

Mr Andrew Gowers
Gowers Review of Intellectual Property
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Dear Mr Gowers

I write as a director of an independent production company specializing in making radio programmes.

I have recently been following the debate about the extension of copyright and I am very concerned that the record labels (e.g. Naxos, Sepia, ASV Living Era, Flare, Memoir etc) dedicated to re-issuing vintage recordings that are out of copyright are in jeopardy of going out of business.

I note that if the copyright period were extended, many precious recordings will be lost forever. None of the major record labels finds sufficient profit-margin to make it worth while revisiting a large amount of their back-catalogues and much of that material is rapidly deteriorating in storage to being beyond recovery.

Were it not for the efforts of the smaller record labels, who are able to exploit their various niche markets and restore the older records for reissue on CD, almost all of our heritage of popular music would be lost. Records and tapes in the larger libraries, such as the BBC's archive, are now in very poor condition through extended use and many recordings have been lost over the years.

To rely on a small sector of a declining industry to preserve the national archive in reasonable condition is not the most perfect of solutions, but in reality no one else is inclined to do so. Extending the copyright period which all artists, performers and writers have accepted up until now will ensure that our heritage will be lost, save for the catalogues of a few living artists who have extensive funds to lobby Parliament and so protect their personal interests.

Yours faithfully

David Aylott

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