

REMIX

BAND

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By Dave Curtin of DeepMix

REMIX • APRIL 2005

SCREEN DREAMS

To get your music in films, commercials or TV, you need to know licensing

In 2002, I opened DeepMix along with partner Brad Colerick to act as a conduit between the music and advertising industries. Specializing in commercial and film music supervision—as well as original music from artists, producers, DJs and remixers—our rapidly growing boutique company puts itself in the middle of the licensing process for clients by searching major- and indie-label catalogs, composing original music or creating customized remixes of licensed tracks. DeepMix is also involved with soundtracks, music-branded CDs and other niche services. With a top-notch client roster, DeepMix has created numerous remixes for commercials and film, including two tracks from the *Spy Kids 3* soundtrack for director Robert Rodriguez. DeepMix has music-supervised a half-dozen independent feature films that can be seen on HBO, Showtime, Cinemax and more.

I began my music career as a DJ when I was still a teenager and expanded my roles to record producer and artist manager throughout the years. From 1992 to 1995, I was junior manager at First Global Management, where I assisted in handling acts such as C+C Music Factory and Fleetwood Mac. Prior to DeepMix, I worked at HUM Music + Sound Design as director of special projects; there, my main focus was to oversee the launch and management of a specialized division of the company that worked with artists. Recently, I have contributed my expertise to commercials for Budweiser, Bacardi, Universal Orlando, Coors Light and Chevrolet. My recent music-supervision projects include the feature film *The Hillside Strangler*, the indie Sundance film *Mall Cop* and the CNN interview program *Off Topic*. I have licensed tracks for commercials from electronic artists such as Weekend Players, Daft Punk and Kaskade. Given my history in the music business and continuing experience with DeepMix, it's safe to say that I know a little something about licensing—so bring on the questions.

Who are the right people to contact regarding licensing material for commercials, films and TV?

When it comes to licensing music for commercials, films or TV, it is important to have a specific strategy. The right contact person is the most crucial aspect. For commercials, the right contacts include boutique music companies, advertising executives and commercial editors. As the creative director for DeepMix, I listen to music that is submitted to my company. There are several companies like DeepMix that will listen to music that is submitted,



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and based on the genre, style and quality, the company may then be enthused enough to pass it on to its contacts at advertising agencies. The people that I contact and submit music to are usually advertising creative executives or agency producers. Some of the bigger advertising agencies have in-house music producers who can also be helpful contacts. To locate potential contacts, some useful directories include *LA 411* (www.la411.com) and *NY 411* (www.newyork411.com).

For film and television, music supervisors are the people you need to reach; they are usually listed in certain industry trade directories such as *Recording Industry Sourcebook*. Additional film and TV contacts can be music editors, film editors or producers. The bottom line is, you want to get your music to someone who cares, will listen and can make a decision—otherwise, it is a waste of materials and time.

What type and quality of work is expected from submissions, and what should be included in a submission package for licensing?

What is usually expected in a submission is the best quality of music that an artist has produced on CD and a small bio; a Website is also helpful. As far as the music goes, less is more. Submit your best

three to five songs. If someone expresses interest, he or she may request more material. If you have already made contact with someone specifically, make sure to include a cover letter reminding him or her of your conversation and an overview of what you are submitting. With technology as advanced as it is, you can also send materials via the Internet, which can be as easy as a link to a Website, an MP3 or an FTP location where you have posted materials for review.

What is fair payment for something like this?

This is a difficult question to answer because it is so arbitrary. Some artists and record companies are willing to license music for little or no money if they feel it is the right exposure, which it can be. Other artists feel that there is a valid value to their music and therefore can have a fee in mind when submitting. My advice is to be flexible with your fee because every project is different—and every project will have a different budget. It is sort of like real estate: You may only get what the market will bear. When I have licensed music for commercials, films and TV, the range has been anywhere from \$250 to \$250,000. The range of artists includes everyone from emerging, unsigned talent to major-label recording artists and everything in between.

