

Guest Article From Katherine Lynn Nemeth

Katherine Lynn Nemeth is a songwriter with placements in Film and TV. In this article she offers advice on Sync Licensing.

3 Steps to Get Your Music in Film and TV

Synchronization means matching songs to picture in movies, TV, and Ads. Truly, any song can be used to synchronize with video. Great songs are used in sync! However, there are things that you can do to increase your chances.

1) Consider sync themes when you are writing:

Lyric themes in shows

- Certain themes come up over and over again in sync. Some examples are “New Day”, “Turning Point”, “Hero”, and “I Can Do This”. Watch your favorite show, and after a song has played, pause it and ask yourself some questions. What did that song do for the scene? What was the song about? Can you use Shazam and discover who created it? Another way to find what songs are being used in a certain show is to go to Tunefind and look up your favorite shows.

Lyric themes in Ads.

- Analyze ads just like you analyze shows. One of my friends hid the remote from his wife so she could not skip the commercials. IspotTV and Adtunes are great ways to look up songs in commercials. Let’s Go and Having Fun are themes often used in ads.

2) Avoid Specific Details:

Avoid specifics

- A song about Park Avenue in New York City may be just right for one scene in a movie set in New York. However, a Sync agent is more likely to choose a song that could fit many scenes and media. They are less likely to select songs that have specific names of people and places in the song.

Avoid narrative storytelling

- They are less likely to choose storytelling songs. So many great songs that tell a story, and you can see it unfold in your mind. However, in a show, movie, or ad, what is being conveyed on the screen is the leading role. Your music must take the supporting role. The story in your song is not the focus.

3) Do these instead:

Set a vibe

- Think of one of your favorite movies. The music often sets a tone of suspense, action, or overcoming. It could be stripped back, spooky, or anthemic. *Send an email to issasongwriters.todd@gmail.com with the words "Sync Licensing" to receive a free "Summit Raffle Coupon"* Find a movie you think your song would fit, then turn down the music and play yours instead. Does it help tell the story? When your music is being produced make sure what vibe you are trying to convey

Have your paperwork in order

If you want to get your music placed in a show, writing a great song and building your portfolio is just the first step. You must also be registered with a PRO and understand the paperwork. You need to know where your music fits and look for opportunities. Establish relationships within the industry and with sync agents and music supervisors. Have the appropriate metadata tags on your songs. Close the deals and follow up on royalties. If it is so much work, why try? A great sync placement can be a career-changing event, but even if it is not, it can provide another source of income for an artist.

Quick Sync-Ready Checklist:

- Register your songs with a PRO (ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC)
- Have high-quality instrumental and clean (non-explicit) versions of every track
- Ensure your metadata is accurate—mood, genre, tempo, and keywords
- Know and document all ownership splits for publishing and master recordings

***(Katherine Lynn Nemeth will be presenting a session on Sync Licensing at the ISSA 2026 Summit. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from someone who has successfully placed music in Project Runway, Music City Mistletoe, and more!)** *