



Theatre Rights and PRS Fact Sheet

General Performance Rights

Plays and Musicals

When producing a play or musical, securing the appropriate performance rights is essential to comply with copyright laws and avoid legal issues. These rights include:

Grand Rights (Dramatic Rights):

- **Plays:** Rights to perform the entire script, including dialogue and stage directions.
- **Musicals:** Rights to perform the complete musical, including book, lyrics, and music.

Steps to Secure Performance Rights:

1. **Identify Rights Holder:** Typically the playwright, composer, or their representative (e.g., a licensing agency).
2. **Apply for Rights:** Contact the rights holder or licensing agency well in advance to request permission.
3. **Pay Licensing Fees:** Fees vary based on the type of production, venue size, and number of performances.
4. **Sign Agreement:** Ensure all terms and conditions are documented in a signed contract.

Note: Unauthorised performances can lead to legal action and financial penalties.

PRS (Performing Right Society)

Using music in your show requires notifying both Hope Street Theatre and PRS (Performing Right Society). Below is a detailed breakdown of the types of music use and the necessary steps:

Types of Music Use:

1. **Specially Written Music for the Show:**
 - a. **Action:** Agree on rights and royalty payments directly with the composer or their agent.
 - b. **Notify Us:** Inform Hope Street Theatre about the agreement – usually during your call to run through arrangements with the Theatre Manager.
2. **Music “Within the Frame” of the Show (Interpolated Music):**

- a. **Definition:** Music not specially written for the production but performed by or intended to be audible to characters.
 - b. **Action:** Clear the rights and make payments directly to PRS.
 - c. **Example:** A song played during a scene that a character reacts to.
 - d. **Responsibility:** The producer or visiting company is responsible for contacting PRS and paying the fees directly.
3. **Music “Outside the Frame” of the Show (Incidental Music):**
- a. **Definition:** Background music heard by the audience but not by the characters.
 - b. **Action:** Provide Hope Street Theatre with a list of the music used and the duration it is played.
 - c. **Charge:** Hope Street Theatre applies a charge based on the PRS tariff.
 - d. **Example:** Scene change or background music.
4. **Overture, Entr’acte, Exit Music:**
- a. **Coverage:** These are covered by the theatre license and do not require additional clearance.

Steps to Comply with PRS Requirements:

1. **Complete PRS Forms:**
 - a. Fill out the necessary forms well in advance (ideally 30 days, but at least 14 days before your first performance).
 - b. Sections to fill in depend on the type of music used.
2. **For Musicals:**
 - a. Provide Hope Street Theatre with a copy of your performance licence.
3. **Submit Forms:**
 - a. Submit direct to PRS and email a copy of your PRS forms to Nick Rogers at nick@hopestreettheatre.com.

Important Notes:

- **Non-Declaration:** Failing to declare PRS-controlled music or obtain prior clearance for interpolated music constitutes copyright infringement and can result in legal action.
- **Assumed Use:** Unless advised otherwise, The Hope Street Theatre will assume incidental music is used and apply standard charges. For interpolated music, producers must pay PRS directly.

By following these guidelines, you ensure legal compliance and smooth operation of your production regarding music rights.