THE MUSIC SPECIALIST

🎼 **Publishing & Licensing Playbook**

From Allen Johnston – The Music Specialist

Turn Your Music into Revenue, Rights, and Reach

🔹 1. Know What You Own

Every song has two sides — and both can earn your money.

- **Composition** = lyrics + melody (you or your co-writers)
- **Sound Recording** = the actual recorded performance (you or your label)

“If you wrote it or recorded it, you own something. Know which side of the coin is yours.”

🔹 2. Register Your Work

If it’s not registered, it’s not protected — and it’s not getting paid.

- **U.S. Copyright Office** – register your compositions and recordings
- **PRO (ASCAP, BMI, SESAC)** – collect performance royalties
- **SoundExchange** – collect digital performance royalties (Pandora, SiriusXM)
- **Publishing Admin (Songtrust, TuneCore)** – collect global royalties

“Don’t wait for a hit to get organized. Get your paperwork right from track one.”

🔹 **3. Split Sheets Are Non-Negotiable**

Every collab needs a written agreement — before the song drops.

- **List of all contributors** (writers, producers, vocalists)
- **Assign percentages** for publishing and master ownership
- **Include contact info** and signatures
- **Keep it simple, but keep it legal**

“Split sheets save friendships — and protect your future income.”

🔹 **4. License Like a Pro**

Your music can be earned through sync, samples, and placements — if you’re ready.

- **Sync Licensing** = music used in film, TV, ads, games
- **Mechanical Licensing** = covers, remixes, physical/digital sales
- **Direct Licensing** = deals with brands, apps, or platforms
- **Use a licensing agent or pitch yourself** with a clean metadata sheet

“Licensing is where culture meets commerce. Be ready to say yes — with terms.”

🔹 **5. Build Your Publishing Empire**

Even one song can be the start of a catalog. Treat it like a business.

- **Track your registrations** in a spreadsheet or publishing dashboard
- **Reinvest royalties** into new music, visuals, and promotion
- **Audit your statements** quarterly — PROs and distributors make mistakes
- **Consider forming your own publishing company** when your catalog grows

“Publishing is legacy. It’s how you get paid while you sleep — and long after.”

💼 **Ready to protect your music and license it like a pro?**

Visit musicspecialistspeaks.com for mentorship, booking, and resources.