

# **Corporate Music Method**



Corporate  
**Music**  
Method

Erwin Steijlen

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## How to Read This Book

This is a book for songwriters, composers and artists who write, and record their own music. The purpose of this book is to inspire and inform those who want to become a creative entrepreneur and make a great living writing music for corporate clients, tv, films, events, shows and commercials.

Chapter 1 to 4 is about the music market and how much this market has changed in the last couple of years. These chapters explain why and how the Corporate Music Method works.

Chapter 5 to 9 are about the “25 Rules to Become a Successful Corporate Music Writer”, with musical tips and mixing tricks, examples and everything you need to know about royalties, rights and synching. Chapter 10 and 11 feature interviews with successful entrepreneurs, so we can learn from the people who started a creative business and succeeded.

In Chapter 12 to 14 we’ll dive deep into important things like mindset, creative-and concept thinking and how to really achieve success as a creative businessman.

For those who read the paper version; all the music and video’s that are mentioned can be found on

[www.erwinsteijlen.com](http://www.erwinsteijlen.com)

[soundcloud.com/erwin-steijlen](https://soundcloud.com/erwin-steijlen)

[www.youtube.com/user/erwinsteijlen](https://www.youtube.com/user/erwinsteijlen)

Enjoy!

## About the Author

Erwin started out as a talented guitar player and songwriter, playing with the best Dutch artists, live and in the studio. His career took off when he started recording his own music. Now he has 15 years of experience as a corporate music writer, composing for brands, shows, events, tv series and films with clients in over 40 countries. Companies like VW and BMW have been using his music and his skills as a musical director for all of their product launches all over the world for years. After writing hundreds and hundreds of epic music tracks for the world's biggest clients, Erwin can now probably say he is the #1 product launch composer in the world.

Some highlights are his work for the Beijing Olympics in 2008, his collaboration with Cirque du Soleil and DJ Fedde LeGrand, the inauguration of the biggest ship ever built "Pioneering Spirit" and his shows with Shakira and Pink!

Brands like Verizon Fios, LG, Ford, Liberty Global, Time Warner, Bentley, Shell, Philips, Nike and many more love using his music for their commercials and branding. In 2014 alone, Erwin had 30 commercials on American TV which he realized using the Corporate Music Method. Also, hit TV series such as The Mentalist, Pretty Little Liars, Parenthood, Shameless, Eliminators and Ben & Kate have built scenes to his songs.

Besides being a songwriter, composer and producer, Erwin teaches Songwriting and Media Composing at ArtEZ Institute of the Arts in the Netherlands.



## CHAPTER 1

# **Are You A Crazy Talented 17 Year Old?**

If you are reading this you're most likely an artist such as a songwriter or a composer, just like me. If you are reading this you are probably a musician, maybe playing in a band, just like me and a million others around the world. Maybe you're a music student or a teacher at a local music school. You may be all of the above, but I'm absolutely sure you are recording your own music or planning to.

In any case, you love music and you would love it even more if you could make a decent living out of it. You'll watch and listen to your heroes on records, radio, YouTube and Spotify, you'll go see your favorite acts live and you wish you could live that kind of life too. Maybe you're living it but it's hard to get recognition and even harder to get enough money to call it a 'real job'.

But let's be honest here..

Are you good enough? Do you live in the right country, preferably UK or US? Do you know people who can help you become famous? Do you have a record deal? A worldwide record deal? Do radio stations play your songs? Do the big stars want to record your songs? Do the Hollywood filmmakers fight over your music? Are you scoring the big pictures? Are royalties paying your bills?

If the answers to the last couple of questions are a “yes”, then you belong to a very small percentage of people who are lucky enough to step into the music business with a good chance of making it big, if you haven’t already. If you can add a gorgeous body, long hair, a voice capable of singing 6 octaves and you can dance like Beyonce.. I’m positive you WILL make it in this cut-throat industry.

But if you are, just like me once, one of those millions struggling to survive as a singer, musician, songwriter, composer or artist... I might have a solution for you.

First, let’s be clear about what you want and where you are at this very moment. Have you really tried everything possible to get somewhere in the music bizz?

Have you really given it all you got?

Are you really working as hard as you can? Have you tried all the possibilities?

Chances are you have not. Not yet at least.

Now, as long as we are being honest; do you have a slightly romantic idea about being a pro musician? Do you still think that you will get noticed in the local club even though you are not a crazy talented 17 year old? Is your highest goal getting on a tv show like The Voice, or playing at a local rock festival? Or do you want to be on YouTube and Spotify just for your friends and family? In other words; do you want to be a pro, or stay an amateur? What is your goal? Are you really serious about your music and the idea of making a living with it? and are you good enough to be a pro? If the answers to last two sentences are “yes” then the Method I think, will be interesting to you.

## **Help me get Famous!**

True, getting famous or scoring a worldwide hit is the ultimate goal for almost all artists, but it's a long shot too, hard to realize and luck is an important ingredient here.

In these modern times, where Spotify, Apple and YouTube rule the music scene, especially money wise, old-school record companies are desperately looking for new ways to make money, radio stations are slowly being overtaken by internet radio, and tv is for old folk because kids want series on-demand like what is offered on Netflix and HBO. In these fast changing times it is even harder to create steady income with your own music. At times it can seem practically impossible for a creative person to make any money at all with his or her art. In the next chapter we will go deeper into the ways how Spotify and YouTube earn their money, and what this means for you. But the most important thing you need to realize is this:

**It is perfectly possible to make a great living as a composer or songwriter, without the help of managers, record companies or publishers!**

I'm not talking about a lucky shot to score a hit, but a long term career in music by getting your own business, making a steady income with your own music, making a living and supporting your family with your self-recorded tracks. Be an entrepreneur besides being a creative person; a creative businessman. Build your business with returning, paying clients and assignments, and be self supporting and free to make your own decisions.

I'm talking about writing and recording for the corporate world.

This can be done in various ways, the most obvious of which would be to write music for commercials. Contact ad agencies if you want to write these 20 second music tracks. But that market is pretty crowded in most countries or taken by big the players. This is because of the royalties these tracks make,

every second on television is paid so writing these commercials account for a nice dollar figure on your bank statement. Another way is to write radio jingles and packages for radio stations. I know a lot of people who do this kind of work.

If you get a chance to compose a nice tv commercial, do it! But also try and look at it differently, try and find a niche that's not so crowded. What about contacting brands and companies directly? What about events, shows and product launches? What about the big corporate market for video's? What about getting your music in TV series and films through synching? What about a collaboration with clothing designers or starting filmmakers? Musically it's more interesting to write an epic piece for a product launch, a whole song or an orchestral track for a show or a film, than to make 20 second commercials where the music, most of the time, has to sound like something you already know (but it does pay the bills of course). Mixing it all up keeps things interesting.

Collaboration in new territories is key here, think about who you know and who can help you.

What about the artists that did make it? Can they still live just from record deals and touring? It is known that 91 percent of all the artists in the world are completely undiscovered, and of the other 9 percent not everyone can make a living. The stars we hear and see on tv, internet and radio all day, are a very small percentage of what is available. Are they really the best or are other factors playing a role here too?

An American example from The Huffington Post: "Today, the only way to make money in the music business is to turn an artist into a brand, and then do everything in your power to maximize that brand's value. The first step on this path still involves music. Songs make a music artist famous in the first place and allow the artist to define his or her brand. Touring can also be lucrative; spending on concerts in North America surpassed spending on recorded music in 2009, and stood at \$9.5 billion in 2011, up almost

20 percent from four years before. But tours are also expensive to produce, so they aren't necessarily as profitable for the artist as they initially appear. For that reason, artists have become increasingly creative with their business ventures. "Ten years ago, if you had a hit song on the radio, and you had a great tour, you'd sell a million records, two million records. That's not necessarily the case anymore.

Today, if you have a hit song and you have a sold-out tour, then other ancillary opportunities are available to you: sponsorships, endorsements, TV, movie, animated features ... all different types of things. Recording an album really has become like a promotional tool, so once an artist becomes popular through music, the four members of his or her management team (agent, manager, lawyer, business manager) work to turn fans' goodwill into revenue. They secure deals for music-merchandise manufacturers to sell keychains with their clients' faces on them, get their clients lucrative judging positions on reality TV shows, and help broker clothing-design jobs with apparel companies. Some artists have made more with these kinds of deals than they would have in the golden age of the CD. Taylor Swift, for example, collaborated with Elizabeth Arden to release a perfume that was predicted to generate \$50 million in the year after its release. Swift, of course, also sells millions of records but music manager Allen Kovac said that it's possible even for moderately successful artists to start lucrative businesses. Kovac cited his client Nikki Sixx, who has parlayed his position as the bassist of Motley Crue into a clothing line, several book deals and a radio talkshow Sixx is also in talks to start a talk show on cable. "He's making more money now as an individual than he did in Motley Crue," Kovac said".

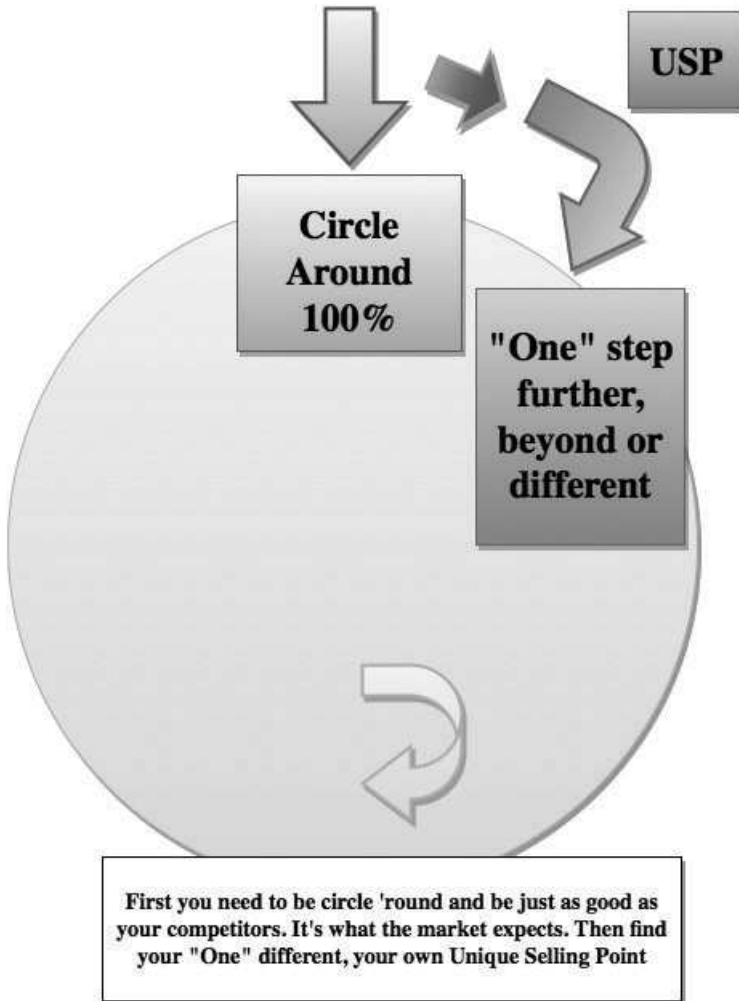
So the famous artists are looking for new business models too. They have to!

The big companies are too slow in changing their business models and the market today is too fragmented for the way they used to work. From Forbes Entrepreneurs: "In today's music scene there are multiple subgenres and blogs catering to niche audiences on the Internet, thousands of cable channels, satellite-and internet radio channels etc. Massive corporations are not built

for this type of promotions, but smaller record labels, smaller marketing firms or motivated artists are. To meet these market needs, a new and exciting business model has emerged where entrepreneurs and small businesses supply needs that the major companies cannot. These companies handle promotions, distribution and marketing for independent labels and artists. They provide services so independent labels don't have to do everything in-house, allowing these labels to compete through services that were once only available by signing exclusive deals with major-label conglomerates". So there are opportunities for independent artists as long as you see your music as a product, and yourself as a creative businessman.

But are you good enough for market demands?

The drawing of the little circle stands for the evolution that, in my opinion, every musician, songwriter and composer needs to go through. You'll want to become just as good as your heroes and your competition, and in the meantime discover your own "unique selling point". The market demands a certain quality and getting up to that standard is hard enough. But what makes you different from the rest? Why should people buy your music? Why would clients be interested in hiring you? So you need to go "around the world", learn and complete the circle, be just as good as your competitors, and then find that "One" different spot! Because that's what makes you different and helps you to stand out from the rest. First try hard to be just as good as your heroes and put as much of yourself into the journey as possible. Then you will need to find the part where you are different and can make the difference. "One" different and step "One" beyond from what the rest is offering. This is very important, so much more on this later in the book.







## CHAPTER 2

# How To Make Money With Music

Fact: it's getting harder and harder to make a living in music. Music is free almost everywhere. With YouTube, Spotify, Deezer, your kids will never, ever pay for a song. That's old school! Music is free in the minds of the young. Nobody will be able to return to the old times.

Money and “ a living” can only be made in other ways, not by selling tracks anymore.

Sure, there is iTunes and it will be here for as while, but since artists put their music up for free on YouTube and the majority of the people, especially young people, are online 24 hours a day, sales will go down there also. It's just a matter of time. My own kids tell me: “dad, why should we pay for a song?, it's all for free on YT”!

Let's talk about selling music, songs. Here are some financial facts; The Guardian march 2015: “Daft Punk's Get Lucky was streamed 78.6 million times through its Play 50 chart, earning up to £660,000, which would be split between record label, publishers, collecting societies and the French duo”. A record deal is 360 degrees these days, meaning that record companies want a share of everything an artist earns money with. These companies cannot live from sales anymore so they have to. Artists with record deals get between 19% and 24 %, depending on the deal they make.

So, even a worldwide hit does not make you rich, as you see in the above example. Not with streams anyway. You would have expected these guys to gain millions with a worldwide hit, but from streams they will not become millionaires, that's for sure.

The Guardian: "Spotify says that its average payout for a stream to labels and publishers is between \$0.006 and \$0.0084 but "Information Is Beautiful" suggests that the average payment to an artist from the label portion of that is \$0.001128 – this being what a signed artist receives after the label's share".

First this: **YouTube is a great place to build a brand, but a bad place to build a business!**

This is a great quote and very true. Anybody can use YouTube to become famous or sell his product. But, there is little money to be made! You would need 1,000,000 views to earn 2,000 dollars.

But then you have to pay taxes, and your costs for making the vids and music. And signed artists need to share with record company and publishing. But if you do get millions of views on your channel you have a big chance of being approached by brands and companies who want you to review their products for money. Most vloggers make a living that way claiming they always can write whatever they want, but I suspect that real independence does not benefit from being paid by the brands they are reviewing.

Spotify then.....the math:

Spotify has 15 million paying customers and 60 million users overall. These 45 million free users take the ads for granted. Nobody really knows how much Spotify makes on these ads.

To make minimum wages, meaning 1200 dollars a month a signed artist needs 1,117,021 streams and an unsigned artist needs 230,326 plays.

Here is a clearer view of what earnings are on Spotify and YouTube:

	<b>Plays</b>	<b>Per play</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Spotify to Performer/ Master rights</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>0.00521</b>	<b>\$ 5,210.00</b>
<b>Spotify to Songwriters/ Publishers</b>	<b>the same million as above</b>	<b>0.000521</b>	<b>\$ 521.00</b>
<b>YouTube to Performer/ Master rights</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>0.00175</b>	<b>\$ 1,750.00</b>
<b>YouTube CSM master recording (Ad Rev)</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>0.00032</b>	<b>\$ 321.00</b>

*source: <http://thetrichordist.com/2014/11/12/>*

*the-streaming-price-bible-spotify-youtube-and-what-1-million-plays-means-to-you/*

Adding more subscribers also adds more plays. This means that there is less paid per play as the service scales in size. This means that Spotify and YT retain their margin, while the artist's margin is reduced! In the above example the 3,000,000 plays add up to \$ 7,802.00 of total revenue. You can make the same amount by selling 1125 albums on iTunes.... (However, if you were to sell 3,000,000 tracks on iTunes you would earn 2,100,000 dollars!.. Wow! but these days are long gone..)

A couple of years ago most people thought that the Internet would bring a whole new middle class of independent artists, composers, painters, musicians, creative people, etc... But, in reality, it brought us a whole generation of amateurs, hobbyists and semi-pro's. Only the big companies like Apple, Spotify, Google and YouTube, make serious money. Artists are poorer than ever... That's just the plain truth.

Geoff Barrow of Portishead tweeted in dec 2015: *34 million streams, my income after tax= £1700. Thank U @apple @YouTube @Spotify for selling our music so cheap.* Another clear example of a bad deal..

I did a little investigation with a song of mine to see for myself what the revenues would be, and it turned it was even less than the above example! I put the song on Spotify and iTunes through “Music Kickup”. You need a publisher or a service like Music Kickup or Catapult to get your music on iTunes, Spotify, Deezer, Google Play etc. Catapult is an official distributor for iTunes, but there are more companies offering this kind of service for a small fee. Here are the results:



Withdrawable amount: 35.44 €

CLAIM NOW

Overall Spotify iTunes Deezer Google Play Withdraw history

	LAST REPORT	QUANTITY	AMOUNT €
spotify	2015-07	5016	17.42
itunes	2015-05	19	13.49
deezer	2015-07	316	1.41
google	2015-05	5	3.11
<b>Total sales revenue</b>			<b>35.44 €</b>

CLOSE

As you can see I got 5016 streams on Spotify for this track earning me 17.42 dollars.

This means I got only 0,00347 per stream. I also got 19 iTunes sales, for which I received 13,49 dollars. This is 0,71 per sale.

So, if i had sold 5016 tracks on iTunes, I would have earned 3561.36 dollars. This is not entirely fair because not every stream would have been a sale

(some listeners may have played the song ten times but would have to buy it only once of course).

But in this simple example it is also pretty clear, you need massive streams to make any kind of living.

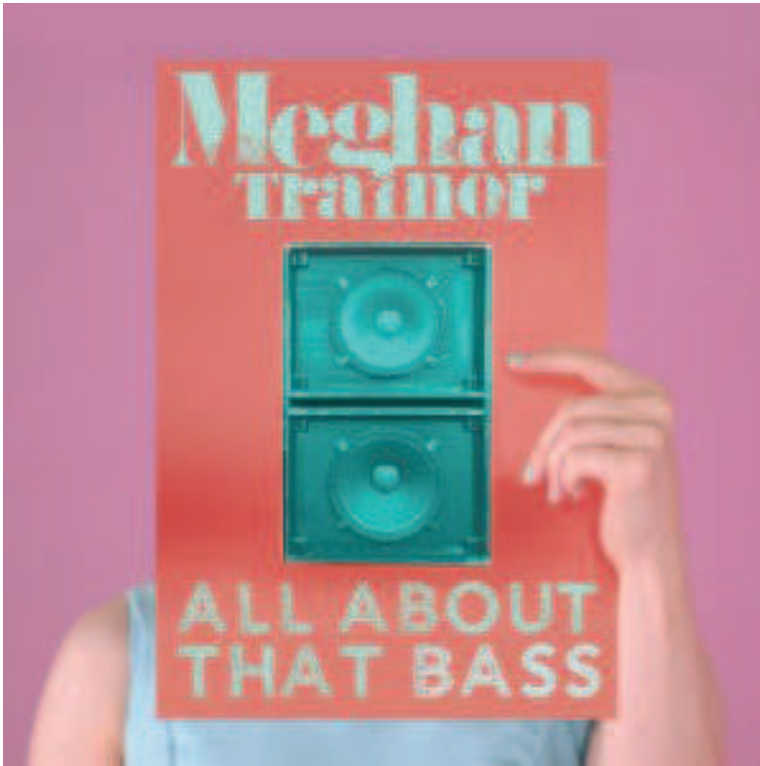
Another example of how bad it can be:

Kevin Kadish, who wrote “All About That Bass”, says he made just \$5,679 (£3,700) from 178 million streams of the song.

“For a song like All About That Bass, that I wrote, which had 178 million streams. I mean \$5,679?

That’s my share,” he is quoted as saying in a report from The Tennessean.

“That’s as big a song as a songwriter can have in their career. It became number one in 78 countries, and you’re making \$5,600? He definitely made a bad deal with his record company. But on the other hand, he wouldn’t have had such a big hit without this company, and the radio royalties should make him rich anyway. But now you’ll understand artists like Taylor Swift, AC/DC, The Beatles and Garth Brooks a bit better when they don’t want to be on Spotify.



Here's what Taylor Swift says about her choice not to be on Spotify anymore:

“Ms Swift says that the argument about fair compensation isn't really about her. She can support herself, her band, crew, and entire management team by playing live shows: at last count, her “1989” tour had grossed over \$86m. The real problem is for those whose star-power is more modest than that of Ms Swift's supernova. Despite technology that puts more power into the hands of musicians to make websites, sell merchandise, book their own shows and connect with fans, many continue to sign old-fashioned, complex paper contracts regarding the rights to their music. These play to the strengths of lawyers and accountants, not lyricists and tunesmiths, ensuring that more money flows to handlers than to creators.” (*The Economist*)

So, what can you do to make a living from music as a creator? As a songwriter, composer or writing artist? Here are the answers:

**1. Be on the radio all day, and be on all radio's worldwide.** That would bring you loads of royalty money... But, it would take a while getting it. It can take somewhere between 1 and 3 years. And, you would have to share with publishing, the record company and collecting societies like ASCAP. But, depending on where you are signed, which has a lot to do with where you live and work, most of the time you will only get on national radio. You will need to be a signed artist with a worldwide record deal to get on all these radio stations worldwide. That's the way most radio stations work, they get new music from record companies promoting new artists. So, first, you would need a great deal.

I know of a great singer who can write well, but every time she records a single she signs this pretty useless distribution deal with a record company. They haven't even managed to get her on national radio, not even once! But she did sign their publishing contract, meaning she lost all control over her own music and recording. No shopping around and no synching with this track, no more freedom to do what she wants with her song, and for what? There are thousands of artists that keep signing these bad paper contracts just because it sounds so great: "I've got a record deal", "I've signed with this great, big publisher", but the truth is that 90% of the times, it won't get them anywhere. Got a great deal?

Sign! If not, remain free and work it yourself, or work with smaller companies who understand how the new "music to business" ways work.

If you're good, the big ones will come back for you anyway. About the deal from my singer friend: That record company put no effort into her song at all. They didn't pay for the recordings, and these days singles aren't even hardware, anymore, only digital. So, no costs at all. None. They need to use their distribution and marketing system, but if they're not totally behind you, or you aren't a well known artist already, this deal will be of no use.

Also, it will always only be national. So find a company that believes in you. Even better if it's smaller and knows how modern day marketing works. Stay away from the big companies unless they can offer you a great (worldwide) deal. Otherwise, do it yourself and use the Method. Get your music on films, commercials or tv series and built it up from there.

DJ Martin Garrix left his record company Spinnin' records and management in august 2015, after failing to get his Intellectual Property Rights back. He signed a "bad" deal when he was very young and trying to change it did not work. He cut his losses, left the company and now only concentrates on new music and he is currently (as I write at least,) available for a new label and a new (better) contract. We all know about the struggles of George Michael and Prince with their companies, but we also all know of artists who don't live in the UK or US, who can only have national success. The road to success is a one-way street; going from the UK and US to the rest of the world. You're not allowed to enter the street from the other side! This is how old-school record companies work and it's about time this changed!

What's the second way to make a living from music?

**2. Gig! Tour! Play live, play, play, play..** Most musicians pay their bills with touring, playing live! Play as much as you can and ask decent money for your live appearance. That's what all the big acts are doing. They tour and earn a lot of money with it. That's why all the old acts are touring again. No more record sales, so they have to. Build a loyal following and keep on playing and touring... (Coldplay costs 1 million for a show I've heard). Costs for touring can be high though and health problems from an important band member could mean no money at all for the whole crew when a show has to be cancelled.

**3. Teaching** is the third answer. Many musicians have a teaching job, or had one at some point in their lives. For songwriters and composers this happens less often, but it's increasingly becoming a subject at music schools and conservatories. But be honest.. does answer 1 and 2 really apply to you?