MUSIC LICENSING for STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHY

[An Electronic version of this document can be requested at Don.Nichols@csulb.edu]

In preparation for your Contemporary Concert Audition, you should first determine the type of music you are using: original music or commercial music?

-If you’re commissioning ORIGINAL MUSIC, it is assumed that the composer has given you permission to use this music. You do NOT need to proceed with the steps below, but you should contact the Music Director to discuss the arrangement you’ve made with the composer.

-If you are using COMMERCIAL MUSIC, you may need to acquire TWO different licenses: the Grand Rights (sometimes called “Dramatic”) License, and a Master Use License. Prior to the AUDITION, you must complete these preliminary steps:
  1. IDENTIFY the person/company you need to contact for Grand Rights
  2. IDENTIFY the person/company you need to contact for Master Use License.
  3. Acquire the CONTACT information (email or physical address) for BOTH Grand and Master Use rights holders.
  4. Prepare a DOCUMENT requesting the appropriate licenses, which will be either a written email draft or, in some cases, a company will have a request form on its website that you will fill out instead. This is needed for both Grand and Master Use Licenses.

Grand Rights

Grand Rights are given on an individual basis by the PUBLISHER or COMPOSER of the piece. This concerns ONLY the composition itself. If you personally know, or can reasonably contact the COMPOSER of the piece (who is not always the performer), s/he can give you the Grand Rights. Otherwise, you need to contact the publishing company by searching these three places:
https://www.ascap.com/ace/
http://repertoire.bmi.com/startpage.asp

If you follow the links above, click ‘performers’ or ‘artist’ and type in the artist name; you should find your track on ONE of these sites. Clicking on the track should reveal the publisher and their contact information. This is who you contact for Grand Rights.

FYI: If you only have music performed LIVE to your dance, then Grand Rights should be all you need.
Master Use License

If you use a RECORDING of your music, then you also need a Master Use License for using that particular recorded version of a composition. This is usually licensed by the RECORD COMPANY that released the CD but in the case of independent artists and self-released music, the artists often retain the ownership and can grant that license. It’s likely your master rights belong to one of the three main record companies below. If your record label lists someone else, you should contact that record label FIRST, even though it’s likely that label is actually owned by one of the three below.

SONY: https://sonymusiclicensing.com/
The link above has a Master Use Request Form (do NOT use the non-profit or student film master use request form as it is for AUDIO-VISUAL works).

Universal Music Group phone number, copyright and license div.: 310/865-0770
The above link is for obtaining a license for free as part of an educational purpose http://www.wmgmusiclicensing.com/WMGML/RequestAccountLanding.aspx?t=n

Preparing a Document To Request Your Licenses

If your piece is selected for the Contemporary Concert, and in particular if it will be shown at ACDA, you will need to have documents ready to send that requests the Grand Rights and Master Use Rights. IMPORTANT: You will NOT send this request until after the Contemporary Concert has been cast and you have shown your document to the Music Director. The license holder will NOT form a contract with you personally.

You will either prepare an email to the rights holders, or else you will fill out a pre-existing form (like with most record companies). However, each case of requesting rights is different so you should prepare the document based on your research. Some record companies can grant both licenses themselves, so processes can vary greatly.

In asking for rights, especially via email, there is important information that you can convey that should help your request:

- Include the fact that you are a university student, that this request is part of a student choreography dance concert at California State University Long Beach.
- Be clear WHAT you are requesting: Piece’s Title by Composer. OR Master Use Rights to use Piece’s Title performed by Artist on Record Label.
- Be clear that you want to use the piece to accompany your ORIGINAL choreography for LIVE Performance.
- If you are using only a PART of a piece of music, be clear about how much. If you are using more than one piece, specify the total duration of your work vs. the song length.

- Include the **Number** of performances and provide the **Days, Month, Year** of the Performances. State that “We are a non-profit university and all income is used for educational purposes. The performances will be open to the public and that there will be a minimal charge for the event ($16 Students, $20 General), which is to partially cover the expense of costumes, staff, lights, etc.”

- Specify that you are requesting the music for live performance only – NO commercial audio/video recordings will be made or distributed.

- Sign your full name and full contact information (email & phone). *Keep an email trail as proof of your conversation and the terms you agree upon.

**Sample Language of Request Letter for Either GRAND or MASTER USE Rights**

Dear Mr./Mrs. ####

I am writing to request the rights to some music in your catalogue to accompany my original choreography for an upcoming performance. I am an undergraduate dance student in the Department of Dance at Long Beach State University.

I would like to use #####, written/performed by #### ####, for a six-minute dance I am creating. This piece will be performed as part of the American College Dance Association conference, which is taking place April 22-25, 2022.

I also want to note that I am requesting the music for live performance use only – NO commercial audio/video recordings of the performance will be made or distributed. Long Beach State is a non-profit, public university and all income is used for educational purposes. The performances will only be open to registered conference attendees.

Please let me know if we are able to use this music free of charge, or if not, what your proposed fee would be. In the past, we have typically paid between $25-$50 per performance. You can contact me directly with any correspondence, questions or concerns. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Dancer
Email: ####@####.####
Cell Phone: 333-333-3333