How The AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund Helps Non-Featured Artists Get Paid

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LOS ANGELES, CA – There's a whole team of people behind every illustrious artist making sure they sound their best — from background singers to session musicians. But what happens when the featured artist collects their royalties?

With the AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund, non-featured artists have been getting paid their well-deserved royalties since 1998. As described in a press release, the AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund collects and distributes royalties for non-featured artists for their performance on songs played on satellite radio, webcasting, non-interactive streaming services and other digital formats.

The Fund was established with the passage of the Digital Performance Royalty Act (DPPA) and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). Now, with the passage of the Music Modernization Act — which was signed into law on October 11 — pre-1972 songs will be included, which translates to even more artists receiving royalties for their musical contributions.

The Fund distributed more than $60 million in royalties in 2019 and over $300 million to date on thousands of titles. It pays a considerable amount to non-featured artists on a slew of Hip-Hop, Pop and R&B titles.

If you have performed on a song as a background vocalist or session musician, please visit "Unclaimed Royalties" on The Fund’s website to see if you're owed. You can look up a song by artist or song title. You can also contact their Participant Services Department if you feel that you have not been credited on a song you have performed on.