



# 4 WAYS TO MAKE MUSIC INCOME IN 2021

PRESENTED BY CREATIVE SOUL RECORDS

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So here we are in a 2021 and you probably are thinking, “There has to be a way to find monetary success in music in this day and age.”

Well while the music business has changed, it’s also largely stayed the same. You still need the same things you have always needed: talent, luck, good advice, patience, investment, and knowledge.

But the good news is that almost every avenue in music is open to you.

In this eBook we will talk about what I feel are the four ways to find success and yes, even make income from your music specifically in the year 2021.

What we won’t talk about are careers around music, like teaching in some capacity, working as a music director for a church, working inside the music business in some way including labels, publishing, and other music companies. These jobs are not usually focused on your own music, although some of these jobs do call for you to compose, arrange, and perform from time to time.

What’s funny about these four things is that you could conceivably do all of these four things at the same time, and many people do. But to do even ONE well can be a career unto itself.

## Who Am I?

My name is Eric Copeland, and I am a full-time music composer, arranger, and producer. I make my full-time income from working for other artists, songwriters, and composers helping them with everything from artist branding, production, and marketing, to helping composers develop their own music publishing ventures.

I have done or am doing all the four things I am about to talk about, or have assisted clients in doing them for over 30 years.

So, let’s get right into the meat of this eBook!

## **ONE: Make a Music Product and Brand... and Get Out There!**

This is the oldest way to get paid for your musical talents: make music, get paid to perform, and have some music product and other merch you can sell at your table.

Yes Virginia, people still do this. It’s worked for hundreds of years, and it’s still viable today.

The very best part of doing this is that you actually get to see what effect your music is having on people. You get to truly perform, or reach people, or minister to people, or whatever the purpose of your music is.

Can everybody do it? Well, technically yes, but truthfully only about 5% of people I meet and work with actually will get out there and perform regularly. Why? Because it is hard to find places to go and sing.

The number one question I get is: “How do I find a booking agent?” This is most of the time asked by people who do not, are not currently, and have maybe never have toured. (By the way, the answer to this question is, you are likely not going to find a booking agent for you as an independent artist. Unless you are commanding \$1000 or more per appearance, no booking agent could make enough off your gigs to want to get involved. YOU, or someone who loves you, are your best booking agent.)

Churches are not as inviting to artists and bands in because they already had a band performance each service.

Festivals and fairs are always possibilities, but these rarely pay of offer space for tables.

Clubs exist for almost every style of music but finding them and booking yourself there is a lot of work.

Still, if you can go somewhere and get paid to be there and entertain, and can sell product this remains a very lucrative, consistent income that many artists live on and support their families with.

There are two main incomes in touring: 1) The fee paid for performing, often called the appearance or booking fee, and 2) Money made selling product and merch which can sometimes be more than what you make for your appearance.

Now, are either of these guaranteed amounts at gigs? No, of course not. But touring artists will tell you that it does even out over a good number of gigs. Still today, our artists that physically tour find the most success and income to support themselves or bring in significant side income.

What? You say you don't know how you would tour with your job, family, or other things? Luckily, there is another solution for reaching a large audience and you don't even have to leave your house.

It's called...the Internet. Which bring us to the number two and probably the most popular way in 2021 to do music.

## **TWO: Develop an Audience Online with a Strong Following**

This may seem obvious, and it is usually how people think about making music now. Make videos (with your phone or otherwise) and show the world your music via YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and anyplace else you can post it.

If you build strong channels and commit to posting regularly (especially if you can build a strong YouTube channel and following) this can be an answer.

Now, in the same way that not many people will put the work into touring and finding opportunities to get out in front of audiences, probably only 5% will commit to building a strong online presence in a way that brings them consistent success and also income.

Everyone else will do it just enough to get some faint praise on Facebook for a day or so, then things will die down again. And they will continue to be disappointed with the return as streaming, downloads, and other online sales will not bring in sufficient income on their own without really busting it and building an audience.

**Hint:** Combining a strong online brand with touring helps both. Touring music brands do better online because they leave a long tail of fans and followers to find them online after they see them live. Artists with strong online followings find it easier to locate fans and plan tours.

So, what's the secret of building a large online following and monetizing it? Consistency, and YouTube.

## **YouTube**

You've all heard the stories of YouTubers making millions, and it's not a myth. There are people who make 6 figures easily due to YouTube ad sales, sponsorships, affiliate sales, and product sales because of the thousands, tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands of followers they have in their niche.

The first hurdle is passing 1000 subscribers and 4000 watch minutes (and the latter is the hardest to get to.) Once you pass this, you can begin to monetize your channel and keep building your audience. Then you can get sponsorships from companies that see you have an audience. Plus, you can sell your music and other products as you go. You can include links to your web site, your social media, and your store in every video.

It's the gift that keeps on giving.

We could also talk about other online exposure such as Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook, but this eBook we are specifically focusing on monetizing and those platforms are more for marketing.

## **The Big But...**

The hitch in this plan though is that it takes consistent video on a weekly and sometimes daily basis to build an audience that you can monetize. If you don't provide consistent programming, you will not find success in building your channel and therefore not monetize it. Touring takes lots of work, emails, and phone calls to find gigs, and then the actual time, travel, and effort to go do the gig. Similarly, building a strong YouTube channel that you can monetize takes a year or more to build up the following with consistent weekly videos. It also takes good content, strategic focus in your niche, some luck, and some equipment. But it's a way to start towards an income with your music brand with just your phone, and an internet connection.

You can find more information on YouTube about this if you do some searching on how to build a YouTube channel. There are many good folks who teach this.

So, some of you may be saying, “Hey, I’m just a songwriter, I don’t need to build a big audience with gigs or online.”

For you there is money making method number three...

### **THREE: Writing Songs and Pitching Them to Publishers**

So, you write great songs (and maybe sometimes perform them), but you’d just like to make recordings of them and pitch them for other artists to sing. How do you do this?

This is something I get asked about regularly. Unfortunately, it’s pretty hard to do.

For one thing, many artists these days (especially artists publishers work with and for at labels) already write their own music or have trusted writers and producers who write it for them or with them.

The other issue is, sure we could walk you into a major label and get you pitching to a publisher, but that publisher already has 10 people currently downstairs or around the music town they are based in (Nashville, LA) writing that day specifically for the projects that publisher is looking for.

So, your music has to be beyond good to make it through. Can it happen? Of course. Can a publisher (or an A&R person) see or hear an artist and flip out? Yes, it still happens.

But it’s a 1% of 1% of people that happens to. It’s winning the lottery, and the lottery probably has better odds because it’s not based on talent or taste.

What is the process for this? Well, it’s not something that has really changed in the last century. You make great demos of your songs, you find a publisher that publishes similar songs, and you try and get the songs to them. The days of sending a cassette or CD in the mail are likely over, and most publishers don’t want to get or have time to listen to MP3s attached to emails. Many don’t even accept unsolicited emails from writers they don’t know.

#### **The In Person Publisher Meeting**

This has always been the tried-and-true way to make a good relationship with a publisher. You find a company you can contact, or find someone who knows a contact, and make an appointment to come and meet with them. Sometimes meeting with your BMI or ASCAP rep can help get you into a publisher if they feel you have a song or songs worthy of a pitch meeting.

Once you have secured a meeting, have three songs (with others ready if they want to hear more) on a website they can quickly access. SoundCloud or preferably your own web site is best. But it must be a reliable site where they can have no issue hearing your songs. Again, these meetings are not the place to bring a cassette, CD, or some iPod that needs a special way of hearing it. MP3s are even risky for sending. But all publishers will have a computer and be able to access a public page with streaming samples.

This meeting is important for two reasons. First, it possibly could lead to them being interested in a song. But the second and more important reason is it can set up a relationship with that publisher so you can send songs regularly for them to check out. This meeting, especially if they find your songs are pretty good, can be the start of a years, or decades long relationship. These kinds of relationships are what the music business has been built on for over a hundred years.

### **How You Get Monetized in Publishing**

So, let's say a publisher likes a song and wants to publish it, what does that mean?

First, and you need to be ready for this, they will become a partner in your song. Standard publishing means they will take the publishing side (50%) and you will get the writer's side (50%.)

Now you may be saying, "I wrote the song, why do they get 50%?" Well dear songwriter, are you going to get it to an artist? Are you going to find opportunities for the song that generate income? Are you going to make sure it gets recorded and out to radio or YouTube? In short, the publisher is the one who will do the heavy lifting while you go back to your little town, sit at home, and eat bonbons.

Seriously, publishing is all about finding someone to help the song get monetized in a way where you will make something. The old saying is "Would you rather get 50% of something the songs make with an artist or band on recordings, radio, and online? Or get 100% of nothing it will make if you own it all and it continues to sit on your computer hard drive?"

You will need to sign up for a Performance Rights Organization (PRO) like BMI or ASCAP as a writer. When or if the songs make any money from radio or television, then your PRO will get that information (another good reason to have a publisher whose livelihood is to track these things.) Then you will get 50% from your PRO, and the publisher will get their 50%.

There are other royalties such as mechanical royalties which come from sales of streaming, downloads, CDs, vinyl, and more, as well as sync licensing opportunities which we will talk about below.

Head spinning? Welcome to publishing. There's much more to this of course, but this is an eBook not a novel. ;)

But maybe publishers or artists aren't what you want to write for. Maybe you want to write music for TV, Film, and Advertising?

Therefore, there is number four on our list...and perhaps the best way of all to get a return on your musical investment.

### **FOUR: Compose Music for TV, Film, Advertising, Online, and More**

This is music that is not about you. That's usually a showstopper right there, as most people who create music are chiefly interested in being recognized in some way for their talents. But here in number four we are the most removed from your audience.

In fact, if you are successful in music licensing for TV, film, Ads, etc., likely no one will know your name or your face. This is music you created that is for the use of another creative product. Can you as an artist or band get your song into sync opportunities? Of course. But this is mainly creating music that can be used for someone else's needs than just yours.

The funny part is, this is likely the most lucrative part of the music industry today. It's also just as full as gatekeepers and tastemakers as any other part of music.

In this music profession, your goal is getting your music heard and accepted by the people looking for music for a particular use. The problem is they often have very specific needs, and you like to make only the music you like to make.

## **Sync Licensing 101**

Getting your music into TV, film, commercials and more can happen in a lot of ways. A music supervisor could be looking for songs for a film based in Kentucky and go looking for artists local to the area who do bluegrass. A TV show music coordinator could need some dramatic orchestral music and go looking for that from trusted composer or a music library. A company could be looking for music to go behind their commercial and go to an exclusive library for a peppy song that has the word "Hello" in it. Or a YouTuber could need music for their weekly content and pay a royalty free library for some background music.

There are a million possibilities. But you see the words, "music supervisor", "music coordinator", and "music library" popping up. These are your targets with music you want to get monetized in TV, film, commercials, and more.

## **How the Money Works**

A direct cut where you license a song to a TV show could result in a fee of \$500-2000 or more upfront (depending on the show's budget and how many songs they play in the show.) Then, as we talked about above, the TV show would also have to pay you a PRO payment (what we call the back end) probably 9 or more months down the road. PROs pay quarterly and are notorious late payers because of the information that must get into the system for you to get paid. Sometimes this can be the fault of whoever was supposed to get that info to the PRO.

But direct cuts with a music supervisor are hard to get and find. There are hundreds of thousands of people trying for this, and only a limited number of overworked music supervisors. So this is where having your music in a library that people needing music for use can search and find you.

There are several kinds of these libraries, from exclusive libraries you sign with in perpetuity, and you can't pitch that song to any other library or music supervisor, to non-exclusive libraries where the payouts may be smaller or even micro-payments \$5-50 for use in a YouTube video. But libraries are a good way to get your music primed and findable for the songs to be monetized.

Like gigging, online following, and publishing before it, there is a lot more to sync licensing than we can go into here.

In fact, this is probably a good place to stop, as your head is likely spinning trying to figure out where you fit. And some of you may be thinking you could fit in any or all of the four ways. Although, most try one or two at a time at most.

We hope this eBook has been helpful to you in thinking of ways to monetize your music and which one(s) makes the most sense for you to focus on.

At Creative Soul Records, through our various music companies, we have done and are currently helping artists and songwriters do all of these. If you'd like to get started on a more formal level with us, contact us below and get in touch.

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Eric Copeland is a composer, arranger, producer, and has at one time or still is doing one or two of the things above. But he also spends a good deal of his time working with artists, songwriters, and composers like you who are trying to figure out the best musical path, and then pursue it with vigor to find success, and just maybe, some income.

Check out our information at [CreativeSoulOnline.com](http://CreativeSoulOnline.com) where we start with all artists, songwriters, and composers of all genres.

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