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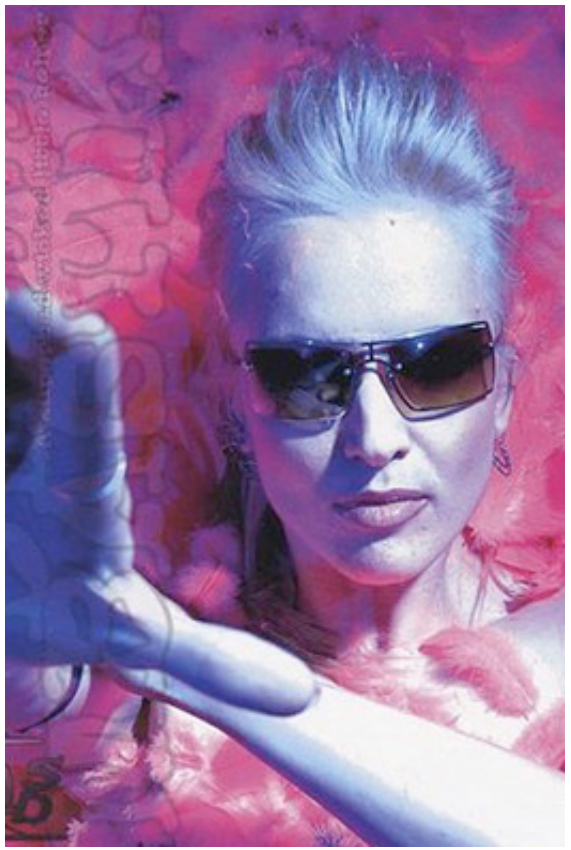
Salme Dahlstrom: Music Licensing Queen



You may not know who Salme Dahlstrom is, but you've probably heard her music. The savvy singer, who knows a thing or two about earning in an era of declining recording sales, licensed every song on her latest album "The Acid Cowboy Audio Trade" for use in films, TV shows and commercials — a rare feat. According to Luke Eddins of Luke Hits, who placed some of Dahlstrom's music, only Moby has succeeded in out-licensing an entire album.

Bank of America, Buick/Pontiac, Miller, Nike, Subaru, Suave, Virgin Mobile and Vodaphone, as well as production companies for 14 TV shows and 13 films, were among those who secured the rights for the album's 10 big beats electronica meets hook-heavy pop songs.

"Licensing has become my business," Dahlstrom told me. Not that providing songs for soundtracks, trailers and commercials was her goal when she began making the album. "No, I wanted to sell a million copies. I wanted a platinum record and I don't know where it went. Where did it go?"

She wrote and recorded the album by herself in her home studio in New York City, playing keyboards, guitar, bass and drums to create her own samples for use in her mixes. She promoted it via MySpace and YouTube. Eddins first found her on www.garageband.com.

Dahlstrom says "The Acid Cowboy Audio Trade" is selling well for an independent album, with licensing providing a nice bump. "That Suave commercial," she said. "It's done more for my sales than any PR campaign or making an expensive video." Suave's used of "C'mon Y'all," she said, resulted in 1,000 downloads of the song.

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