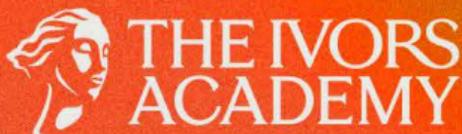


REVENUE & PARTNERS

Knowledge Toolkit



REVENUE AND PARTNERS

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INTRODUCTION

No songwriter or composer works entirely in isolation. Whatever your relationship with the business side of music – whether you actively embrace it, reluctantly engage with it, or prefer to keep it at arm's length – you'll find yourself [working with various professionals](#) who help ensure your music reaches its audience and generates income. Some writers thrive on the commercial aspects of their careers, while others focus purely on creation, viewing the business elements as necessary but separate from their artistic practice. There's no right or wrong approach; what matters is finding the support structure that allows you to create sustainably while protecting your rights.

The infrastructure supporting songwriters and composers can seem complex at first glance, and the reality is that managing these relationships often takes up more time than the creative work itself. You'll encounter [collecting societies](#), [publishers](#), administrators, [agents](#), [managers](#), and various specialists – each playing distinct roles in different revenue streams. The landscape is also shifting: traditional support from publishers is evolving, new types of partners are



emerging, and the expectations vary significantly between commercial songwriting, media composition, and classical music. Some partners you'll have direct contractual relationships with, representing your interests and helping you navigate the industry. Others are important stakeholders who, whilst not directly contracted to you, act as gatekeepers or facilitators for your music's commercial exploitation. Knowing the difference matters when you're deciding who to work with and understanding how money flows through the system.

This section maps out the key professional relationships available to UK songwriters and composers, explaining what each partner does and when you might need them. We'll cover everything from essential partnerships that every writer needs, through to specialist support for specific sectors like media composition or classical commissioning. Whether you see yourself as an artist, an entrepreneur, or somewhere in between, understanding these options helps you make informed decisions about who to work with and how much of the business side you want to handle directly. The goal isn't to turn every creator into a businessperson, but to ensure you have the knowledge to build the support network that works for your individual approach to your craft.

REVENUE STREAMS

1. Performance Royalties

Revenue Stream: Income from [public performance of your music](#).

Sources:

- Radio and TV broadcasts.
- Live music venues.
- Background music in shops, restaurants, offices.
- Streaming services (performance element).
- Online radio.
- DJ sets and club plays.
- User-generated content platforms (performance element - TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube).



Key Partners:

- [PRS for Music](#) (UK collecting society for performing rights).
- **Foreign PROs** via reciprocal agreements ([ASCAP/BMI](#) in US, SACEM in France, etc).
- **Music publishers or publishing administration services** (register works, chase unpaid royalties, negotiate UGC deals).

Important Stakeholders:

- Broadcasters and venues (licensees).
- UGC platforms (negotiate with publishers/PRS).
- MRT platforms (DJ Monitor, SoundMouse, BMAT - monitor performances for PRS royalty distribution)

2. Mechanical Royalties

Revenue Stream: Income from reproduction of your music.

Sources:

- Physical sales (CDs, vinyl).
- Digital downloads.
- Streaming services (mechanical element).
- Cover versions.
- User-generated content platforms (mechanical element - TikTok, Instagram Reels).
- Music boxes and novelty items.

Key Partners:

- **MCPS** (UK mechanical rights society - accessed via publisher or direct).
- **Music publishers or publishing administration services** (typically handle MCPS relationship, UGC licensing).
- **The MLC** (for US digital mechanicals).
- **Digital aggregators** (for self-published writers).



Important Stakeholders:

- Record labels (licensees for physical/digital).
- UGC platforms (direct deals with publishers).

3. Synchronisation Income

Revenue Stream: [Licensing music for audio-visual productions.](#)

Sources:

- Film and TV placements.
- Advertising.
- Video games.
- Corporate videos.
- Trailers.
- Brand content.

UK Context:

- Some sync uses are covered by PRS/MCPS blanket licences (certain broadcaster uses).
- Commercial sync (ads, films, games) requires direct licensing.
- Different from US where all sync is directly licensed.

Key Partners:

- **Music publishers or publishing administration services** (pitching and negotiation).
- **Sync agents** (specialist representation).
- **Production music libraries** (particularly for media composers).

Important Stakeholders:

- Music supervisors (gatekeepers who select music).
- Production companies (licensees).
- Advertising agencies (decision makers).



4. Commissioning fees (media/classical composers).

Revenue Stream: Upfront payments for creating bespoke music.

Sources:

- Film/TV production companies.
- Game developers.
- Orchestras and ensembles.
- Arts organisations.
- Brands and advertising agencies.
- Theatre companies.

Key Partners:

- **Agents** (securing commissions).
- **Managers** (negotiating terms).
- Lawyers (contract review).
- **Publishers** (may source commissions).

Direct Clients:

- Production companies.
- Orchestras and arts organisations.
- Game developers.

5. **User-generated content (UGC) licensing.**

Revenue Stream: Income from social media and content platforms.

Sources:

- TikTok.
- Instagram Reels.
- YouTube (Content ID and user videos).
- Facebook.
- Snapchat.
- Twitch.



Key Partners:

- **Music publishers or publishing administration services** (negotiate platform deals, claim royalties).
- **Digital rights administrators** (ICE, IMPEL).
- **UGC specialists** (for direct platform relationships).

Note on UGC:

- These platforms generate both performance and mechanical royalties.
- Often licensed through direct publisher deals rather than CMO blanket licences.
- Rates and payment structures vary significantly by platform.

6. Streaming

Revenue Stream: Performance and mechanical royalties from on-demand services.

How streaming generates royalties:

- **Performance royalties** (via PRS) - for the communication to the public.
- **Mechanical royalties** (via MCPS/publishers) - for the reproduction.
- Both generated from single stream, split varies by territory.

Sources:

- Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music.
- Deezer, Tidal.
- Fitness apps (Peloton, Apple Fitness+).
- Gaming platforms.
- Podcast licensing.

Key Partners:

- **PRS/MCPS** (collect streaming royalties).
- **Publishers** (ensure proper registration, may have direct deals).
- **Multi-territory licensing hubs** (ICE, IMPEL for multi-territory processing).



7. Sheet music and print

Revenue Stream: Sales and rentals of written music.

Sources:

- Physical sheet music sales.
- Digital sheet music downloads.
- Hire library rentals (orchestral parts).
- Educational licensing.
- Arrangements and transcriptions.

Key Partners:

- **Print music publishers** (Faber, Boosey & Hawkes, etc).
- **Digital sheet music platforms** (Sheet Music Direct, etc).
- **Hire libraries** (for classical composers).

Live Performance (Direct Income)

Revenue Stream: Income from your own performances

Sources:

- Concert fees.
- Residencies.
- Workshop and masterclass fees.
- Conducting fees.
- Musical direction.

Key Partners:

- Booking agents.
- Managers (career development).

Important Stakeholders:

- Concert promoters.
- Venues and festivals.
- Orchestras (for classical composers).



8. Additional revenue streams

Grand Rights (Dramatic Performances)

- Musical theatre.
- Opera.
- Ballet.
- **Partners:** Theatrical publishers, grand rights agents.

Lyrics Licensing

- Lyric websites and apps.
- Karaoke systems.
- Merch.
- **Partners:** Lyric aggregators (LyricFind, Musixmatch).

Private Copy Levies (European income only)

- Blank media levies.
- **Partners:** Foreign collecting societies.

AI Training Licensing (Emerging)

- Dataset licensing for AI models.
- **Partners:** Publishers, specialist licensing bodies.

ESSENTIAL BUSINESS PARTNERS

Legal and Financial

- **Music lawyers** (contract negotiation, dispute resolution).
- **Accountants** (royalty auditing, tax planning).
- **Business managers** (financial oversight).

Administrative

- **Rights administrators** (for self-published writers).
- **Royalty analysts** (tracking income).
- **Data management specialists** (work registrations).



Creative Development

- **Managers** (career strategy).
- **A&R (at publishers)** (creative direction).

PARTNERS VS STAKEHOLDERS

- **Partners:** Entities you have direct contractual relationships with.
- **Publishers, CMOs, agents, managers, lawyers:** These represent your interests.
- **Stakeholders:** Important industry players but no direct contract.
- **Music supervisors, broadcasters, DSPs, venues:** These are typically licensees or gatekeepers.
- **MRT platforms** that monitor music usage for CMOs.

DIRECT LICENSING VS COLLECTIVE LICENSING

Collective: Via PRS/MCPS blanket licences

- Traditional broadcast, live venues, background music

Direct: Publisher negotiated

- Sync licences, UGC platforms, some streaming deals

Music recognition technology (MRT)

- B2B services like DJ Monitor, BMAT, Audoo that monitor music usage.
- Help CMOs track performances in venues, clubs, radio.
- Work behind the scenes to ensure accurate royalty distribution.
- Different from consumer apps - these are industry infrastructure.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Media Composers



- Production music libraries often primary partners.
- Copyright ownership vs. royalty participation crucial in commissioning agreements.
- May bypass traditional publishers.
- Need to clarify if assigning rights or licensing them in contracts.

Classical Composers

- Commissioning bodies are both clients and stakeholders.
- Publisher often handles publishing and performance materials.
- Hire library income is significant.

Commercial Songwriters

- Publisher relationships crucial for access
- UGC platform income increasingly important
- Co-writing expands network and opportunities

REVENUE AND PARTNERS FAQs

Do I need to join both PRS and MCPS as a UK songwriter?

You must join PRS for Music to collect performing rights royalties. MCPS membership depends on your publishing situation:

- **If self-published:** Yes, join MCPS directly to collect mechanical royalties
- **If you have a publisher/administrator:** No, they'll access MCPS on your behalf and collect mechanical royalties for you

PRS and MCPS work closely together with one website and portal, making the process straightforward.

What administration options exist for UK songwriters?

Three main options:

- **Self-administration:** Join PRS and MCPS directly, handle all registrations yourself.



- **Publishing administration service:** They handle registrations and royalty collection for 10-20% commission, no creative input.
- **Traditional publisher:** Full service including creative support, pitching, and admin for typically 20-30% (sometimes up to 50%).

PUBLISHING DEALS FAQs

What should I look for in a UK music publisher's contract?

Key elements to examine:

- **Royalty splits:** At least 50% of performance royalties flow directly to you via PRS (writer's share)
- **Territory:** UK only, Europe, or worldwide?
- **Term:** Number of years and any option periods.
- **Minimum commitment:** Songs/albums you must deliver.
- **Creative services:** What support beyond administration?
- **Reversion clauses:** When/how you get rights back?
- **Advance recoupment:** How advances are recouped from your earnings.

How does a UK [publishing deal](#) typically differ from a US deal?

Main differences:

- **Performing rights:** UK deals respect the writer's share flowing directly from PRS (typically 50%), while US deals may assign all rights to publisher initially.
- **Mechanical rights:** UK mechanicals usually flow through publisher, US has compulsory licensing.
- **Sub-publishing:** UK deals often include European administration more seamlessly.
- **Terminology:** Different terms for similar concepts (e.g., "synchronisation" vs "sync").

Should I use a UK publisher for worldwide representation?

Consider:



- **Your target markets:** If mainly UK/Europe-focused, UK publisher may suffice.
- **Publisher's network:** Do they have strong sub-publishers or offices internationally?
- **Direct relationships:** Major UK publishers often have US offices or partnerships.
- **Genre considerations:** Some music types travel better with local representation.

REVENUE STREAMS FAQs

What are all the ways my songs can generate income in the UK?

Via PRS (Performing Rights):

- Radio and TV broadcasts.
- Live performances.
- Background music in venues.
- Streaming services (performance element).
- DJ performances.
- Online uses.

Via MCPS/Publisher (Mechanical Rights):

- Physical sales (CD, vinyl).
- Digital downloads.
- Streaming services (mechanical element).
- Cover versions.

Direct Licensing (usually via publisher):

- Synchronisation (film, TV, ads, games).
- UGC platforms (TikTok, Instagram Reels).
- Grand rights (musical theatre).



- Sheet music and print.
- Lyrics licensing.

How do PRS and MCPS collect different royalties for my songs?

PRS collects when your music is performed:

- Issues blanket licences to broadcasters, venues, digital services.
- Monitors usage through cue sheets, setlists, MRT technology.
- Distributes based on usage data.

MCPS collects when your music is reproduced:

- Licences record labels for physical/digital copies.
- Collects from streaming services (mechanical portion).
- Usually accessed via your publisher rather than directly.

Why might I receive royalties from US organisations like ASCAP or BMI?

- Your music was performed/broadcast in the US.
- US societies collect locally, then pay PRS under reciprocal agreements.
- PRS passes this to you minus international processing fees.
- You can join US societies directly to reduce fees and speed payment.

How does the UK mechanical royalty system differ from other countries?

UK/Europe:

- Mechanical rights typically controlled by publishers.
- No compulsory licence for physical products.
- Rates negotiated between publishers and users.

US:

- Compulsory licence system with government-set rates
- The MLC handles digital streaming mechanicals



- Publishers can't refuse mechanical licences at statutory rate

What royalty rates can I expect for different uses of my songs in the UK?

Rates vary significantly:

- **Radio:** Based on station revenue and music use (BBC has fixed rates).
- **Streaming:** Approximately £0.002-0.005 per stream (split between performance/mechanical).
- **TV:** Depends on channel, time of day, duration of use.
- **Live:** Typically 3-6% of box office (varies by venue type).
- **Sync fees:** Entirely negotiable, from hundreds to hundreds of thousands.

SPECIALIST AREAS FAQs

How do revenue streams differ for production music versus commercial songs?

Production Music:

- Upfront fees often buy out mechanical rights.
- Performance royalties remain your main ongoing income.
- Library handles all licensing and pitching.
- No artist royalties to consider.
- Simpler metadata and registration.

Commercial Songs:

- Full royalty participation (mechanical and performance).
- Multiple stakeholders (artists, producers, labels).
- More complex licensing negotiations.
- Potential for cover versions.
- Higher sync fees for known songs.

What unique revenue streams exist for classical composers in the UK?

- **Commissioning fees:** Primary income source.
- **Hire library fees:** Orchestras rent performance materials.



- **Performance royalties:** Via PRS for concert performances.
- **Sheet music sales:** Both purchase and rental.
- **Broadcast royalties:** When works are played on Classical FM, BBC Radio 3.
- **Educational licensing:** Universities and conservatoires.
- **Recording royalties:** If you retain rights.

How do sheet music sales and licensing work as a revenue stream?

Traditional Publishing:

- Publisher handles printing, distribution, marketing.
- Composer receives royalty (typically 10-12.5% of retail).
- Publisher owns physical product rights.

Digital Distribution:

- Higher royalty rates (up to 50%).
- Instant global distribution.
- You may retain more rights.

Hire Libraries:

- Performance materials rented per performance.
- Particularly important for orchestral/large ensemble works.
- Generates income for each performance.

How are royalties calculated for music used in film and TV?

Synchronisation Fee (upfront, negotiated):

- Based on: budget, territory, term, media, prominence.
- Paid 50/50 between publisher and writer typically

Performance Royalties (backend, via PRS):

- Calculated on: channel audience, time of day, music duration, territory.
- Cue sheets essential for accurate payment.
- Can generate income for years.



UK Specific: Some broadcaster sync uses covered by PRS/MCPS blanket licences.

MEDIA COMPOSER SPECIFIC FAQs

Do I need a team to work as a media composer?

Not necessarily, but you may need:

- **Assistant:** For admin, managing cuts, scheduling.
- **Orchestrator:** For larger projects (as needed).
- **Technical support:** For complex programming (as needed).

This is different from having co-writers. Spending a day figuring out drum programming means not writing any new music - it is sometimes better to have specialist support.

How do I handle conflicting feedback from multiple producers?

- Document all feedback clearly.
- Ask for clarification on contradictions.
- Explain your creative reasoning.
- Credit stakeholders with changes (even if your idea).
- Remember: You need to know the reason why every note is there.

What's the reality of deadlines in media composition?

- Feature films: Sometimes as little as 2 weeks (for replacements).
- TV series: Often working on multiple episodes simultaneously.
- Reality: Only about 20% of time spent actually writing music - rest is meetings, revisions, admin.



How do rights work differently for media composers vs commercial songwriters?

Key differences:

- Often asked to assign copyright to production company (buyout deals).
- May retain performance rights only (not mechanical).
- Work-for-hire common in US (less so in UK).
- Need to clarify: Are you assigning rights or licensing them?
- Production music libraries may take ownership for upfront fees.
- Always negotiate to retain performance rights through PRS.

Should I work with production music libraries or stay independent?

Production Music Libraries:

- **Pros:** Regular briefs, upfront fees, no pitching needed, global reach.
- **Cons:** Often lose mechanical rights, lower sync fees, less control.

Independent:

- **Pros:** Retain all rights, higher sync fees, creative control.
- **Cons:** Must find own work, handle negotiations, no guaranteed income.

Many composers do both - library work for steady income, independent for prestige projects.

CLASSICAL COMPOSER SPECIFIC FAQs

How do commissioning fees work for classical composers?

- Fees vary enormously: £1,000 for small ensemble to potentially much larger amounts for major orchestral work.
- Payment terms crucial: Always get a contract in place and negotiate 50% upfront before writing any notes.
- Consider consortium commissions to increase fee and performances.
- Factor in 6-12 months of work for major pieces.



Why do classical works get so few performances?

- High cost of mounting orchestral performances.
- Limited programming slots for new music.
- Works often get only one or two performances then may not be played again for decades.
- Solution: Consortium commissions, smaller instrumentation, building relationships.

Do I need a publisher as a classical composer?

The landscape has changed:

- Publishers are struggling to provide comprehensive services they once offered.
- Many classical composers now work with agents/managers instead.
- Publishers still valuable for international reach and hire library management.
- Consider what services you actually need.

How important are recordings for classical composers?

Essential for future performances:

- Provides a reference for other ensembles to hear the work.
- Often self-funded or negotiated with commissioning orchestra.
- Complex rights issues if orchestra funds recording.
- Worth the investment despite challenges.

How do performance rights work differently for concert music?

Concert hall performances:

- PRS licences venues and collects performance royalties.
- You submit programme details for accurate distribution.
- International performances tracked through reciprocal agreements.



Broadcast performances:

- Higher rates than venue performances
- BBC Radio 3, Classic FM generate significant royalties
- Broadcasts can earn more than live premieres

Educational performances:

- Often lower rates but frequent performances.
- Student orchestras and conservatoires licensed separately.

Should I handle my own hire library or use a publisher?

Self-managed hire library:

- **Pros:** Control over materials, direct income, know who's performing
- **Cons:** Storage, copying costs, international shipping, chasing payments

Publisher-managed:

- **Pros:** Global distribution network, professional copying, handles logistics.
- **Cons:** Commission on hire fees (typically 50%), less direct control.

Hybrid approach:

- Use publisher for international, self-manage for UK.
- Digital distribution reducing physical hire needs.



THE IVORS ACADEMY RESOURCES

[On demand content – Publisher perspectives – effective rights administration](#)

[Career guide - Using professional services](#)

[Career guide - Introduction to collective licensing](#)

[Career guide - Introduction to music publishing](#)

[Career guide - Using an agent](#)

[Career guide - Using a manager](#)

[Career guide - What are performance rights](#)

[Career guide - What is PRS?](#)

[Career guide - What are BMI/ASCAP/HMA?](#)

[Industry template contract - Sync license](#)

[Career guide - Introduction to music commissioning](#)

[Career guide - Using a lawyer](#)

[Career guide - Music publishing - pitfalls and how to avoid them](#)

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