

## ADAM SILAS MILLER | AUDIO PRODUCTION

### Musical Composition Copyright Resources

Your composition is copyrighted automatically when the work is “created,” which the law defines as being “fixed” in a copy or a recording for the first time. Therefore, the first step in the musical composition copyrighting process is the production process. The registration of your copyright is recommended, as it makes your copyright more ‘valid’ in the entertainment law realm, though it is not ‘technically’ required.

#### **3 Ways to Copyright a musical composition (with instructions and photos):**

<http://www.wikihow.com/Copyright-a-Song>

#### **Copyright.gov’s overview of musical composition copyrighting and publication:**

<http://copyright.gov/circs/circ50.pdf>

If you plan to distribute your compositions, I would strongly advise that you join one of the major Performance Rights Organizations (PROs); A PRO provides intermediary functions, particularly collection of [royalties](#), between copyright holders and parties who wish to use copyrighted works *publicly* in locations such as shopping and dining venues. Legal consumer purchase of works, such as buying CDs from a music store, confer *private* performance rights. PROs usually only collect royalties when use of a work is incidental to an organisation's purpose. Royalties for works essential to an organisation's purpose, such as theaters and radio, are usually negotiated directly with the rights holder.

I encourage you to spend time researching the three major PROs (each of which have their own benefits and specialities) and enroll in the one that suits your needs to most. The three PROs are:

- *The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP):*  
<http://www.ascap.com/>
- *Broadcast Music International (BMI):* <http://www.bmi.com/>
- *SESAC, Inc.:* <http://www.sesac.com/>