

Dear Mr Gowers

I am very disturbed by the possibility that the copyright on recordings could be extended from 50 to 95 years, as urged by the major record companies.

I have been a fan of nostalgia recordings of the 1930s to the 1950s for a good many years. My taste in music I would say is eclectic, ranging from children's songs to dance band to stage musicals. Currently I am spoiled for choice with many wonderful CDs available to me in the shops on labels such as Naxos, Sepia, ASV etc releasing material I like from the past and at a fair price too. I understand that these smaller companies restore the music from the original 78 records, and they do a fine job, as the original masters are not available to them. The major record companies, who recorded the material and who presumably still own the masters have never bothered to release these material on CD, and now they are trying to prevent the smaller companies from doing so by asking for the copyright to be extended.

I think this is so wrong and unethical. Its a case of them not wanting to make these material available to me (because they think it won't sell in huge quantities to warrant a release) and at the same time they are not happy to let others do so. Is that fair? The 50 years copyright they currently have on a recording is a long time and in my opinion long enough for them to recoup their initial investment many times over.

If they were to succeed in getting the law changed, I, the consumer, will surely lose out as my choice will be greatly reduced. The few nostalgia CD releases offered by the major record companies in the past 15 years have been pitifully few and its always the same old material whereas the smaller labels have given me access to some rare gems recorded from an era gone by that I didn't know existed but was delighted to discover. All these wonderful recordings will be lost forever as after 95 years who is going to remember they ever existed.

I suppose the big companies are getting worried because of The Beatles coming out of copyright soon etc but not everyone is interested in The Beatles. I watched a television programme recently regarding this debate where a major record executive was interviewed and said that the record companies need the extra revenue to nurture new talent. If so, is that why EMI spent 80 million pounds on Robbie Williams and paid Mariah Carey 20 million or thereabouts to finish her contract when her CD failed? And what about the millions they pay their top executives? That is money that could have been used in a more productive manner like investing in new talent. I think that for them to convince the public of their cause they must first put their own houses in order.

I hope you come to a fair and correct decision, but whatever you do, please remember that should the extension is allowed, there are many like me who will have their enjoyment curtailed especially when even BBC radio nowadays have reduced programmes catering to my taste.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Willie Liam