
Soundtrack Legalities using current music

Posted by Daniel Gourley - 2008/08/20 11:33

Does anyone have a ball park idea it would run for the rights to record a popular song if one were to cover it, using say studio musicians, for use in a film? I guess I'm asking what do the rights for the sheet music usually run if you plan to use the song for a movie?

I know a limited amount about this, but since no one has replied I will give you as much as I know.

A popular song from an Independent (mainstream) Example Road-Runner Records. Label will vary from 5,000 to 9,000 per song.

A popular song from a Mainstream Label ex. Atlantic, Universal, etc. will most likely not release their songs for under 10,000 if they choose to release them at all. You must contact their legal office and ask about copy write release for a song. Then you have to give them a detail description of what you are using the song for, where you expect to show it/sell it. And all of your company's legal information.

If you are attempting to re-record the song, it all depends on the results of your recordings. If you just use the Instrumental, then you must pay for the composer/producers fees. Which I am unsure of. I would estimate 500 to 1,000 from an Indi, and 1,000 to 7,000 from a mainstream.

If you use the words from the song, add more money. You then have to pay for the songwriter's fees. Which could be anywhere from 1,500 to 9,000 depending on the label.

If you want to know, contact the company that owns the rights to the song. They will inform you of how much it will cost, but from my experience, it has never been cheap.

The best way to do it is to record the song as if it is a new song, change the lyrics at least 70 percent of them, or the order in which they are sung, and modify the instrumental so that it does not resemble over 30% of the original.

Almost any mainstream label is going to give you a hard time about releasing the song, but if you are persistent and conduct yourself in a business manor, then you will be able to find someone to give you the answers. Also, look online, there is exact information about this on other websites.

Post edited by: admin, at: 2008/08/20 11:33

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This is one of the reasons we use publicly available music from local bands. It is a great opportunity for us because there are a lot of great bands around us and it gives us more promotion through the combined efforts of film companies and the local music scene working together.

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