



Robert Ashcroft

Open letter to the Japanese film industry

3 October 2017

I am the Chief Executive of PRS *for* Music (PRS), the collective rights management organisation (CMO) for musical works based in the United Kingdom.

By way of background, PRS represents the rights of over 125,000 songwriters, composers and music publishers (our members) in the UK and around the world. Creators joining PRS provide us with an exclusive assignment of their performing right, meaning that PRS becomes the legal owner of this right.

We license the use of our members' musical works globally through a network of almost 100 representation agreements. In Japan we have a long standing reciprocal representation agreement with JASRAC, wherein JASRAC administers PRS' rights for the public performance of our repertoire in your country. Both PRS and JASRAC are members of the global creators' umbrella organisation CISAC (the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers). CISAC works to protect the rights and promote the interests of creators across the world in various artistic fields, including music.

An essential function of a CMO is to license the use of the rights it represents on behalf of its members, and in doing so to ensure fair remuneration for the use of these rights wherever music is performed in public.

Fair remuneration of rights is a vital element in sustaining the creative industries as it provides a livelihood for composers by rewarding their creative endeavors. Without this income creators would be deprived of the essential funding they require to continue to produce new music, which is such an important element contributing to the commercial success of cinema films.

The film industry, both in Japan and globally, has enjoyed sustained growth over several years. Indeed, according to MPAA data Japan is now the third largest country in terms of cinema box office collections in the world, which in 2016 totaled US\$2.2bn. However, while internationally the value of copyright has generally grown together with the growth of the film industry, in Japan this has not been the case. In fact very little has changed over the last 50 years when it comes to the remuneration of music creators for the use of their music in Japanese cinemas. I mentioned previously about seeking fair remuneration for the use of our creators' rights, accordingly, in Japan, I understand that foreign films still only receive a flat fee of ¥180,000 per film. This is regardless of the number of screenings of the film or its box office success. Such a low fee cannot be considered fair value. If anything it significantly undervalues the rights of our members and their creativity.

For this reason PRS fully supports JASRAC in its proposal to increase licence fees for the use of music in cinema films; this is long overdue and should be resolved as soon as possible. I very much hope to have the understanding of the Japanese film industry, itself a part of the wider creative community, in properly valuing the rights of creators whose music forms such an integral part of the commercial success of films and in turn the cinema industry in your country.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Robert Ashcroft', written in a cursive style.

Robert Ashcroft
Chief Executive