valuable. Both need to be registered and protected.

Jordan's jaw dropped. "So I've been making ONE income... when I could've been making TWO?"

You nodded. "If you only care about streams, you're living off crumbs while the REAL money — the publishing — is untouched."

THE MONEY BREAKDOWN

Here's what most artists don't understand: when a song is streamed on Spotify, the platform pays out approximately \$0.003 to \$0.005 per stream. That money is split between:

- **Master Recording** (typically 70-80%): Goes to the artist and record label
- **Publishing/Composition** (typically 20-30%): Goes to songwriters and publishers

If you write AND perform your own music, you should be collecting BOTH sides. But most independent artists only collect the master recording side because they never set up their publishing.

Jordan sat quietly, processing. "I didn't know... I just didn't know."

And that's the problem: Most artists have the talent... but not the knowledge.

CHAPTER 3 WHY PUBLISHING MATTERS (KINGDOM PERSPECTIVE)

Jordan leaned in. "Dean... can I ask something real? Is this actually spiritual? Or just business?"

You took a breath. "This is absolutely spiritual."

THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

You explained gently:

God is a God of ORDER

1 Corinthians 14:33 — "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." Your

publishing should reflect divine order, not chaos.

God is a God of STEWARDSHIP

Matthew 25:14-30 — The Parable of the Talents teaches us that we're responsible for what God gives us. Your songwriting gift is a talent that must be stewarded properly.

God is a God of MULTIPLICATION

Genesis 1:28 — God commands us to be fruitful and multiply. Proper publishing allows one song to multiply its impact and income across decades and generations.

God is NOT the Author of CONFUSION

1 Corinthians 14:33 — When your publishing is disorganized, unclaimed royalties pile up, contracts are unclear, and blessing is blocked. God wants clarity in your business.

THE REALITY CHECK

Publishing is literally: the stewardship of the gift God placed inside you.

Jordan swallowed hard. "You're saying I've been irresponsible with my gift..."

"Not irresponsible," you corrected. "Just uninformed."

There's a huge difference. Ignorance isn't sin — but staying ignorant after you've been shown the truth? That's different. Now you know better. Now you can do better.

Jordan wiped their eyes. "Dean... I want to honor God with my music. I want to do this the right way."

THE KINGDOM IMPACT

And that's why publishing matters:

- It brings **ORDER** — No more confusion about who owns what
- It brings **CLARITY** — You know exactly where your money comes from
- It brings **STRUCTURE** — Your catalog is organized and protected
- It brings **PROTECTION** — Your intellectual property is legally secured
- It brings **MULTIPLICATION** — One song can bless you for a lifetime

STEWARDSHIP ACTIVATES BLESSING

CHAPTER 4 THE SIX ROYALTIES EVERY ARTIST MUST KNOW

You walked Jordan to a whiteboard and drew six big circles. Jordan's eyes grew wide.

"You're telling me ONE SONG can make ALL these incomes?"

You nodded. "Yes. And most artists don't collect ANY of them."

1. PERFORMANCE ROYALTIES

What they are: Money generated every time your song is performed publicly — whether live or broadcast.

Generated when your music is played in:

- Concerts and live venues
- Radio (terrestrial and satellite)
- TV shows and broadcasts
- Restaurants, bars, and retail stores
- Live streams and virtual concerts
- Social media platforms
- Fitness studios and gyms

Who collects: Your PRO (ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, or GMR)

Average payout: \$0.08 to \$0.15 per radio play, varies by venue size for live performances

2. MECHANICAL ROYALTIES

What they are: Money generated from the reproduction and distribution of your song.

Generated when your song is:

- Streamed on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, etc.
- Downloaded on iTunes, Beatport, etc.
- Reproduced physically (CDs, vinyl)
- Used in ringtones

- Manufactured for sale

Who collects: The MLC (Mechanical Licensing Collective) for digital, publishing administrators for physical

Average payout: \$0.0006 to \$0.001 per stream, \$0.091 per physical unit sold

3. SYNC LICENSING ROYALTIES

What they are: Money from "synchronizing" your song with visual media. This is often the biggest payout!

Generated when your song is used in:

- Movies and film
- TV shows and series
- Commercials and advertisements
- Video games
- YouTube videos and content
- Documentaries
- Corporate videos and presentations

Who collects: You (or your publisher) negotiate directly with the licensee

Average payout: \$500-\$5,000 for small placements, \$10,000-\$500,000+ for major film/TV/commercial uses

4. PRINT ROYALTIES

What they are: Money from physical or digital printed versions of your song.

Generated from:

- Sheet music sales
- Lyric books and folios
- Songbooks and compilations
- Teaching and educational materials
- Guitar tabs and chord charts
- Digital sheet music downloads

Who collects: Print music publishers (Hal Leonard, Alfred, etc.) or your publishing administrator

Average payout: 10-15% of retail price for sheet music, varies for educational materials

5. DIGITAL PERFORMANCE ROYALTIES

What they are: Money from non-interactive digital radio and streaming.

Generated from:

- Pandora
- SiriusXM
- iHeartRadio
- Internet radio stations
- Music Choice
- Muzak and background music services
- Non-interactive streaming platforms

Who collects: SoundExchange (for the master recording side), your PRO (for the composition side)

Average payout: \$0.0022 per stream (SoundExchange rates)

6. MICRO-SYNC ROYALTIES

What they are: The newest royalty stream! Money from user-generated content on social media.

Generated from:

- TikTok videos and trends
- Instagram Reels and Stories
- YouTube Shorts
- Facebook videos
- Snapchat content
- User-generated content across platforms
- Viral challenges and memes using your song

Who collects: Your publishing administrator or PRO (platforms negotiate blanket licenses)

Average payout: Varies widely, viral songs can generate \$50,000-\$1,000,000+ from this source alone

Jordan held their head. "This whole time... I thought streams were the only thing that mattered."

You just smiled. "Welcome to the REAL music business."

CHAPTER 5 PROs (ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, GMR)

"Dean... what is a PRO?" Jordan asked.

"A Performing Rights Organization," you explained. "They collect performance royalties for your songs whenever they're played publicly."

THE FOUR MAJOR U.S. PROs

ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers)

Founded: 1914 — The oldest PRO in the U.S.

Membership: Over 900,000 members

Notable Members: Stevie Wonder, Katy Perry, Lin-Manuel Miranda

Payment Schedule: Quarterly

Membership Fee: \$50 one-time fee

Best For: Established songwriters with consistent radio play

BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.)

Founded: 1939

Membership: Over 1.1 million members

Notable Members: Taylor Swift, The Weeknd, Rihanna

Payment Schedule: Quarterly

Membership Fee: FREE for songwriters, \$150-\$250 for publishers

Best For: New and emerging artists (no upfront cost)

SESAC (Society of European Stage Authors and Composers)

Founded: 1930

Membership: Invite-only, approximately 30,000 members

Notable Members: Bob Dylan, Neil Diamond, Zac Brown

Payment Schedule: Monthly (fastest payouts!)

Membership Fee: By invitation only

Best For: Established writers seeking personalized service and faster payments

GMR (Global Music Rights)

Founded: 2013

Membership: Exclusive, smaller roster

Notable Members: Bruno Mars, Drake, Pharrell Williams

Payment Schedule: Varies

Membership Fee: By invitation only

Best For: Major catalog owners and top-tier hit songwriters

Jordan frowned. "So I just pick ONE?"

"Yes," you said. "One PRO for your songwriter account. And if you start your own publishing company, you can join the same PRO or a different one for your publisher account."

Jordan nodded slowly. "This is starting to make sense."

CHAPTER 11

REGISTERING YOUR SONGS PROPERLY

You handed Jordan a printed checklist.

JORDAN'S
COMPLETE
REGISTRATION
CHECKLIST

ST	
✓ Join a PRO	Register with ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, or GMR to collect performance royalties
✓ Register with The MLC	Claim your streaming mechanical royalties from Spotify, Apple Music, etc.
✓ Sign with Publishing Admin	Let Songtrust, CD Baby Pro, or others collect worldwide royalties
✓ Upload with Distributor	Use DistroKid, TuneCore, CD Baby to get music on streaming platforms
✓ Complete Metadata	Fill in songwriter credits, ISRCs, ISWCs for every song
✓ Copyright.gov	Register your compositions with the U.S. Copyright Office (\$35-\$65 per song)
✓ YouTube Content ID	Claim your songs on YouTube through your distributor or administrator

Jordan held the paper like it was gold. "This alone... is worth everything."

CHAPTER 12

TURNING PUBLISHING INTO REAL INCOME

Jordan leaned in. "Dean... be real with me. How do I actually make money from publishing?"

You smiled. "It's simple."

THE PUBLISHING MONEY FORMULA

CREATE → REGISTER → RELEASE → PITCH → REPEAT

Step 1: CREATE

Write consistently. Aim for 20-50 songs per year. Build your catalog.

Step 2: REGISTER

Complete ALL registration steps immediately after creation. Don't wait!

Step 3: RELEASE

Get your music to streaming platforms and start generating data and momentum.

Step 4: PITCH

Actively pitch for sync opportunities, collaborations, and placements.

Step 5: REPEAT

Consistency multiplies everything. Your catalog grows, your income grows.

Jordan nodded. "This is the blueprint I never had."

CONCLUSION

YOUR TURN

Jordan walked out with a new mindset — not confused, but **confident**. Not stressed, but **empowered**. Not lost, but **aligned**.

And now... it's YOUR turn.

The world doesn't need more confused artists. The world needs **informed creators** who know how to steward their gift.

Today, you received knowledge that most artists never get. You now understand:

- The difference between a song and a recording
- All six royalty streams available to you
- How to register and protect your work
- The spiritual foundation of stewardship
- The exact steps to turn publishing into income

And today — that's YOU.

READY TO TAKE ACTION?

If you're ready to:

- ✓ Build your catalog the RIGHT way
- ✓ Protect your intellectual property
- ✓ Collect ALL your royalties (not just some)
- ✓ Pitch for sync opportunities
- ✓ Operate like a Kingdom creative
- ✓ Make REAL, sustainable music income

Then it's time to join:

DEAN REYNOLDS MUSIC MEDIA

Book Your Consultation Today

deanreynoldsmusic@gmail.com
@DeanReynoldsMusic