

Angela's Artist Advice

Angela Marie Eidenmiller is the ISSA Associate Director of Artist Relations. Over the past few years many of our Award Winning Artists have benefited from Angela's sage advice.

Aria's First Release - A Manager / Artist Conversation

Let's set the scene: A Musician (Aria) is excited about a new single release, and he Manager (Miles) is being the necessary, detail-oriented team member.

Aria (Musician): The final mix for the album is insane. We're launching in 3 weeks, right?

Miles (Manager): Love that energy, and yes, three weeks out. Now, let's talk the not-so-sexy stuff: Copyright Registration. Did you file the e-copyright yet?

Aria:: Do I need to? Isn't it like, automatically mine the second I exported the WAV file?

Miles: You know the law, but that's like bringing a knife to a gunfight. Automatic protection is just the bare minimum.

Aria: A knife fight? Seriously?

Miles: Seriously! If some massive TikTok star copies your main riff and you have to sue, the court doesn't care about your WAV file timestamp. They want the official, registered copyright.

Aria: Ugh. Why is the government always so extra?

Miles: Because that registration is your legal power-up. It makes you eligible for statutory damages and attorney fees in federal court. That's the difference between maybe breaking even on a lawsuit and actually being reimbursed and paid what you're owed. Plus, the public record scares off weaker infringers.

THE INSTANT PROTECTION TRAP

Aria: So I saw that service that gives you an "Instant Global Certificate" for $20. Can't I just use that to save the hassle?

Miles: NO. Please, no. Look, those services are fine for time-stamping, but they are not a substitute for official government registration with the U.S. Copyright Office.

** Conversation Continued On The Next Page **

The Songwriter's Copyright Registration Checklist

Protect your songs like the hits they're destined to be!

- **STEP 1: Know What You're Protecting**
  Musical Composition (lyrics + melody), Sound Recording (the recording), or both. If you wrote and recorded it yourself, register both under one form!

- **STEP 2: Gather Your Info**
  Titles, artist name, authors, year, MP3/WAV files, lyric sheets. Label files clearly — "SongTitle_YourName_2025.mp3".

- **STEP 3: U.S. Registration**

Visit copyright.gov/registration.
Create an eCO account, upload your song, and pay:
$45 (single) or $65 (standard/group).

* Save money with "Group Registration for Unpublished Works."

- **STEP 4: Canadian Songwriters**

Go to CIPO online (~CAD $50).

* SOCAN = royalties; CIPO = copyright protection.

- **STEP 5: European Creators**

Copyright is automatic. For proof, use time stamping or deposit services. Register with local PROs like PRS, SACEM, or GEMA.

- **STEP 6: Keep Records Organized**
  Store certificates, lyric sheets, receipts, backups. Keep a "Copyright Portfolio" per album.

- **STEP 7: Avoid "Instant Protection" Traps**

Only government registration (like the U.S. Copyright Office) holds up in court. Do it yourself — cheaper, official, and empowering.

- **STEP 8: Celebrate!**

You did it! You own your songs — officially.

* Celebrate your creative rights and get back to writing your next hit!

Aria: Why not? They say they offer protection.

Miles: They're selling convenience and marketing hype. The only thing that grants you those crucial legal benefits (the attorney fees and statutory damages) is the official, government-issued stamp. Anything else is a weak foundation.

Aria: So I'd be paying for a certificate that doesn't actually help me win the knife fight... or gunfight.

Miles: Correct. You pay more for less legal standing. When you do it yourself, you pay the official filing fee (around $45-$65) and you learn the forms, which actually gives you better control over your work in the long run.

Aria: Fine, fine. I'll get into the eCO portal this afternoon. Is it one form per song?

Miles: That brings us to the cost-saving pro tip! Since you have three new singles lined up before the album drop...

If you can bundle a collection of songs (especially unpublished works by the same author/claimant) you might qualify for a group registration. That means you pay one lower fee (like $65) to cover multiple tracks—not a separate fee for every single.

Aria: Wow! So, saving money by being organized?

Miles: It's smart business! Just remember the difference: register the Composition (the melody and lyrics), the Sound Recording (the master), or both. For a new release, we should cover both!

Aria: On it! Composition + Sound Recording. Official U.S. Copyright Office. No "instant certificates." Saving money with bundling.

Until the next newsletter, "Go forth, CONNECT authentically, CREATE fearlessly, and confidently CONTRIBUTE your music to the world."

- Your ISSA Sis,

Angela Marie Eidenmiller

Email Angela your feedback, questions and suggestions of subjects you'd like for upcoming articles.

On the following page is a great Copyright Checklist that you can use