

### Submission to the Gower Review

I wish to make a submission on the subject of copyright in recorded musical performances.

I understand that pressure is developing to extend the current period in this field beyond 50 years. I would very much regret such a move, which I understand comes largely from the pop music side of the industry. It seems to me that copyright holders in this area currently enjoy their ownership for a perfectly reasonable time. The current period provides ample opportunity to maximise profits — and indeed they would seem to have done so very successfully.

In other branches of music however, such as the classical, light orchestral, jazz and folk fields, an extension of this sort would probably condemn many performances, arrangements and even compositions to being lost forever. Even recorded performance is to some extent ephemeral, and it is especially so in these areas. Already it is mainly the smaller companies, operating on very tight margins, who are ensuring the survival of many early performances, and hence providing archival/historical resources which would otherwise sink without trace. I realise that the limit of the 50-year rule is now moving from the 78rpm to the EP/LP era, but even here there are still many important aspects of musical history which remain to be revealed, analysed and restored. An extension of Copyright (and particularly a retrospective one) would probably bury many important recorded documents permanently. This loss of such material for future study --- not to mention enjoyment --- would be extremely sad.

I therefore urge the Review to resist any call to extend the copyright period in this field. I am aware of a recent decision in the USA which will result in the loss to the public there of access to a large number of important historical recordings. As a private citizen, particularly interested in “light,” or “programme” music, and keen in my own small way to support further investigation and documentation of an earlier epoch, I should hate to see a similar trend develop in the UK.

John L Hope