



READY FOR THE RELEASE.



A record worth hearing deserves a plan.
Prepare the files. Check the rights. Make your next move.

Start with one release.

Use these eight pages to get organized, ask better questions and prepare a focused campaign. The checklists and planning exercises are Future Rap Icons recommendations. Numbered references point to primary sources for platform rules and rights information.

ARTIST / PRODUCER / PROJECT

RELEASE TITLE + TARGET DATE

THE LISTENER YOU WANT TO REACH + ONE ACTION YOU WANT THEM TO TAKE

Inside 02 Readiness / 03 Rights / 04 Delivery / 05 Pitching /
06 Rollout / 07 Royalties + results / 08 Sources

Before you announce it

A practical readiness check. Tick a box when you have the file, approval or decision in hand.

01 / The record

- ☐ Final mix and master approved by the responsible collaborators.
- ☐ Authorized clean, explicit, instrumental or a cappella versions prepared as needed.
- ☐ Song title, primary and featured artists, credits and version labels consistent.
- ☐ Beat, sample, artwork and footage permissions checked for the uses planned.

02 / The release folder

- ☐ Cover art, artist photo and thumbnail meet the recipient's specifications.
- ☐ Short bio, one-sentence story, release date and contact details ready.
- ☐ Distributor requirements, delivery window and platform processing time checked.
- ☐ Artist profiles, preview links and scheduled video destinations tested.

03 / The campaign

- ☐ One primary listener action chosen: watch, save, join or buy.
- ☐ Relevant DJs, outlets and collaborators selected; task owners and budget agreed.
- ☐ Links, spelling and download permissions checked on a phone.

Build in time for the pitch

Spotify for Artists accepts unreleased songs for editorial consideration. Pitch at least seven days before release for inclusion in followers' Release Radar; an editorial playlist spot is not guaranteed. The delivered song must appear in Upcoming first. Allow for your distributor's timing as well. [1]

Know what you can use

U.S. rights overview. Keep this worksheet with the signed agreements; it does not replace them.

The song's composition and its sound recording are separate copyright works. Their owners and shares can differ. In the U.S., protection begins when an original work is fixed; registration provides additional benefits. [2]

Read the actual beat license

"Free," "unlimited" and "exclusive" are not complete descriptions of your rights. Check permitted uses (including video), stream or sales limits, term, credits and royalty obligations. Buying permission to use a beat does not necessarily transfer ownership. [3] BeatStars producers set their own license terms. [4]

Samples: a sample can involve both recording and composition rights; an interpolation re-records existing composition material. Check what permissions are required and whether any clearance covers your use. A beat purchase alone does not settle this. Exceptions can apply; unresolved cases need qualified advice. [3]

Content ID: YouTube requires exclusive rights to reference material. Non-exclusively licensed music is a common example of ineligible material. Do not enroll a track automatically because you bought a beat; check the underlying rights and your provider's rules first. [5]

Put the decisions in writing

WRITERS + AGREED COMPOSITION SHARES / WHERE THE AGREEMENT IS SAVED

RECORDING OWNER(S) + PRODUCER / ARTIST TERMS / AGREEMENT LOCATION

THIRD-PARTY MATERIAL + PERMISSION STATUS + WHO WILL RESOLVE IT

Save the license, relevant receipts and collaborator approvals with the project. Confirm credits with everyone involved. Rights and collection arrangements outside the U.S. may differ.

RIGHTS CHECK / USE WITH THE GUIDANCE ABOVE



Make delivery effortless

Our delivery checklist. Ask the recipient which versions, file specifications and delivery method they need.

For producers / records and packs

- ☐ Use clear filenames; include the track title, BPM and key where relevant.
- ☐ Export requested stems or trackouts from a common start point.
- ☐ Confirm the requested sample rate, bit depth and audio format.
- ☐ Include the license, included files, credit instructions and contact details.
- ☐ Check sample and loop redistribution rights before selling a sound pack.
- ☐ Test the download link and confirm how long it will remain available.

For artists / DJ delivery

- ☐ Label clean and explicit versions accurately when available and authorized.
- ☐ Supply intro edits, instrumentals or a cappellas when requested and cleared.
- ☐ Put the artist, title, BPM, release date and contact details in one place.
- ☐ Include a preview plus an approved download link. Follow the DJ's instructions.

One folder people can navigate

01 Audio / approved versions and requested stems

02 Visuals / cover, artist photo, video thumbnail

03 Information / credits, bio, date and contact

04 Agreements / private licenses, approvals and permissions

Keep private contracts out of public press folders. Share only the files and information the recipient needs. A file labeled "clean" should actually be the approved clean version.

Pitch with a purpose

An adaptable email template from Future Rap Icons. Use a specific reason, a working link and one clear request.

Give them a reason to listen

Subject: [Artist] — [Title] | [Genre] | [Release date]

Hi [Name],

I'm [Name / role]. I'm sharing [Artist]'s [Title] because [specific reason it fits this show, audience or outlet].

The record is [one sentence about the sound and story]. It releases on [date]. [Add one useful, accurate fact about the artist or project.]

Preview: [link]

Approved DJ / press assets: [link]

Credits and short bio: [link]

Would you consider [one request: a listen for your show, coverage, or a premiere]?

Thanks for listening,

[Name / role / reply email / official artist link]

Before you send

- ☐ Confirm submissions are accepted; use the recipient's current route.
- ☐ Replace every placeholder. Test links without your own account signed in.
- ☐ Keep it relevant. Avoid large unsolicited attachments and repeated messages.

For example, DJcity directs artists to its submission form and says review does not guarantee placement. [6] Our suggestion: one courteous follow-up after a reasonable interval, then move on if there is no response.

Work back from release

A suggested final-month planner. R = your release date. Start earlier if rights, delivery or collaborators need more time.

01

R minus 30–21 days / Prepare

Confirm rights, credits, audio and artwork. Check delivery requirements and processing time with your distributor. Set a realistic date; unresolved permissions may require moving it.

02

R minus 20–14 days / Set the story

Prepare your preview, assets and one-sentence hook. Choose a few relevant recipients. Draft posts around the story, a performance and a behind-the-scenes moment.

03

R minus 13–7 days / Invite people in

Send targeted pitches. For Spotify, submit the unreleased song pitch at least seven full days before R, once it appears in Upcoming. [1] If it is not ready in time, do not assume a last-minute upload will meet that window.

04

R minus 6 days through launch / Check + release

Confirm links and collaborator plans. Test on a phone. Publish approved assets when the release is live. Reply to real listeners and give them one clear next step.

05

R plus 7 days / Learn

Compare results with your goal. Thank collaborators, test one new angle and write down what you will change next time.

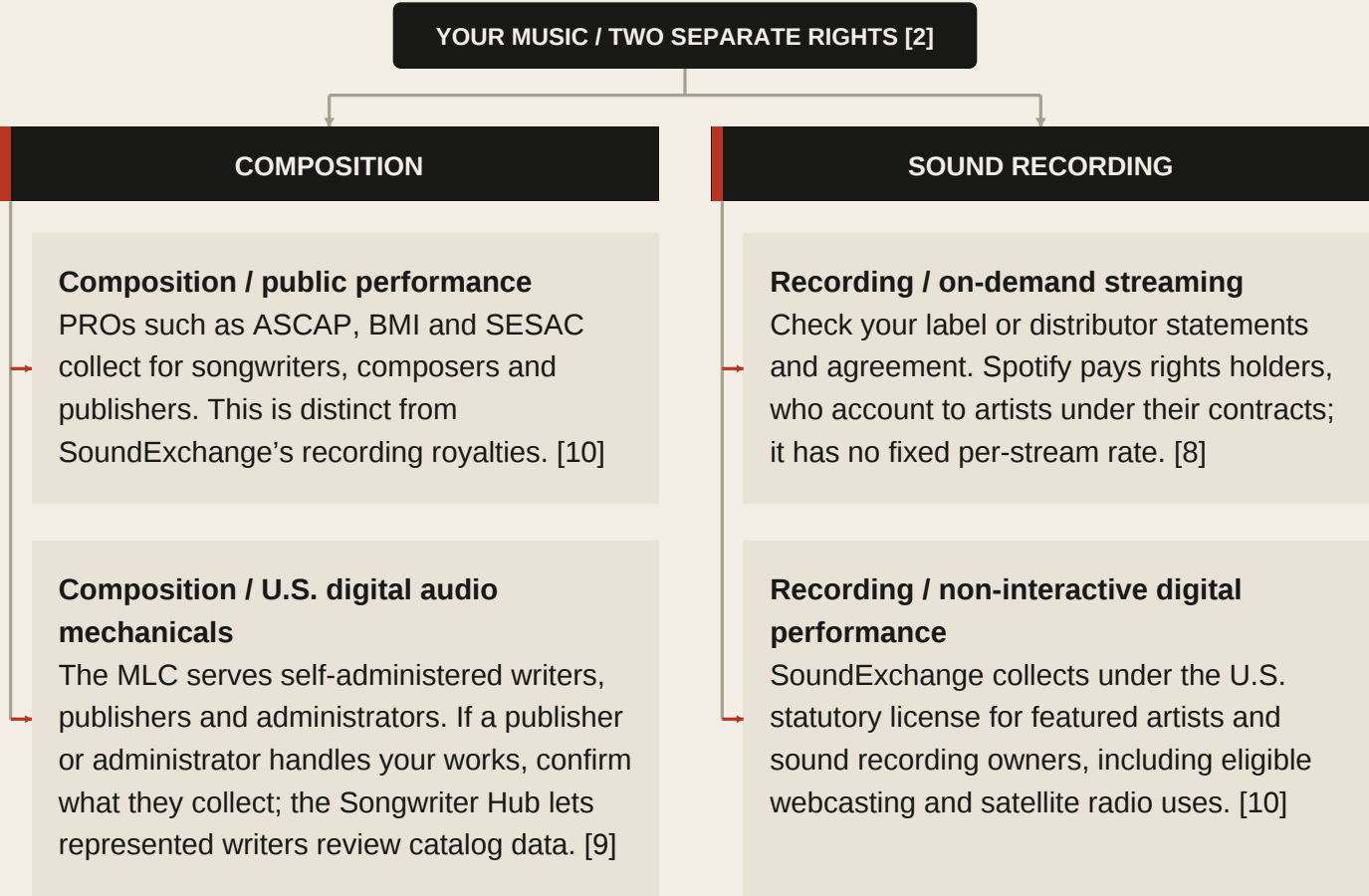
YOUR NEXT TASK + OWNER + DEADLINE

Avoid artificial growth. Spotify says paid services guaranteeing streams or playlist placements violate its terms. Confirmed artificial streaming can lead to removed counts, withheld royalties or other action. [7]

Follow the money

A U.S. starting map. Identify which rights you control and who already administers them; one registration does not cover every royalty.

Four routes to understand



Track results without guessing

Our recommendation: choose a goal and review date, then log the channel, content, link, spend and result. Compare the same time windows. Reconcile revenue with fees, collaborator shares and costs; sales are not automatically profit.

PRIMARY GOAL + TARGET + REVIEW DATE

ACTUAL SPEND / RESULT / WHAT YOU WILL CHANGE

This is an orientation, not a complete royalty map. Keep composition and recording shares separate, and confirm administration before making overlapping claims.

Go straight to the source

Primary sources checked September 23, 2026. Click a title to read the organization's own guidance. Recheck it before your next release.

[1] Spotify for Artists — Pitching music and videos

Unreleased-song pitching, timing and placement limits.

[2] U.S. Copyright Office — Musicians

Composition and recording rights; protection and registration.

[3] U.S. Copyright Office — Sampling, Interpolations, Beat Stores

Preexisting music, beat agreements and clearance questions.

[4] BeatStars — Available licenses and terms

Producer-specific contracts; read the actual license.

[5] YouTube Help — Content eligible for Content ID

Exclusive-rights requirements and ineligible material.

[6] DJcity — How do I get my music on DJcity?

Current submission route and review policy.

[7] Spotify for Artists — Services that guarantee streams

Artificial streaming and guaranteed-placement services.

[8] Spotify Loud & Clear — Questions answered

Rights-holder payments and streamshare.

[9] The MLC — Membership

Digital audio mechanicals and who administers the works.

[10] SoundExchange — Frequently asked questions

Recording performance royalties and how they differ from PROs.

One move before you close this.

WHAT WILL YOU FINISH NEXT, AND BY WHEN?

Future Rap Icons created the templates, checklists and suggested schedule. They are planning tools, not promises of placement or earnings. Rights guidance is U.S.-focused and educational; contracts and circumstances matter. Get qualified advice for unresolved legal or accounting questions.