

# Music

**1** Music rights can include a right in the **composition** (music and any lyrics) and a separate right in any recording. This code only deals with the composition, often called the **publishing right**.

**2** When you write original music or lyrics it attracts copyright when it is **written down** or **recorded** (known as being 'fixed'). More than one person can own copyright in the composition, and often do.

**3** A composer or lyricist may assign certain rights to a **music publisher** and to a **collecting society**. The publisher generally administers the right to publish sheet music and make physical and digital recordings (the **mechanical right**). The collecting society administers the performing right which includes use on radio, TV, film, background music in shops and restaurants and by online services.

**4** If you **perform** a piece of music in public, permission is needed from the copyright owner of that music. The performance can be live, or in a recording or broadcast. A licence to do this is usually granted by a collecting society and taken out by the venue or the broadcaster, not by the performer.

**5** If you **record** a piece of music, permission is needed from the copyright owner of that music. The recording will have a copyright separate from that of the music.

**6** Composers and lyricists often reserve the ability to allow certain performances or recordings. This includes rights in dramatico-musical works, such as musical shows, operas, and pantomimes. These so-called **Grand Rights** are licensed individually. Similarly, use in advertisements, TV or films, known as **synchronisation**, is often, but not always, approved individually. Some composers write and record what is called library or production music which is specifically aimed at use for synchronisation.

**7** Copyright in music and lyrics exists for **70 years** after the death of the composer/lyricist. If there are several composers or lyricists the death of the last one to survive starts the calculation.

**See also:** *Copyright Basics, Sound Recordings, Moral Rights and Performers' Rights*

This document is one of a series of introductions to the rules that apply to most copyright works in the UK and does not purport to offer legal advice. Some special cases apply and in case of doubt appropriate advice should be taken.

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