

# sandbox

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MUSIC MARKETING FOR THE DIGITAL ERA

music:)ally

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## LIVE AND DIRECT



**A FIFTH OF VIDEOS POSTED TO FACEBOOK ARE NOW LIVE BROADCASTS.  
HOW ARE MUSICIANS MAKING THE MOST OF THE FEATURE?**

# TOOLS SYNCHTANK

**Synchtank began with a heavy focus on assisting professionals working in, you guessed it, synch.**

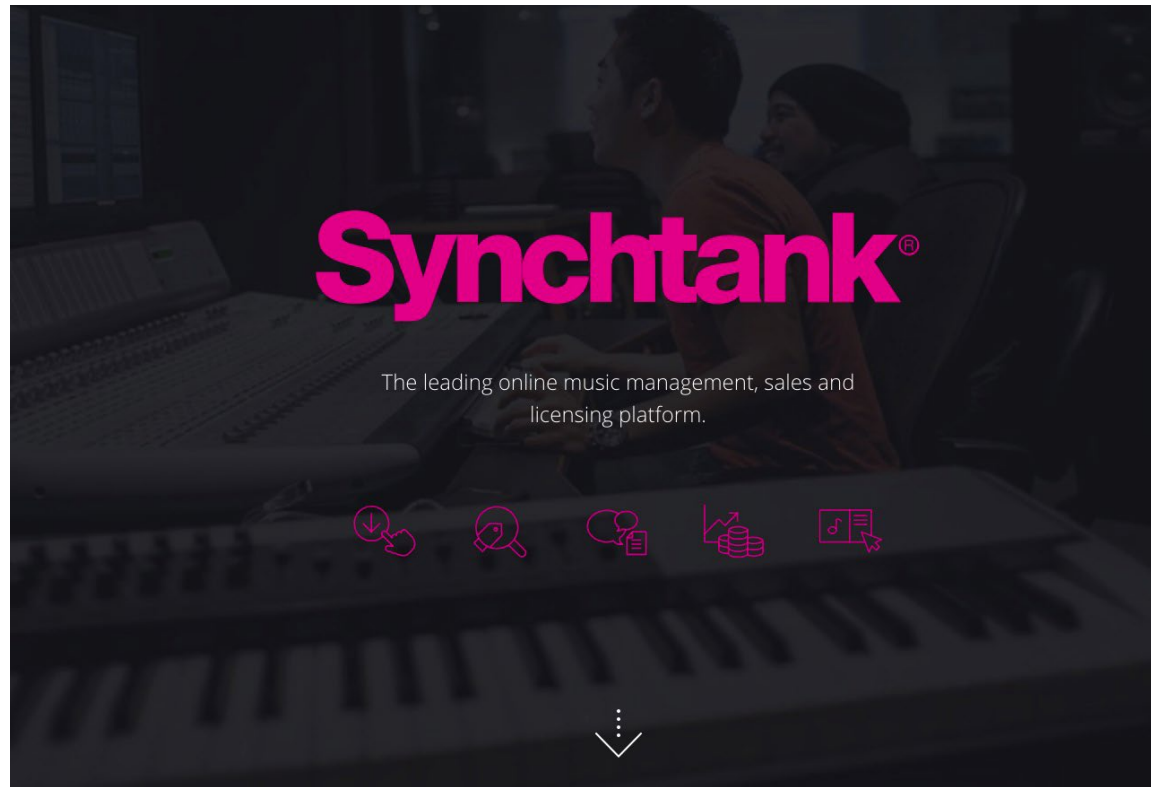
But since its founding in 2008, the company has evolved past the ability to allow users to pitch and search audio assets available for licensing, mock up synchs with them, and license them.

**music:)ally** spoke to founder Joel Jordan, CEO Rory Bernard, and CBO Chris Cass about how Synchtank has evolved over the past few years, and what it's trying to offer the music industry today.

## **sandbox** How did Synchtank get started?

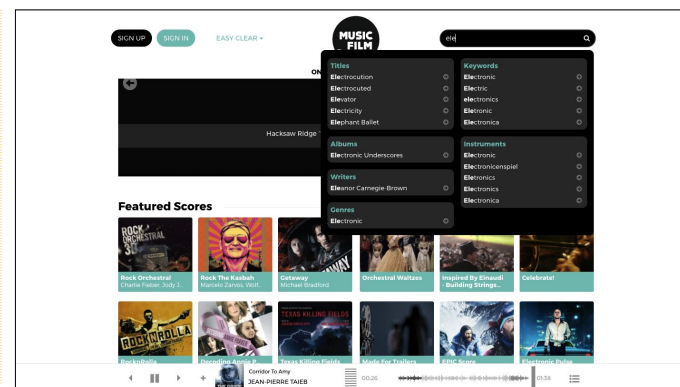
**Joel Jordan:** Synchtank was created out of the frustrations of running an independent label and publishing company for 20 years with little or no staff beyond myself. Initially, it was created as a tool for me to understand my catalogue and rights better than I was able to through my personal iTunes collection of masters and my endless spreadsheet of copyrights. I needed a place to unite all the data in one online location, and to create a space for myself and my clients to interact with my catalogue in a more meaningful way beyond emails, zip files, spreadsheets, and links to file-sharing sites that didn't drive my brand.

Starting on working on a website for my copyrights and recordings as a means to commercialise my catalogue better was the initial step. Luckily the bassist in my punk band in college turned out to be an



amazing full-stack developer, and I over the years had become a pretty proficient designer.

Understanding that, we stayed out of each other's way and built something that was initially pretty basic for managing all the details of and for pitching my catalogue, but looked really slick and showed how serious I was about my business. Suddenly my problem of communicating what I had available was solved, and I began booking more licenses – not because the music got



any better, but because of the presentation.

I took it around to some friends in publishing and at labels that were pretty forward thinking and they all thought it was very progressive and signed up immediately for what would become a software as a service (SaaS) company. That was 2010, and the business officially launched in 2011.

## **sandbox** How have you developed Synchtank over time?

**Jordan:** It's project Falkor, as in the Neverending Story. We've been building for nine years now and it just gets better and better and wider and wider in the use cases, and more applicable to different types of businesses and media. We've been listening to the clients: they are the daily users that are super-smart and have incredible insight into how the system can be shifted or improved to do other things.

For instance, pitching – that's not just something we do for sync right? We pitch for retail, DSPs, DJs both club and radio, blogs and media, and so on and have unique templates for each type of campaign, perhaps we also watermark the tunes for anti piracy and to see exactly where and how many spins we're getting. All of that can be done through Synchtank as well.

Synchtank is also a perfect tool for managing the licensing processes but is also used widely for all other pitching purposes at music companies. We've also stitched in means for on-boarding large catalogues and providing baseline

searchable audible descriptive metadata such as tempo/BPM, key, mode, moods, instruments, similar songs, and so on, alongside any legacy or historical data to make catalogues instantly searchable, no matter how large they may be.

We've incorporated multiple data streams and validation services, are DDEX compliant, hooked into most distributors such as CI and FUGA and have made our software basically a 'command central' for music catalogues. You're also able to quickly build playlists and push them to DSPs like Spotify, Deezer, YouTube, and SoundCloud, with more to come and ideate and distribute releases back to your distributor.

Synchtank has become a tool for managing, marketing and selling way beyond the sync department, so the name is a bit of a misnomer now, but 'Do-Everything-You-Want-To-Do-With-Your-Music-Tank' isn't that snappy. We also have release-management tools, a built-in CRM to manage sales funnel and licenses, integrated contacts and groups, automated instant licensing and blanket licensing controls for B2B and B2C consumers, an online A/V sync spotting tool, mobile/responsive designs, and more, thanks to our amazing clients' support and suggestions.

**Rory Bernard:** Our development of interfaces into YouTube MCN's to allow our clients to develop marketing campaigns and work with creators was probably an instance where we were closer to b2c uses than normal. It was great to see it initially go-live. I think our client had about 20k new licensees/users within the first couple of weeks. We are rapidly developing interfaces with all the major streaming services that are already driving new uses for clients as streaming

continues to become a critical revenue stream.

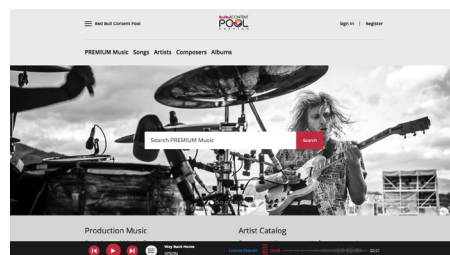
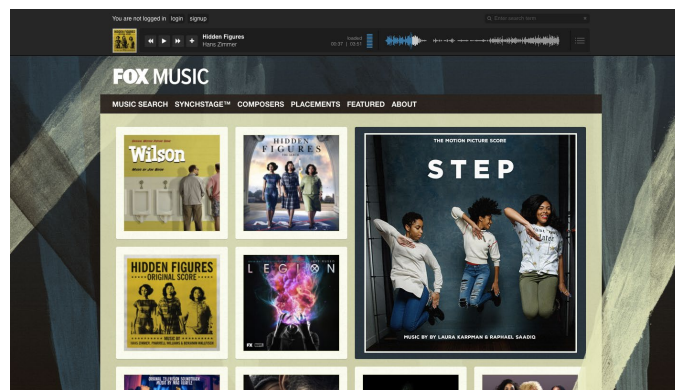
Within the b2b arena we are seeing new work that we could not have even imagined 12 or 18 months ago. We have projects that are integrating through into SAP, financial analysis reporting and white label interface development. It's a continual challenge to ensure that we can provide this and ensure that our platform remains a pure play SaaS offering with all the benefits that gives our clients.

**sandbox** What's your ideal client, and what's your quick pitch to a potential client?

**Chris Cass:** There's no 'ideal' client. We work with everyone from British Telecom, Disney, Naxos, peer music and Sony Pictures and hundreds of companies in-between, so it would be unfair and no doubt unwise of me to single one out.

It's basically the same pitch to everyone. Synchtank is a cloud software platform for IP and Digital Media Asset Management used by the global entertainment industries via a SaaS commercial model. It addresses music and A/V rights management. Synchtank gives you compliance management efficiency and workflow enhancement and our products are aimed at Enterprise and SME.

Most media businesses do not currently use cloud software but a huge % are looking to roll out a cloud strategy and see their business software interoperability as a key strategic goal over the next few years. Synchtank is a software platform that connects to other digital platforms, such as rights databases and digital content distributors, and enables you to manage your copyrights for commercial exploitation and production.



**sandbox** What's next for Synchtank? What new features are coming and how might the business evolve?

**Cass:** In the 90s I was leading one of the first companies to legally license music and other entertainment for online use. This was a funny time, me being a "real" music guy negotiating with self-proclaimed "music" guys at major record labels, folks who'd never been in a gigging tour van (note, not bus), let alone driven one. People forget how excruciating it was, dragging these guys into business models that worked on the Internet, IVR and mobile.

Now that the online surge is unstoppable, it feels time to complete the cycle and make sure the creators are compensated by these new revenues that include everything from music and video streaming, on-demand pay TV and

the head unit in your car. It's why I am especially passionate about Synchtank.

Synchtank's client base, from bedroom labels to multinational music publishers to film studios and broadcasters, should say enough about where we're taking this. Just last week we won Proper Music Distribution and Haawk as customers, and that is quite a contrast of clients, right there.

We have a great pipeline of features and partners under development at the moment which we will be talking about as they mature into commercial roll outs, all of which will add great value to the clients who are subscribing to the platform.

**sandbox** What's the competition and how do they compare?

**Cass:** I don't bother talking about the competition, that's their job. At a high level, there are numerous companies out there with simple systems and low price points aimed at the bedroom-user who compete with us on our own SoundGizmo product, but as far as I can work out these companies don't have enterprise-level product and a path forwards, so good luck to them.

I suppose our competition can sometimes be the internal IT divisions at prospective customers. They often develop in-house systems that get increasingly expensive to run and maintain, and we are finding a trend of moving these out-of-house to companies like Synchtank, who operate as SaaS.

Otherwise, we typically view the ecosystem of third-party system integrators, OTT and broadcast play-out systems, entertainment metadata providers and other technology vendors with rights management/database resources as potential partners to the Synchtank platform, rather than see them as competitors. :)