



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is SESAC?

A: SESAC was founded in 1930 as the **S**ociety of **E**uropean **S**tage **A**uthors and **C**omposers. Since that time **SESAC** has significantly expanded the number of songwriters and publishers represented and its repertory now includes all music genres. As a reflection of this change, S.E.S.A.C. became **SESAC**, Inc.

Q: What service does SESAC provide?

A: SESAC acts as clearinghouse between the creators and owners of copyrighted music and those who wish to play this music in their facilities. **SESAC** offers a blanket license agreement that is recognized as the most convenient and cost effective method to obtain the required advanced authorization to perform (play) all of the copyrighted music in the vast **SESAC** repertory.

Q: What types of music performances are authorized under a SESAC license agreement?

A: Live music by bands, orchestras, choirs as well as recorded music such as CDs, tapes and karaoke.

Q: Why should I have a SESAC Performance License?

A: If you are using someone's property (in this case, a song) there is an ethical and legal obligation to obtain the owner's permission. Under the **U.S. Copyright Act**, anyone who plays copyrighted music in a public facility is required to obtain permission in advance from the copyright owner or the copyright owner's representative.

Q: If I have licenses with ASCAP and/or BMI, why do I need a license with SESAC?

A: SESAC, ASCAP, and BMI are three separate and distinct Performing Rights Organizations (PRO). Each organization represents **different** songwriters, composers, publishers and copyright holders, and **each** organization licenses **only** the copyrighted works of its own respective affiliated copyright holders. Licenses with ASCAP and BMI do **NOT** grant you authorization for the right to use the copyrighted music of **SESAC** represented songwriters, composers, publishers or copyright holders.

Since a license with ASCAP and/or BMI does not grant authorization to play songs in the **SESAC** repertory, most businesses obtain licenses with **SESAC**, ASCAP and BMI to obtain proper copyright clearance for virtually all of the copyrighted music in the world.

Q: What kinds of music does SESAC represent?

A: All kinds! SESAC has grown over the decades and currently represents a significant amount of music written and performed in the United States in every musical genre. **SESAC** has been serving music users throughout the U.S. and abroad for over 70 years with a diversified repertory including Gospel, Contemporary Christian, Folk, Big Band, Jazz, New Age, Easy Listening, Adult Contemporary, Urban, R&B, Top 40, Pop, Hip-Hop, Rock, Rap, Blues, Country, Bluegrass, Latin/Hispanic, Tejano, Salsa, Caribbean, Polka, Choral, Classical, Educational, and Children's Music, as well as Radio, Cable, TV and Internet Jingles.

SESAC represented songs have been awarded **Dove, Grammy, Clio, MTV, VH-1** and **CMA** awards, as well as scores of Gold and Platinum records. Artists and performers from all genres of music have performed **SESAC** represented works.

Q: What is a blanket license?

A: A **SESAC** license authorizes you to perform **all** of the songs in the vast **SESAC** repertory as often as you like, without having to worry about trying to obtain advance permission for each individual song performed. This is called a **blanket license**, as a result of its extensive coverage.

A blanket license is efficient, economical, and convenient. It would be virtually impossible for you to know in advance every song that will be used in your facility. Even if you were able to determine each song in advance, it would be extremely challenging and expensive for you to contact each copyright holder in advance to inform them of each song you plan to play in order to obtain the permission required by federal law. To combat these difficulties, **SESAC** provides a blanket license allowing you to utilize any or all of the copyrighted musical compositions in the **SESAC** repertory for a modest fee.

Q: Do I have any other option to obtain the required authorization to perform copyrighted music?

A: Yes, while **SESAC** offers the convenience and low cost of a blanket license authorizing performance of all of the songs in the **SESAC** repertory, you have the option of individually licensing each song you wish to play. In order to comply with copyright law without a blanket license, you must negotiate a separate license agreement directly with the copyright owner of each song you wish to play in advance of the performance.

Q: Do I have to pay for music licenses when I have already paid for the DJ or band or purchased the records, discs or tapes to be played at my event?

A: Federal court cases interpreting the **Copyright Act** clearly state that the owner or operator of the facility where the music is being played is ultimately responsible for obtaining the required authorization. The compensation you provide to a performer such as a DJ or band does not relieve you of this obligation.

When you purchase a record, tape, compact disc, DVD or similar product you are granted the authorization for a non-public performance, such as in your home or car. There is no public performance right attached to the sale of these products and if you decide to play this music in your facility you are required to obtain authorization from the copyright owner or their representative.

Q: What IFEA members qualify for a 15% SESAC discount?

A: Members that have a festival(s) in the U.S. that are not otherwise eligible for another type of SESAC Performance License. For example, Municipalities and Amusement Parks do not generally qualify, because SESAC has more specific licenses that are better suited for these markets. If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact SESAC at 35 Music Square East, Nashville, TN, 37203 or 615-320-0055.