



Notes on Self-publishing
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an ASCAP publishing company

Self-publishing is not for everyone because you will be working mostly alone and it requires self-discipline. Plan to spend about 50% of your time on the business and 50% composing (A. S.). 2 hours a day (L.B.).

1. Getting Started

- a. Register the publishing company at the County for Doing Business As (DBA) and Fictitious Business Name (FBN), City for Business license, and California State Board of Equalization (Sales Tax)
- b. For books, register at Bowker.com for the bundle of self-publishing tools you need to get started. With an expanded focus on Identifier Services (myidentifiers.com). Bowker® is the official ISBN Agency for the United States.

2. Join a Performing Rights Organization (PRO)

- a. Research and decide on which PRO you would like to join: ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, also international options
- b. Join PRO as both a composer and as a publisher so that you will get 100% of the royalty.

3. Steps for One Composition

- a. Are you composing it on commission, or for your own pleasure?
- b. Composing is work
- c. After the piece is completed, you have to
 - prepare the scores and parts
 - register it with your PRO
 - distribute your newly composed piece to performers
 - generate interest and publicize the composition so that it will be performed and recorded
 - copyright: name on each page, publisher copyright; apply for U.S. Copyright with Library of Congress

4. Business

- a. The self-publishing arm maintains the web site, advertises, prints scores and parts, binds, fills orders, keeps financial and tax records and sometimes generates large publicity mailings.
- b. Culver Crest Publications was established in 1991 to publish my text, *Accompanying Skills for Pianists* (and the 2nd Edition in 2006) which has been used in more than a hundred music departments mostly in the U.S. and Canada. The book sales have helped support the publication and recording of many of my composition projects.

5. Alex Shapiro, Activist Music, LLC is up-to-date

Alex is one very successful MPE self-publisher! She was interviewed in 2016 online about her self-publishing by Garret Hope.

www.composeronfire.com. Episodes #60, and #61.

Here are a few of her suggestions:

- Keep writing, but don't rush; live a while in the sound pallet you have created
- Throw out what does not speak to YOU
- Be proud of what you publish
- Be aware where there is a market today: (new works for band and new choral works).
- Build a consortium as a successful way to get your music out there. Each ensemble pays a small amount for you to compose a piece for them; with a broad base you get many premieres and even your living expenses paid while you are composing the piece.
- Be gracious, human, and build relationships. Performers like to know the composer personally.
- Create a compelling web site that showcases YOU and presents each work well.

6. Up-to-date apps and online store possibilities in 2020