

Copyright Licences for Weddings

If you intend to play music as part of your wedding celebrations, you may need to obtain permission from copyright owners before you can use their music.

Such uses may include playing songs as background music, featuring a live band performing music, making a photo montage or video set to music for playing to your guests during the wedding, as well as many other means.

When would you need to obtain permission for your use of the music?

In general, permission, in the form of licences, should be obtained for the use of any material which is protected by copyright.

If the music that you intend to use is something that you heard playing on the radio or while surfing the Internet, it is likely that it is protected by copyright.

Music that you have purchased, for example the songs from your original CDs or the tracks downloaded from digital music sites like Singtel's AMPED, would also be protected by copyright and would also require permission to be used. In such instances the copyright owner may only have licenced specific rights to the buyer of the music, which may not include the ways that you intend to use the music at your wedding.

When would it not be necessary to obtain permission for your use of the music?

It may not be necessary to obtain permission if you are playing or performing music which is no longer protected by copyright. This would apply to relatively older music, where the term of copyright protection for the works in the music has already expired. Click [here](#) for more details on term of copyright protection.

However, although classical music written by past composers may be regarded as relatively older music, not all recordings of classical music are free for public use. While the melody of the classical music may be a musical work that is no longer protected, if the sound recording of the classical music was produced recently, the sound recording is likely to be under copyright protection. Click [here](#) for more details on musical works and sound recordings.

Other examples of situations when it would not be necessary to obtain permission can include when you are performing a song that you wrote yourself, or when you are performing a song which a friend wrote for you and gave you permission to perform.

If you need to obtain permission, who should apply for the licence?

As shown by the above example on classical music, a song is made up of various kinds of works and subject matter such as song lyrics, background music and the entire sound recording. It is important to keep in mind that these separate works and subject matter would each have their own specific copyright protection, which may each require their own specific licences.

It may be useful for you to check whether the parties involved in your wedding (for example wedding planners, professional videographers, hotels, restaurants, other public venues etc) already have existing licences that would permit your use of the music. The table below may serve as a guide when enquiring with your wedding professional or venue whether they already have the relevant licences.

If your wedding professional or venue does not hold the relevant licences, you may need to obtain them yourself from the specific copyright owners. These copyright owners are often represented by Collective Management Organizations (CMOs). You may wish to check the table below for more information on copyright issues that may need to be addressed for your wedding preparations.

If you intend to do the following during your wedding celebrations...	Actions that involve copyright	Licences Required	Relevant CMOs / Rights Owners (Includes links to relevant IPOS webpage)
...play your photo montage or video montage which incorporates music or lyrics	Copying the musical work	Reproduction of musical works	COMPASS MPS
	Publicly performing the musical work by incorporating it in the video montage	Public performance of musical works	COMPASS
	Publicly performing the lyrics by incorporating it in the video montage	Public performance of lyrics	COMPASS
	Copying the words of the lyrics onto your video montage	Reproduction of lyrics	COMPASS MPS
	Copying the digital sound file from your source to your video montage	Reproduction of sound recordings	RIPS
...play music from original media (e.g. playing music from CDs that you had bought, playing legally obtained music direct off your media player)	Publicly performing the musical work by playing the song to your guests	Public performance of musical works	COMPASS
	Publicly performing the lyrics by playing the song to your guests	Public performance of lyrics	COMPASS
...make a separate CD, or rip songs to a media player, from the CDs or digital files that you had bought, for the purpose of playing as music at the wedding	Copying the songs from the CD/media player to your new CD/new media player	Reproduction of sound recordings	RIPS
	Publicly performing the musical work by playing the song to your guests	Public performance of musical works	COMPASS
	Publicly performing the lyrics by playing the song to your guests	Public performance of lyrics	COMPASS

...feature live performances of music by e.g. bands, singers, etc	Publicly performing the musical work by the band playing it to your guests	Public performance of musical works	<u>COMPASS</u>
	Publicly performing the lyrics by singing the song to your guests	Public performance of lyrics	<u>COMPASS</u>

What could happen if you don't obtain the necessary licences?

Generally, copyright infringement occurs when a person uses a substantial portion of another person's copyrighted work without prior permission. If a copyright owner finds that his work has been infringed, he can consider taking legal action to seek civil remedies against the infringing party.

To do so, the copyright owner (or sometimes the CMO that he assigned his right to) may apply to the courts to start civil proceedings for an injunction to stop the infringing party from committing further infringing actions.

Such proceedings may include a hearing where the courts will take all specific circumstances into account, such as the extent of the infringement which occurred or the harm done to the copyright owner. The courts will then decide whether to award the injunction and what terms it should include. If the injunction is not warranted, or if the copyright owner can be properly compensated by monetary damages, the court may refuse to grant an injunction. Thus, the copyright owner would need to decide if this method is cost effective for him to carry out in relation to the extent of the infringement that has taken place.

The copyright owner may also choose to seek damages in court as compensation for the infringement that has occurred. Similar to the process for taking out an injunction, proceedings will first be held for the courts to take all specific circumstances into account before the amount of damages to be paid can be determined.