

Dear Sir,

I've just seen a report/rant/ramble from Tony Barker that there is a proposed copyright extension - to be applied retrospectively - for 95 years. His alarm is justified, in my opinion, in that it would cut off the current world of musicians from what is their musical heritage.

Personally, I study Music Hall material for performance within a "Folk Club" environment ... a study that would be impossible without the re-issue on CD of many of the early recordings. In like manner - I also study/ enjoy many of the early Folk Performers - an area of music that, due to lack of potential financial return, is and will be abandoned by the "copyright holders"....

I'll add a third string to this bow - in that as the Chairman of the International Concertina Association and it's current Sound Archivist - I feel extremely alarmed that any of our efforts to track down, preserve and circulate some of the very famous of the past masters of this instrument will be frustrated and made illegal by this proposal.

That a 95 year copyright be imposed on most of the current music is fine - it's mainly rubbish anyway ... indeed to extend the current 50 year copyright from 1956 to whenever would not be unreasonable and would leave the material the specialists wish to preserve and circulate. It is surely unreasonable that material that has come out of copyright and is now freely available should be taken back into copyright?

And why only 95 year - why not make it 500 years then descendants of Will Shakespeare can claim copyright breach on his works! Silly? Of course - so if there is a good reason for a 95 year copyright (and I can't think of one - except for greed on the part of a couple of indifferent companies) - then compromise by not changing the rules on what is currently out of copyright - simply extend the current 50 years to 95 years - though I would still consider it a stupid and unnecessary change. I guess it wouldn't matter so much if there were any real chance that the companies holding the copyright would - or could process and re-release the material.

Yours sincerely  
Jon McNamara  
Chairman International Concertina Association  
Organiser Stortfolk Music Club