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Industry Profile: Seven Seas Music Founder, Brooke Wentz

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Industry Profile: Seven Seas Music Founder, Brooke Wentz

By Elizabeth Shearrow



Brooke is the CEO of [Seven Seas Music](#) and an award-winning music producer and supervisor. For a decade, she has led [The Rights Workshop](#), a leading music licensing and supervision firm with film credits including "Bully," "Melancholia," "Don't Stop Believin': Everyman's Journey," and "Bill Cunningham: New York." In 2014, Brooke married her singular knowledge and passion for world music with cutting-edge technology to found Seven Seas Music, a web-based platform where media professionals can listen to, build lists and license – with a single click – curated sounds from an astounding array of emerging and established artists in more than

150 regions. Seven Seas employs its unique library of curated international music in many high-profile television and film productions, including "Parts Unknown," "Criminal Minds," "VICE," "Legions," "Snowfall," "Homeland" "SEAL Team," and "Altered Carbon." She is the author of two books on music licensing, "Hey, That's My Music!: Music Supervision, Licensing, and Content Acquisition," and "Music Rights Unveiled: A Filmmaker's Guide to Music Rights and Licensing."

What was the inspiration that led you to start Seven Seas Music?

I have a business called The Rights Workshop, and we provide music licensing for other clients in film or television. Many times, when they wanted to use international music, it would take months for songs to get cleared for use. Because I had previous experience in licensing, via the twenty-five international recordings I produced, I had a lot of contacts in other countries. We thought that by making a company where overseas artists could sell their songs to film or television media producers here in the U.S., artists could make money from their music being used in shows. The music would be much more

authentic, and it would be a win-win for both the media producers and the artists. It provided an opportunity for artists to be marketed in a way they haven't before.

Would you say Seven Seas Music is more for your international clients whereas The Rights Workshop is for more homegrown artists?

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— ” —

No, The Rights Workshop is a service where people come to us asking for a specific artist's song and we then go to the copyright holders and negotiate the use on behalf of who is calling us. With Seven Seas, we have already talked to the content makers, the musicians, the labels, and the producers, and have asked permission to exploit the songs for them. People come to us saying they need music from Siam, now known as Thailand, asking to use traditional Siamese music. We will go into our catalog and see what we have that fits best, what the producer is asking for. That is the difference; one is a catalog, and the other is a service.

What challenges did you face when you started Seven Seas Music?

One of our challenges was technology and creating a search engine platform which cost us a lot of money. Service-driven businesses are not so costly because people are the ones calling you for your services, but when you have a search-driven site where people go to actively search through music and get the data they need, that takes a lot of backend engineering.

What does an average work week look like for you?

Well, I exercise in the morning then go directly to my emails and then meetings and Zoom calls pretty much throughout the day. I like to finish my day around 4PM to give myself time to do personal things before I go back online and do more work. A lot of the

time I have calls with artists from other countries. I've been working with one producer in Jamaica recently, and also a Lebanese artist in which I would get up at 5:00am in the morning due to the time difference to call them. So, we have certain situations where we have to essentially "put out fires," that pertain to dealing with other countries and time zones. I spend my weekends doing other projects outside of work, but we're constantly looking for investors or clients. We're still growing the business for Seven Seas, so it's a matter of keeping that ball rolling.

How do artists around the world get in contact with you to offer their music for licensing?

There's a contact option on our website, sevenseasmusic.com, for musicians to get in touch with us. They can reach out, and send some .mp3 files, or a link for us to hear their music. We are very open to listening to music, as long as we can access it.

When a media creator comes to you, how would they use Seven Seas Music?

We have two Creative Directors—one in Los Angeles and the other in Chicago so they would usually reach out to them since they have relationships with the media producers and music supervisors. They will usually say they are reaching out for music for a specific scene, and one of our creative directors will provide them with a song in a Hightail link. [N.B. Hightail is a secure file-sharing app.]

Does language and culture ever play a role in the work you do and is it ever a challenge?

Yes, when a song gets placed, especially when a song is heard on television as they do on a CBS show called *SEAL Team*. When a song gets placed on a show like that, the network will generally ask for lyrics. We have to provide the lyrics both in the original language and the English translation. We do have to deal with language all the time and we have our Contributor Agreement available in six languages.

**Has working in the music industry changed the way you listen to music?
Do you tend to listen to more undiscovered artists from around the world
rather than what's on the radio?**

I listen to music in many different ways from different sources. But yes, when I do listen, I tend to listen from a placement standpoint meaning, "Would this sound good in a movie or a TV show? Would it sound good in an advertisement?" When I'm just listening to music casually, I'm not doing that, I'm just listening as it is. If someone is sending me music, I usually am listening to see if it is placeable.

For example, if someone is sending me a pop song with tremendously personal lyrics, that is not going to fly with the type of work we do. Producers want music that is broader and a bit more fast-paced, generally. Do not get me wrong though because there are ballads in TV shows, but they need to fit the scene being created. Especially during COVID-19, people are looking for more positive songs in light of the current situation. How many times can a free-jazz song be used right now? Rarely! No one is going to pay thousands of dollars for that.

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————— ” —

**Finally, what advice would you give to students
about to get started in the real-world music
industry?**

Network! Take whatever job you can possibly get your foot in the door. It may not be the job you want, but what is great about taking a job you may not want is the way you can learn what you DO NOT want to do which can give you a better sense of what

you DO want. From there, you will eventually start to look for jobs in the areas that do suit you more and you will enjoy.