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Africori is an online music licensing platform, a new kind of agent for independent musicians, composers and music producers, digitally connecting them with buyers in the mainstream media. It enables independent content owners to reach hundreds of outlets around the world with a comprehensive and unique technology platform that provides distribution and marketing services with efficiency, transparency and control.

Africori has extensive and varied knowledge of the music industry in its many incarnations, both with the independents and the majors, along with experience in brand building, marketing, advertising, film and the digital and mobile worlds. The company is based in Africa and has worked with clients in over 100 countries.

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hit television series as: *The Apprentice* (NBC), *The Biggest Loser* (NBC), *Masterchef* (FOX), *Who Do You Think You Are* (NBC), *Shark Tank* (ABC), *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, *Extreme Makeover: Weightless Edition* (ABC) and many more.

From unforgettable themes to action packed underscore, their music has touched lives and crossed cultural boundaries reaching the ears of millions of people each day throughout the world.



JEFF VAN DRIEL, CEO OF MVIBE

## Pushing the boundaries of sync through cover licensing



by David Abramovic

In a world of seemingly ever growing demand for media content, companies are coming up with new ways to make life easier for people along the supply chain of media production. Areas such as distribution, editing, and communication have seen new tools be created that have radically simplified formerly inefficient processes.

Yet, in the area of licensing music for sync, little has changed so far. Perhaps understandably so, considering the barrier to simplicity and automation is strongly maintained by the unique nature of every individual song's publishing and master rights negotiations. But where others see complicated obstacles as no-go-zones, some companies see even greater opportunity for change, and mVibe is one of those companies.

With a catalog of over 500,000 songs, mVibe's website brings users a sync music platform for

## “We’re a very hands on organization.”

cover songs that offers both sophistication, and intuitive design. When searching for the perfect cover version, mVibe allows users to sort with categories such as “original artist”, “moods”, “genres”, “performed by”, and “made famous by”, to make navigating through their vast catalog hassle-free. In addition to their catalogue, mVibe also does custom recordings of songs, if by any

chance the perfect cover version isn't on their platform.

Music supervisors and other creatives looking for quality cover songs have arguably never had an easier experience, and since mVibe is built bottom-up with them in mind, this shouldn't

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come as a surprise. As music supervisors know, the work isn't finished by the time you find the right song, and luckily for them, mVibe handles the next steps by facilitating deals on both the master and publishing sides of things. Thereby mVibe takes on a range of responsibilities that a mere software company, or a synchronization company wouldn't be able to take on.

“We’re a very hands on organization.” says Jeff Van Driel, CEO of mVibe. Van Driel joined the company after an impressive run as CEO & President at leading North American classical music label Naxos of America. At Naxos, he oversaw six subsidiaries that all managed growth, and when joining mVibe, he saw an even greater chance to build something valuable. For this branch of the music industry however, he quickly realized the necessity of not only technological competence, but human competence as well. “We’re not a micro sync site and we’re not a production music library, we’re really a combination of music technology and expertise to find the right song and make sure that all the documentation is done right and that the rights are properly cleared.” he says.

The goal subsequently, is not to gather every cover they can find. If a cover version doesn't add something to the catalogue that was missing, it's not of interest. With their focus being on high-quality production content, high-quality covers are key. In this way mVibe not only works towards breaking the misconception that licensing covers have to come at the cost of

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### ALIBI MUSIC LP

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ALIBI's robust, versatile, and expertly curated catalog features music and FX produced, structured, and crafted for storytelling and is available to license for advertising, trailers, promos,

lower quality recordings, they also make users conscious of what benefits the covers actually have over the original.

One of them being the ability to use tracks with high song recognition and mold it to fit your specific content. Where an original has one mood, mVibe can provide you with the same composition, only with seemingly endless musical directions. "A good cover song can be a different style, a reinterpretation, and therefore potentially fit the picture much better" says Van Driel.

Working with Naxos, Van Driel helped expand their digital music library from 200,000 songs to over 2,000,000 songs, which proved to be very useful when joining mVibe, whose catalog he predicts will reach 1,000,000 songs by early next year. The challenges associated with aggregating large amounts of content are well known to him, and accordingly, he is very keen to collect data the right way, especially seeing that cover songs, in comparison to originals, are in need of further information. "There are certain ways music is listed which is typically around artist and

**"When you're putting out a major motion picture, you want to make sure you're not going to get sued".**

song title." he says. "So in the case of covers, it's about getting additional data and making sure it gets standardized and accurate."

With the help of their organized database, they can also guarantee the ever important need of trust. Someone who licenses a cover song through mVibe can be sure not to run into trouble with legal issues, something Van Driel not only attributes to their thoroughness, but to his previous experiences of looking at other platforms from the Naxos days. "There were numerous platforms that were selling licenses that were not legitimate," he says. "When you're putting out a major motion picture, you want to make sure you're not going to get sued".

Another one of mVibe's means of bringing value for customers is in the way which they

allow record labels' full catalogue to be utilized. "There's a lot of record labels that have their own sync people, but they're usually pitching the cool music from the latest artists they're working with." says Van Driel. "What happens then is that a record label that has a large catalogue has a significant part of it that's being overlooked. We really provide opportunities for record labels to make a lot more money of their back catalogue when it comes to covers."

**"..We really provide opportunities for record labels to make a lot more money of their back catalogue when it comes to covers."**

In the future, Van Driel envisions mVibe to have helped solve several inefficiencies of the sync business through technology. One being the ability for music supervisors to much easier find the right song for their project, through a high quality marketplace equipped with a cutting edge search engine. This marketplace, with the help of technology, he hopes will also be able to bridge the different agents involved in the synchronization chain, and overall make the licensing process much less complicated. "mVibe can help pave that way by specifically targeting covers first," Van Driel says, implying that their technology could well be a marketplace for original versions as well.

And why could it not? As the music supervisors look at the rest of the entertainment business with yearning eyes, any company that manages to put the sync industry in technological parallel with the rest, will gain their attention in a heartbeat. Fortunately, they might not have to wait long, as mVibe continues work with rigid determination to bring the future to the present. ■

**David Abramovic** is on the impossible mission to figure out where culture is headed. Get in touch:  
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