

Sir

The British trade magazine, Music Week, is currently waging a fierce campaign to get the law on copyright changed and I'm sure that the major record labels will support them to the hilt, but I have to put in a word for the consumer.

Collectors of vintage music will have already experienced, with pleasure and gratitude, the huge amount of "out of copyright" material reissued in the UK by labels such as Proper, Sepia, Vocalion, JSP, Delta, Jasmine, Memoir, ASV and others - all making available tracks which would otherwise never again see the light of day.

If, as the recording industry is urging, the copyright period is extended to 75, or even 95, years, all these reissues from small companies would disappear, for I'm positive that the owning companies would only reissue the really popular material. In the past they haven't been too bothered, but now that recordings by cash-cows like Elvis Presley and the Beatles are approaching the 50-year deadline, they're getting hot and bothered. I'd have no problem with buying reissues from the major companies, but we all know that they'll cherry-pick, leaving a huge catalogue of vintage recordings to gather dust in their archives.

As always happens in such cases, it is these huge record companies and mega-stars like Cliff Richard and Elton John who are among the most vociferous on the side of change. Music Week quotes the aforementioned Cliff Richard as saying "*I am a firm believer that the UK Government needs to extend the term from the present 50 years. Extending the term of copyright for artists like myself is crucial because our works will slip out of copyright under the existing law and become open to exploitation - with all that entails - from anyone*". Why the obscenely rich Sir Cliff should continue to be paid over and over again for a few hours work he put in at Abbey Road Studios half a century ago is puzzling. I wish I could be continually rewarded for for work I'd done in the past!

I do earnestly ask you to take into account, in reaching your decision, the interests of the record-buying public.

Jim Marshall