

OPUS.

THE OPUS LETTER · FIELD GUIDE No. 1

The Catalog Owner's Checklist

Five moves that stop a catalog from quietly leaking value.

By Patrick George Wilson

CEO & CFO OF OPUS · CO-FOUNDER & DRUMMER OF WEEZER
FORMER CFO, WEEZER TOURING, INC.

*"The song is not the finish line. The song is the starting line.
What happens to the rights, the masters, the publishing, and the brand
over the next twenty years is the actual return."*

PATRICK GEORGE WILSON, WRITING IN HYPEBOT

THE FIVE MOVES

None of this requires selling out.

Structure does not kill the art. Structure is what finances and protects the art. Work through these five moves in order. Check each box, or write down why it does not apply. When every box is checked, your catalog stops leaking and starts compounding.

01 Know what you own.

If you cannot list your assets, you cannot protect them. Most leaks start here: value nobody wrote down is value nobody defends.

- Inventory every master recording, and note where each file physically lives
- List every song split, in percentages, for every co-writer and producer
- List your publishing: who administers it, and under what deal
- Inventory trademarks, band names, artwork, and social handles
- Pull masters off old hard drives and inboxes into one archived location

02 Register and collect.

Over a billion dollars in global publishing royalties go uncollected every year. This is the single highest-return hour you will spend this year.

- Register every work with your PRO (ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC)
- Register with The MLC and claim any unmatched mechanical royalties
- Register with SoundExchange for digital performance royalties
- Confirm your distributor and publishing admin are collecting everywhere
- Search unclaimed-royalty databases for your catalog, then set a yearly reminder

03 Paper the splits while everyone still likes each other.

The cheapest time to settle who owns what is before there is anything worth fighting over. Splits agreed over text and never papered are how friendships and royalties both end.

- Complete a written split sheet for every song, signed by every contributor
- Paper any verbal or text-message agreements from past releases now
- Store signed splits with your master inventory, not in a thread
- Make split sheets part of every session before the song is finished

04 Separate the artist decision from the owner decision.

As an artist you might release something free or license it for exposure. As the owner, you should at least know what you are giving up. Make the call on purpose, not by default.

- Before any free release or exposure deal, write down what rights move
- Price every sync and license against the catalog, not against the bill due
- Ask of every deal: what does this do to the asset in twenty years?
- Never rent the brand cheap because the moment feels urgent

05 Think in decades.

The question is never just what this song earns this year. It is what the rights, handled with care, are worth in 2046. A catalog either compounds or erodes, depending on whether anyone is paying attention.

- Review the full catalog once a year: registrations, splits, collections
- Track catalog income by source so erosion shows up early
- Put the catalog in your estate plan; decide who stewards it after you
- Before selling anything, get an independent view of long-term value

OPUS.

The work is the starting line.

*Treat it like the asset it is, and it will still be working for you
when you have long since moved on to the next thing.*

KEEP GOING

You are reading Field Guide No. 1 of The OPUS Letter,
a memo on treating catalogs, masters, publishing, and brand
as long-term assets rather than one-off paydays.

Questions about your own catalog?
patrick@opuswilson.com · opuswilson.com

ABOUT OPUS

OPUS helps artists, founders, and family offices treat creative work, catalogs, and brands as long-term assets, not one-off paydays. Founded in 2024 and based in Carlsbad, California, OPUS is led by Patrick George Wilson, CEO and CFO, co-founder and drummer of Weezer and former CFO of Weezer Touring, Inc.