

New Music Gathering

Publishing Models for the Independent Composer | January 15, 2015

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 Digital Print
Publishing

Goals of publishing

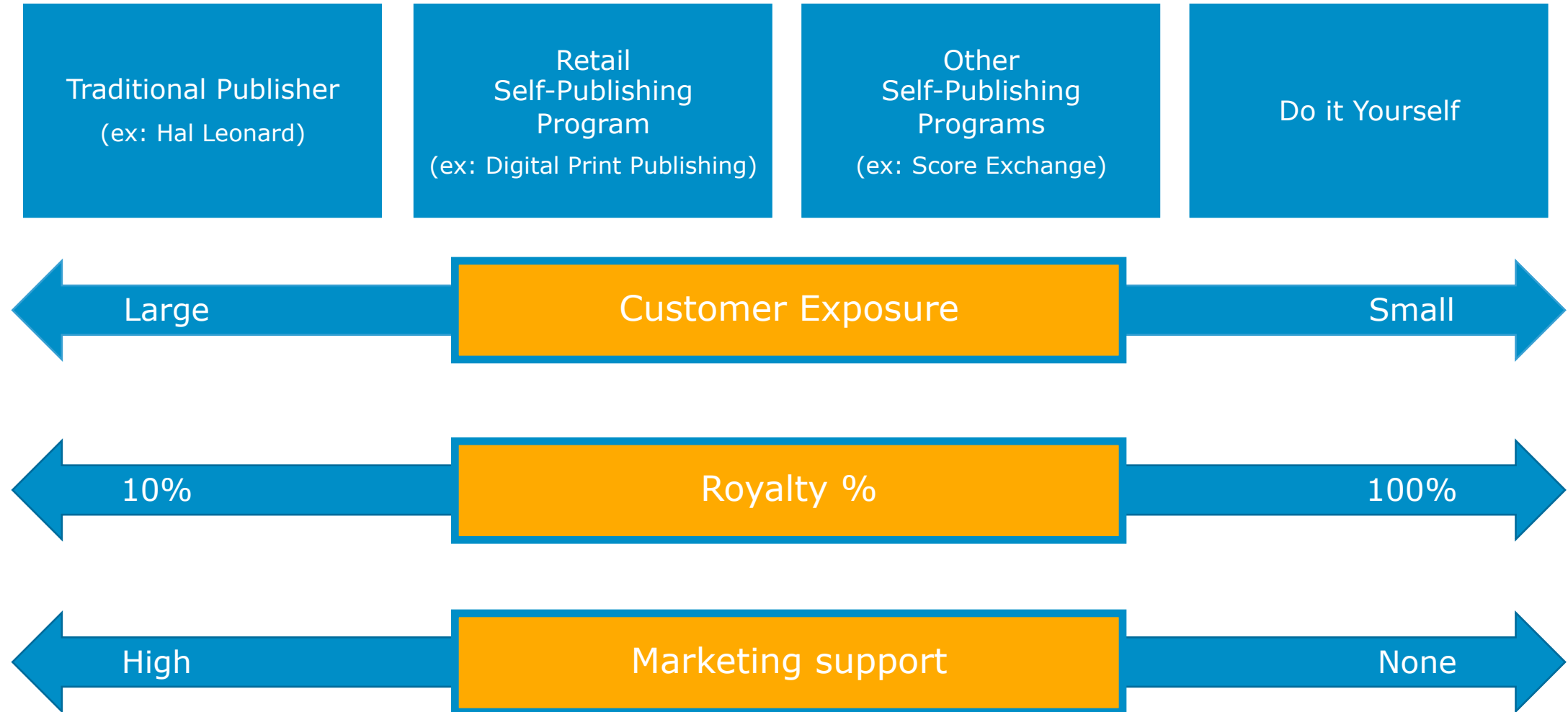


- Make money
- Get exposure as a publisher
- Find someone to play my music

The good news!

As a composer, there are more cost effective options than ever for making your music available.

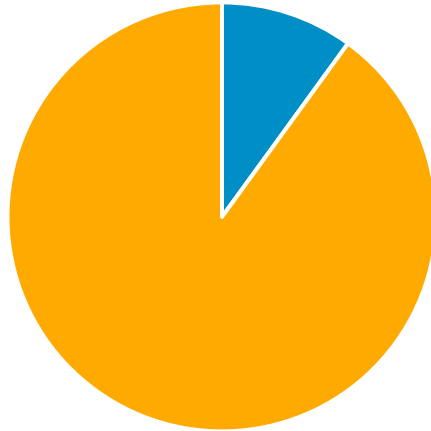
Ways to publish



The best channel for you depends on the size of your market and how you best reach it.

Traditional Publishing

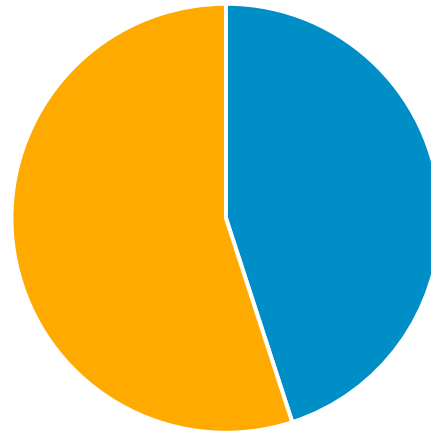
Sales



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Digital Print Publishing

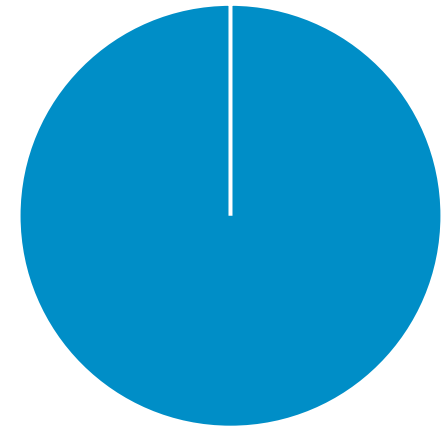
Sales



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Self Publishing

Sales



■ Composer

Factors to consider:

- How broad is your target market? Big markets favor publishers.
- How connected are you to your target market? Not well connected favors publishers.

Considerations for what will be the best channel for you.

- **Where are your potential customers?**
 - Don't expect customers that aren't friends and family to visit your composer website. You want your product available where potential customers shop.
- **Going beyond your existing networks is key if you want to get more exposure as a composer.**
- **How "mainstream" is your product.**
 - The more potential buyers that are out there, the more benefit you will get from broad distribution networks and traditional publishers.
- **How strong is your network.**
 - If you know every potential buyer for your product, you may as well do it all yourself. That is not usually the case.
 - For very specialized pieces, you may have a stronger relationship to potential buyers than some publisher.

More considerations

- **Ownership of copyright**

- With a traditional publisher, you typically relinquish control of your copyright.
 - Traditional publishing is a “all or nothing” decision.
- With other publishing models, you retain control of your copyright.
 - You have more ability to experiment with sales channels if you retain your copyright.

- **Your time**

- Your time is likely your biggest limitation.
- Make sure you spend your time on your highest payback activities.

- **Your costs**

- Highest cost when you do it yourself, especially if you offered printed product.

- **Print versus digital**

- Overall, it is more expensive to publish a physical copy of sheet music rather than a digital piece of sheet music. If you self publish, you will bear that cost.
- Some customers prefer the quality of professionally published piece.
- Digital is much lower distribution cost and gives you access to a world-wide market.

Pricing



- If you are working with a traditional publisher, they will probably set the price.
- If you are self-publishing, you have the opportunity to set the price.
 - How much do similar titles go for? Look at instrumentation, title length and ability level.
 - How competitive is the market for your composition? You will need to price another piano/vocal arrangement for Jingle Bells more aggressively than an original composition for clarinet quartet.
 - Don't under price! Most buyers will buy your piece because they want to play it, not because it is \$1 less than another piece that might play. Only in the most competitive situations will you make more through volume by lowering price.

Marketing your product


- **Use your network**
 - Get reviews from your network on the channels of distribution – reviews help sell product!
- **Make your title findable on Google**
 - Your product should exist somewhere on a Google indexed website.
 - Product data – comprehensive product information – instrumentation, genre, style, length of composition.
 - Product description – describe the music with keywords that your target customer is likely to look for – what are similar composers, what are appropriate events for it to be played out, is it tied to a season of the year? Why will someone want to play it?
- **Allow people to sample**
 - Sample pages – very, very important. Unlikely to sell a new piece if there are no sample pages.
 - Sound clips – very important – titles with sound clips far more likely to sell than those without.



Regardless of how you publish your piece, you need to market your product.

Bad product marketing

- **From customer point of view:**
can my group play this? Is it a good arrangement? Will I like this piece? How long is it – will it fit in my service? No one will buy this piece unless they know before looking that they want this exact title.



Then David Mourned

Anthem

By Thomas Tomkins

Instrument: Choir sheet music
Organ Accompaniment sheet music

Ensemble: 4-Part
Mixed Choir
SATB

Format: Score

Usually leaves our warehouse:
Within 3 to 4 weeks

Price: \$4.95

Quantity

Save 8% when you buy 2 or more copies of this item.

[Add to Cart](#)

[Save to Music List](#)

Be the first! [Write a Review](#)

Share: [Mail](#) [Like](#) {0} [g+](#) {0} [Tweet](#) {0}

Detailed Description ↓

Then David Mourned (Anthem). Composed by Thomas Tomkins (1572-1656). For SATB choir and organ. This edition: ED 10611; Saddle-stitch. Choral Music. Tudor Church Music. Score. 24 pages. Published by Schott Music (SD.49014098).
ISBN 9790220103360.

Good product marketing

- **From customer point of view**
The difficulty level is clear. The customer can view 5 sample pages, and listen to it, to see if they like the arrangement and song. There are references to composers and styles that may appeal to specific users.
- Sold with no promotion to a music library.



Piano Sonata (2002)
By Charles Moehnke

Instrument: Piano Solo sheet music
Format: Singles
Level: Advanced

Available Instantly
Price: \$3.99
Quantity
Save 8% when you buy 2 or more copies of this item.
Add to Cart
[Save to Music List](#)

Click to Enlarge

Be the first! [Write a Review](#)

Share: [Mail](#) [Like](#) 0 [+1](#) 0 [Tweet](#) 0

Detailed Description ↓

Piano Sonata (2002) composed by Charles Moehnke. For Piano, Piano Solo. 21st Century. Advanced. Sheet Music Single. Standard Notation. Moehnke Music Publishing #MM.0001. Published by Moehnke Music Publishing (S0.1003).

With Standard Notation. 21st Century.

Composer notes: "My first sonata for piano, best be described as neo-impressionist, was inspired by two of my favorite piano composers, Ravel and Debussy. The first movement, Prelude, is actually in a loose sonata form, with a cascading development section climaxing in an augmented 7th chord that defines the work as a whole. The second movement, Song and Dance, consists of a lively jig bookended by slow reflection and transitioning straight into Movement 3, a toccata-like ride full of forward momentum that threatens to derail with occasional atonal interruptions. The final movement returns to the style of the first, this time emphasizing the Lydian mode, giving a sense of hesitance, as though the piece itself is reluctant to end."

Summary

A blue-tinted photograph of a hand holding a pen, writing musical notation on a sheet of music. The background is a solid light blue color.

- Today is a great time to publish sheet music – there have never been so many options.
- Your best publishing option may vary by piece.
- You will have most success by being thoughtful on what channel you use to publish your piece.
- Making your piece available is only the first step. You still need to price and market your music.