



'Business Basics For Musicians'

By Bobby Borg

Bobby Borg, author of several music handbooks and numerous articles, is very enthusiastic about his books when I talk with him and he loves sharing his experience with others. His latest publication with Hal Leonard books is *Business Basics for Musicians*.

Far too frequently, especially in Nashville, talented singers and musicians come to town with a dream of making it but have no concept of the business side. Country music is filled with stories of singer-

songwriters that have lost the rights to their own music due to lack of knowledge and being too trusting with unscrupulous music managers.

Borg has distilled his five primary topics in the book down to: Career Execution, Business Relationships, Pro Teams, Deals & Dollars and Future Predictions. In Bobby's own words "Most musicians spend years developing their musical talent only to learn about the music business the hard way."

Although this could easily

be applied in a classroom setting, and Borg does teach at Musicians Institute and UCLA extensions, the core information is aimed at working musicians who are proficient at songwriting and performing but not on the money side of music. In chapter one Bobby lays out 15 simple and digestible tips that can be applied and he also enlists Michael Levine, owner of Levine Communications PR office in Los Angeles, California, to discuss topics related to the music biz.

What impressed me about the book was the attention to percentages that artists must share with publishing companies and other music business partners and the formulas that can be applied. He also addresses the "poor man's copyright" which is essentially a music myth where it stated you mail an original song that you wrote to yourself and then don't open the envelope. Per the Copyright Office "The mere act of placing a copy in the mail addressed to oneself does not secure statutory copyright protection for the work."

Music copyright laws will vary per the country that you live in, but as detailed in *'Business Basics for Musicians'*, never trust the cheap and easy methods that you hear, follow the best legal recourse to protect yourself and your songs! Many of the artists I interview discuss the building of their team. These points are

covered in-depth in Borg's book, even suggesting when to hire a business manager and qualities to look for.

One of the artists I know here in Nashville used an unscrupulous Business Manager that took more than his share of the money, mismanaged what was the artist's and basically left him in financial ruin while his career was on the upswing in country music. Some of us may never need a management and PR team, but even if we handle things ourselves we still need to know the legal ins and outs so that we don't give up our rights or lose income from our music!

Several chapters are dedicated to making and selling records and the many options that are available today, especially between Independent labels and Major labels. In this digital age we live in there are many avenues for music distribution but the challenge is finding the lucrative ones and how best to reach your audience. I had this conversation with a popular country artist and we both agreed that just because you create great music doesn't mean your fans will find it, unless you market it to them (and that includes merchandise! Borg covers this in his book as well).

Business Basics for Musicians doesn't cover the fun and exciting side of the music dream, but it could keep it from becoming a nightmare

Eric Dahl •

www.bobbybyborg.com