

Dear Mr Gowers,

It has come to my attention that there is a movement on the part of certain pop musicians to extend the period of sound recording copyright from 50 to 75 or more years.

I am anxious that the copyright period be not extended because I believe that those small record labels that reissue out of copyright recordings perform a vital function. They will be put out of business if copyright is extended, thereby depriving serious classical record collectors of the chance to buy and study historical performances of music that are generally neglected by the major companies, which seem these days to be run by accountants. The independent labels are instrumental in bringing forgotten or neglected musicians before the public.

Many recordings of these performances are very difficult to find elsewhere in any format: the independent reissue companies produce them with a care for detail that is remarkable by comparison with the majors.

This important area of reissue recording operates at the margins of the classical recording world. Extending the copyright period will indeed benefit the Elton Johns and Cliff Richards, who are already millionaires, but hardly those serious musicians whose work would no longer be heard but for the efforts of the independents.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Asser