

# ASCAP

The **American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers** is a not-for-profit performance-rights organization (PRO) that protects its members' musical copyrights by monitoring public performances of their music, whether via a broadcast or live performance, and compensating them accordingly. ASCAP collects licensing fees from users of music created by ASCAP members, and distributes them back to its members as royalties. In effect, the arrangement is the product of a compromise: when a song is played, the user does not have to pay the copyright holder directly, nor does the music creator have to bill a radio station for use of a song. In 2012, ASCAP collected over US\$941 million in licensing fees and distributed \$828.7 million in royalties to its members.

ASCAP was founded by composer Victor Herbert at the Hotel Claridge in New York City on February 13, 1914, to protect the copyrighted musical compositions of its members, who were mostly writers and publishers associated with New York City's Tin Pan Alley. ASCAP's earliest members included the era's most active songwriters—Irving Berlin, Otto Harbach, James Weldon Johnson, Jerome Kern and John Philip Sousa. Subsequently, many other prominent songwriters became members. The jazz, blues, country, and swing music genres sound tracked the 1930s, and ASCAP members Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, Gene Autry, and Jimmie Rodgers entertained the nation.

Highland Cathedral is a popular melody for the Great Highland Bagpipe; it is a popular wedding song. This melody was composed by German musicians Ulrich Roever and Michael Korb in 1982 for a Highland games held in Germany. The tune has been performed by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, and featured in the album, *Spirit of the Glen*, which won a Classical Brit award in 2009. The song has been performed at numerous Scottish cultural events, including Scotland's Rugby Union games. The tune was the Royal Hong Kong Police Anthem under British rule which ended in 1997. It was played at a ceremonial lowering of the Governor's flag at Chris Patten's official residence, Government House in Central, on the last day of British rule.

Various arrangements of Highland Cathedral are copyrighted. For example:

Tune: Highland Cathedral by Michael Korb and Ulrich Roever. Copyright© 1992 EDITION ROMA.  
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Public performances - one that occurs either in a public place where people gather – require the purchase of a license or permission from the songwriter. It legally belongs to the songwriter who created it, and the music publisher who markets it. Rental or purchase of sheet music does not authorize its public performance. License rates are based on the manner in which music is performed (live, recorded or audio only or audio/visual) and the size of the establishment or potential audience for the music.

If the performance is part of face to face teaching activity at a non-profit educational institution, permission is not required. Permission is required when music is used as part of training seminars, conventions, or other commercial or business presentations.

I always warn the bride when they request the tune, and I'll leave it to you as to whether it is legal to play.