

Musical works

Musical works refers to written musical scores in the form of sheet music, broadsheets or other notation.

A recording of a musical work is protected separately as a [sound recording](#).

Lyrics or words to a song are considered [literary works](#), and they have a separate copyright to the musical score.

A published edition of a musical score is protected by a separate copyright, as are new arrangements, even if the copyright in the underlying musical work has expired.

Using musical works

You can use a musical work for certain purposes such as educational use, research or study or criticism or review. For more information, see [using copyright material](#).

You must properly acknowledge any musical work that you use.

Ownership

Copyright in musical works is generally owned by the creator or author but it can vary depending on a factors such as employment or licensing agreements - see [ownership of copyright](#) for more information.

The composer is the person who writes the arrangement of the music down in a material form. Generally, if a group is involved in the creation of the musical work, it is recommended that an agreement is entered into that determines who owns the copyright in the work.

Rights of copyright owners

Copyright owners of dramatic works hold the right to reproduce, publish, publicly perform, communicate or adapt their works. For more information see [rights of copyright owners](#).

Performers of musical works have [performer's rights](#) in their performance.

Duration of copyright

A	B	C	D	E
Published, performed or made publicly available during the composer's lifetime	Published, performed or made publicly available after the composer's death	Unpublished works	Created anonymously or under a pseudonym	Copyright expired if...
Life of the composer + 70 years.	70 years from the end of the year first published, performed or made publicly available.	As of 1 January 2019, the duration of copyright will be the same for both published and unpublished works.	70 years from the end of the year the work was first published, performed or made publicly available.	Composer died before 1 January 1955 and the work was published during the composer's lifetime.

Notes on duration in music

Arrangements of early music are not necessarily copyright free. If the creator of the *original* arrangement died before 1955, the *original* score will be out of copyright. However, if someone has created a new arrangement, the new arrangement may still be in copyright.

Copyright in musical works *made for*, or *first published by a government*, or in which copyright is owned by a government, lasts for 50 years from the end of the year of first publication.

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