

## Hiring music from publishers

### Preface

Hiring music from publishers is vital for amateur music groups. We have worked with various publishers and the Music Publishers Association (MPA) on this guidance to ensure our groups can access the music they want and receive the best possible service in doing so.

Whether you need choral scores or a set of orchestral parts, the procedures outlined below will help to ensure that you receive what you want, when you want it and to avoid misunderstandings, delays and errors on the part of users and publishers alike.

We have split the procedure into four broad categories:

- How to find the music you want
- Getting a quote
- Placing an order
- Receiving, using and returning the materials

But before we start we would like to give two general pieces of advice:

1. **Give yourself time:** plan your programme as far in advance as possible and give yourself plenty of time to find music, get quotes and place an order. As volunteers we know you are busy, and music publishers have high workloads as well. Allowing plenty of time gives you the best chance of finding the music you want at a price you want. It also means the music publishers have the best chance of ensuring you get what you need when you need it.
2. **Build relationships:** publishers want their music to be hired and performed and are happy to work with, and help, amateur groups. As a librarian of an amateur music group it is worth cultivating a relationship with both the hire librarians and the promotion department of music publishers.

Be aware that some publishers may be willing to negotiate on price.

### How to find the music you want

The task of hiring music can at first seem confusing, whether you're trying to find out who publishes a specific title, which agent is responsible for hiring a publisher's titles in your territory.

Music publishers have recognised the need to streamline and simplify the process of hiring music, and many of them have joined together to create the [Zinfonia](#) music portal. This is a website that combines the catalogues and databases of many of the world's largest classical music publishers, making all the information available in one place.

After completing the free registration process, Zinfonia users can:

- find out who publishes a specific piece of music
- communicate with the local distributor to obtain a quote and/or ask questions about hiring the music
- place an order
- view all their orders in one place and receive order status updates from the publishers
- store the results of previous searches together in one place

If the piece you are looking for is not listed on Zinfonia, there are some other ways you could find out who the publisher is:

- For orchestral pieces, you may be able to find the information in David Daniels' book *Orchestral Music: A Handbook* – most major music libraries will have a reference copy, or you can [use the online facility](#) (a subscription fee is payable).
- Try searching for the work in the [British Library catalogue](#), which lists details of the publisher for each item.  
The [Music Publishers' Association](#), the MPA, is likely to be able to help – contact [info@mpagroup.com](mailto:info@mpagroup.com).

Publishers are able to supply full scores on loan for perusal for the purposes of programme planning, and some even offer online scores as a free alternative to receiving hard copies in the post. There may be a small charge for this service to cover administration costs.

**Top tip:** Speak to the promotions department of the relevant music publisher as well as the hire department. A member of the promotions team might be able to put together a package deal for you on multiple works, or could recommend other pieces to accompany the one you have chosen at a specially negotiated price.

### Getting a quote

Hire fees for amateur rehearsal and performance are typically based on: the type and size of the performing body or bodies, the duration of the work (or extract), the period for which the materials are required, the amount of material required and the number of performances.

Further supplements and discounts may apply according to: the number of individual parts required, the copyright status of the work, and whether the materials are required for rehearsal/readings only, performances or recordings.

Special fees may apply for world and territorial premiere performances, broadcasts or recordings. Most publishers are happy to provide copies of their current hire tariffs, or alternatively supply a quote for a specific hire period, upon request. Publishers have individual terms for vocal materials in cases where they are made available for hire.

Please be aware that publishers have individual credit and payment terms and may require full settlement in advance of dispatch.

**Top tip:** Don't be afraid to negotiate for the hire of long, substantial works. If the initial quote is out of your budget then don't be afraid to go back and ask if they can do a better price. Music publishers want their music to be performed and would rather work with you to find a price that works for you than not hire the music at all. Having said that: they are running a business and so ultimately have to make a commercial decision – so whilst they are genuinely open to negotiation, you have to be realistic about how far they can go.

### Placing an order

If the music you require is listed in Zinfonia, you can order your music through the website. This allows you to keep track of all your orders with multiple publishers in one place.

The other main alternative to Zinfonia is to email the publisher with your order. Some publishers also still accept letters and faxes, or may have ordering facilities on their own websites. It's advisable to get a quote

in writing from the publisher prior to placing your order. Orders, which should be placed by the person or organisation responsible for payment, will need to specify the following information:

- Composer & title (including edition or version)
- Invoice address and phone number
- Delivery address and phone number
- Materials required, i.e. number of scores, string parts, vocal scores
- Date for delivery and duration of hire
- Number, date(s) and venue(s) of performance(s)
- Name and description of performing body or bodies
- Name of conductor and soloist(s)
- Whether a recording is to be made (audio or audio-visual) and whether there are plans to use the recording on a website or for broadcast.
- Make sure you also tell the publisher that you are an amateur music group in order to ensure you are charged the correct tariff

Help the publisher get your music to you on time by placing your order as early as possible and ideally no later than one month in advance of your requested delivery date or longer for a foreign work. Some publishers may be able to supply materials at shorter notice, but additional fees may be charged.

#### Copyright and permission/licencing issues

In the UK a piece of music is generally in copyright for 70 years after the death of the creator(s). This will most often be the composer but if a piece of music has been arranged, edited or translated then there will be copyright in those creations. The publisher will be able to advise on the copyright status of a musical work supplied on hire.

Generally publishers' hire agreements relate to the hire of physical performance materials and they do not include any permissions to record or perform the music. If you wish to perform the work publicly or record the music you will need other permissions and licences:

- The performance of music in copyright is handled by PRS for Music, which grants performance licences and collect royalty payments on behalf of copyright holders in the UK. This is separate to the hire agreement with a publisher. If you perform music in copyright you must ensure that the venue in which you are performing has a valid licence from PRS for Music. Making Music can advise on this. To find out more about performance royalty fees [please see our separate guidance: How to Pay PRS fees.](#)
- The performance of **dramatico-musical works** (operas, operettas, musical plays, ballets, etc.) is not handled by PRS for Music but is generally dealt with by the publisher or stage rights owner. Advice should be sought directly from the publisher in respect of permissions for concert performances of dramatic works (whether complete or in part). In all cases, a performing fee (plus VAT) will be payable direct to the publisher in addition to the fee for the hire of materials. Find out more about [Performing Rights \(PRS\) for dramatico-musical works.](#)
- If you want to make a sound recording, as well as needing permission from the publisher, in respect of the music rights, you will also need an additional licence (for mechanical royalties) *in advance* from PRS for Music. This applies to any kind of sound recording, whether it is audio only or audio-visual (e.g. CDs, DVDs or videos), and whether it is commercial or just for members of the orchestra or audience. [Find out more about PRS licences for recordings.](#) Note the permission/licence for audio visual synch can also reside with the publisher and not with PRS for Music.

### Arrangements, adaptations and parodies

If you want to make any changes to the way copyright music is performed you must contact the publisher immediately as no alterations, arrangements, adaptations or parodies may be made without the publisher's prior permission. This includes re-orchestration and cuts in performance.

Copyright Restrictions Unlicensed photocopying and graphic reproduction are unlawful under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and permission should always be sought from the publisher.

Please remember that if you want to include any musical extracts or reprint the words from a piece of music in a concert programme, permission must be sought from the publisher. In many instances publishers can supply biographies, photos and programme notes for concerts and will advise you if there are any associated costs.

Hire materials should not, under any circumstances be made available to third parties without permission of the publisher.

### Importation

Making Music members are reminded that caution needs to be taken when obtaining orchestral materials from abroad as material legally available overseas may infringe current UK copyright law if imported. Seek advice from the relevant UK publisher before importation. We will also be publishing some more detailed information about this area shortly. Do not assume that hire materials obtained via overseas online services can be lawfully used in the UK.

## **Receiving, using and returning the materials**

### Dispatch and receipt of hire materials

Publishers will endeavour to ensure your order arrives on or by the date requested. The materials should be checked against the delivery note upon receipt, and any deficiencies should be notified immediately to the publisher. Delivery charges will usually be levied in addition to the hire fee (and VAT may be payable on this charge).

### Return of hire materials

The person who signed the hire agreement (if one has been issued) or placed the order is responsible for the return of materials as supplied. To avoid damage in transit, pack materials securely and return them by trackable means or as agreed with the publisher – for example some publishers now offer a collection service to customers. Remember to include your details in the package so the publisher can identify who the parcel is from and also include copies of the concert programme(s) if they have been requested. You will be charged for any late or lost material, so please do return music promptly.

Provided the materials are returned in good time, most publishers will allow extra time for the recovery of odd parts that may be missing before invoicing for their full replacement costs.

### Condition of hire materials

Publishers will always endeavour to supply the best materials available from their stock at the time of order/reservation, but if you have any concerns about the condition of hire materials, tell the publisher as soon as possible to see if there's anything that can be done. The hirer is responsible for ensuring that the materials are returned complete and in the same condition as they were received. Any missing or defaced materials could incur a charge at full replacement value.