

AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund, A Saving Grace for Musicians and Vocalists

Backing musicians and vocalists make up the tapestry of sound on a great percentage of music and songs that we listen to throughout our lives. They work behind the scenes and rarely achieve individual fame, but their contributions are undeniable. Since the beginning of recorded music, artists, bands, and orchestras have relied on their expertise

& SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund only pays union performers, but that's simply not the case. "The Fund" is required under U.S. copyright law to pay both union and non-union musicians and vocalists. They collect and distribute these royalties for pretty much every genre of music you can imagine including Hip-Hop, Pop, Rock,

so even if a known star/featured artist sings backing vocals or plays an instrument on other artists tracks where they are not listed as a "featured artist" anywhere in the song credits, they too can also receive royalties. Virtually anyone who performs a non-featured role on a recording that's covered by this Fund is owed, whether they are a professional or not.

Like all other performance rights organizations, the Fund does need the correct performer information or "metadata" to find and pay those who are owed royalties. A lot of singers and musicians use multiple names or AKAs on song credits, which can make it difficult for PROs to find them. Fortunately, this Fund does have a team of expert researchers with deep music backgrounds, many who specialize in different styles of music.

Any non-featured performer who is listed on a covered song, The Fund calls a participant because they participate or share in a royalty distribution. There are no membership fees and it is absolutely free to register with them. Vocalists and musicians can check out the Fund's "covered recordings" page to see if they're owed, and they can also check their "unclaimed royalties" page to see if they're owed any royalties that they might have



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at making their sonic dreams come true. Fortunately for these well-deserving performers, the AFM & SAG-AFTRA Fund has their back.

The lion's share of royalties that The Fund pays out to backing musicians and vocalists is for their performance on music that's played on non-interactive streaming formats like SiriusXM, webcasting and any other digital radio-like services. The Fund has distributed well over \$550 million in royalties to date, and with the growth of these formats the organization expects to distribute even more royalties in the years to come.

Many vocalists and musicians might think that an organization with a name like AFM

Country, R&B, Punk, Jazz, Alternative, Classical and even some of the most avant garde music played on niche satellite radio stations.

This Fund has definitely made a seismic positive change for many non-featured artists who now have another income stream for the work they've done throughout their career. With the passage of the Music Modernization Act in 2018, non-featured artists who performed on songs from 1972 back to 1957 are now getting paid their fair share as well. Some well-known artists started as backing artists,

overlooked because they are listed under a different name or AKA. Even if you're not receiving royalties from The Fund, chances are you know someone who is.

Check out afmsagaftrafund.org

