TIMELESS TRIBUTES

Music Licensing

A Guide for the Legal Use of Music in Video Tributes

In today's world of instant online sharing, what seems simple - using a favourite song in a video tribute - has become one of the most legally complex issues facing funeral homes and families alike. At Timeless Tributes, we navigate this landscape daily so you don't have to.

In the past, DVD and BluRay tributes complied with the OneMusic Licence agreement in Australia and were not at risk of licensing violations because the burnt discs were for private use and, therefore, not easily distributed like content is today. If tribute videos are extracted from discs, or if they are already in a copyable video file format, there are serious consequences if they are shared on Social Media.

This guide explains why we approach music the way we do, and how our music process protects everyone involved.

A Quick Synopsis of the 5 main choices:

1. Risk copyright infringements and penalties
2. Pay exorbitant licensing fees and wait months for approval
3. Hire professional musicians to record a cover version of preferred songs
4. Create a customised, AI-generated soundtrack for the tribute
5. Include the AI soundtrack for sharing, but play preferred songs independently at the premiere under Australia's OneMusic Licence Agreement.

The Core Problem: Two Rights, One Song

Every commercially recorded song involves two separate copyrights:

1. The Composition (the music and lyrics)
    - Owned by the songwriter(s) and their publisher(s)
    - Licensed through organisations like APRA AMCOS in Australia
2. The Sound Recording (the specific performance)
    - Owned by the recording artist and their record label
    - Licensed through organisations like PPCA in Australia

To legally include a specific song in your video tribute for sharing, you need permission from BOTH rights holders. This is called a ***Synchronisation Licence***.

TIMELESS TRIBUTES

Music Licensing

The Social Media Trap

Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram have automated systems (Content ID) that detect copyrighted music. When you upload a video containing unlicensed music, the platform may:

- Block the video entirely (in some or all countries)
- Remove the audio (leaving silence)
- Place ads on the video (with revenue going to the rights holder)
- Issue copyright strikes against your account

This is not theoretical. It happens daily. A tribute meant for sharing with distant family can disappear or become unwatchable because of these automated systems.

The Scale of Licensing Costs

To understand why licensing commercial music isn't simple or cheap, consider these real examples:

- Microsoft reportedly paid $8 million USD in 1995 to licence The Rolling Stones' "Start Me Up" for Windows 95
- Apple pays an estimated $1-2 million USD for each U2 song used in commercials
- Even for a small business, licensing a major hit song for online use typically starts at $10,000-$50,000 AUD and can take 4-16 weeks to secure, and there is no guarantee of approval

Who Bears the Legal Risk?

If licensed music is used illegally, multiple parties face liability:

Party	Potential Risks
Your Family	Takedown notices, blocked videos, copyright strikes on personal accounts
Funeral Directors	Breach of their OneMusic licence, damage to professional reputation
Venues	Legal action from rights holders for unauthorised public performance
Timeless Tributes	Copyright lawsuits, business termination, permanent brand damage

Music Licensing

The Funeral Industry's Historical Approach

For decades, many tribute creators have operated in a legal grey area:

1. Creating DVDs with unlicensed music
2. Playing them at funerals (covered by venue licence)
3. Giving copies to families "for private use only"

This practice has always been on the fringes of legality - the "private use" disclaimer doesn't override copyright law. It has persisted only because most tributes never reached wide distribution. In today's digital sharing environment, this approach exposes everyone to greater risk.

The Timeless Tributes Solution

We believe in complete transparency and legal certainty. Rather than making promises we can't keep, we've developed a sophisticated system that honours your musical preferences while protecting all parties.

Option 5 is the solution that works for everyone, and Timeless Tributes is committed to delivering it. This is what we do:

- ➢ Work with the Funeral Director or Business to ensure your preferred music is played independently at the premiere during the tribute.
- ➢ Provide your high quality tribute with music that matches the music played independently at the premiere.
- ➢ Based on our discussions with you about the person, their personality, and the preferred music that is played at the premiere, we create an original, AI-powered soundtrack that is approved by you.
- ➢ This version becomes the permanent, legally-compliant soundtrack to your Timeless Tribute that is unlocked the following day in your exclusive Legacy Vault.
- ➢ You are free to share this version online without any of the complications mentioned in this guide.
- ➢ Family and friends can enjoy this definitive, visual biography of your loved one all around the world for generations to come.

TIMELESS TRIBUTES

Music Licensing

Why This System Is Better

Aspect	Traditional DVD Approach	Timeless Tributes AI Approach
Legal Status	Technically infringing	Fully compliant
Online Sharing	High risk of blocking	Sharing without legal risk
Ceremony Experience	Same	Same (even better timing)
Family Legacy	Limited-use DVD	Digital file + streaming access
Future-Proofing	Obsolete technology	Modern digital delivery

Your Path Forward with Certainty

Our Services:

1. All Research: We investigate every music request to determine the proper legal pathway
2. Full Transparency: We explain exactly what's possible, with realistic timelines and costs
3. Professional Execution: We deliver technically perfect solutions for both ceremony and sharing
4. Risk Mitigation: We ensure no family receives a tribute that could cause legal issues later

A Clear Path for Soundtrack Legality

Step 1: Consultation

We ask about your musical wishes and explain the options clearly, including:

- What's immediately possible (mute video + licensed score)
- What's potentially possible (original composition)
- What's complex/expensive (commercial song licensing)

Step 2: Production

Our editors work with your chosen music as the emotional guide, creating perfect timing and pacing whether we're using it directly for the live premiere or as a reference (for licensed alternatives).

Step 3: You Receive

- The Premiere Version with custom AI music that can be muted while you play other music under normal licensing laws
- The Legacy Vault Edition with our original AI music soundtrack
- A Technical Guide for you and the venue to ensure success at the premiere
- Peace of mind knowing everything is legal and shareable

For Funeral Director Partners

Our system integrates seamlessly with your existing OneMusic licence while providing:

- Reduced liability compared to traditional DVD providers
- Higher quality tributes for your families
- Digital delivery that matches modern expectations
- White-label options that maintain your brand presence

Conclusion: Why We Are The Best Choice

The digital landscape has transformed how we share memories. What was once a "don't ask, don't tell" industry practice is now a significant liability in an age of social media sharing.

Timeless Tributes is the first tribute service built from the ground up for this new reality. We don't avoid the complexity - we master it, providing:

- Emotional authenticity with your chosen music at the ceremony
- Digital safety with fully licensed versions for sharing
- Professional integrity through transparent, legal practices
- Technical excellence in both production and delivery

When you choose us, you're not just getting a beautiful tribute - you're getting certainty in an uncertain landscape.

Resources:
https://onemusic.com.au/
https://www.apraamcos.com.au/
https://www.ppca.com.au/