

11 April 2006

Dear Mr. Gowers

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 music that I like and that are out of copyright are in jeopardy of going out of business.

The reasons why I am concerned and feel strongly that the copyright period should not be extended are numerous but I will aim to elucidate them as follows:

1. The recordings from these CD releases are very difficult to find elsewhere if not impossible.
2. Great care and attention are given to the artwork including the cover art, which you can tell has been carefully sourced.
3. The liner notes are often well-researched and written by experts and really give you lots of important and valuable information about the artist and the recording data.
4. The CD usually selling for around 8 pounds each represents good value for money because you do get extra photographs, rare recordings and also more information on the sleeve notes than your standard release of this calibre.
5. These releases are a labour of love and stand out in a market that puts out the same old fodder again and again. The major record labels are the worst culprits in releasing CDs like The Best of Perry Como, Vera Lynn or Bing Crosby featuring the same chestnuts time and time again.
6. Finally, as all consumers vote with their pockets – the prices of these CDs are fair and reasonable. If these companies have to pay recording royalties as well as the composer royalties currently in place, it may not be economically feasible to release these CDs anymore.
7. In an era where everything is geared to charts and expensive DVDs and MP3 players and digital downloads – these are recordings that I as a consumer want to own and have not been able to find elsewhere.
8. Through these companies I have been able to access wonderful recordings from stage musicals of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, recordings that the majors who own the masters have never seen fit to issue themselves. I have also discovered artists from a past era via these CD releases. If not for these smaller labels, these recordings would surely be lost forever so what they are doing is helping preserve important and historical recordings from which we are able to trace the evolution of popular music and the history of our music theatre.
9. To me it makes no sense to increase the copyright to 95 years because a whole generation could potentially miss the opportunity of knowing about these much loved artists and the history of their music

Please take the time to look at some of these CD releases and you will see the love, care and attention taken by the small labels in respect of these artists and their records. These smaller labels are not exploiting or jeopardising the memories of these artists but are in fact enhancing memories for this generation and future generations.

In conclusion I would like to say long may these labels be allowed to continue to bring music into my life.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Mathurin

(Music lover)