

Dear Sir

I write concerning the proposed extension of copyright from 50 to 95 years. Whilst I believe that, where possible, artists should continue to receive royalties for as long as practicable I think there is another element that needs to be catered for.

My particular interest is Music Hall. Many of the labels recording Music Hall artists 95 years ago, and subsequently, have been taken over (sometimes several times). Their catalogues and the rights to them are now often owned by major labels e.g. EMI, Polydor etc.

However you need to be aware that at least these two in fact have no copies of their recordings from this period - I believe EMI have no masters or pressed copies of anything at all pre 1930.

In recent years many small labels - often run by enthusiasts - have sourced copies - often from collectors, junk shops etc, and issued them on small limited edition CDs. This applies not only to Music Hall but also jazz, blues (2 more interests of mine) opera etc. Are you aware that some of Caruso's recordings have only been released in recent years this way. The proposed changes put these releases in jeopardy since in a nutshell the owners of the catalogues are physically unable to issue these recordings. These recordings are a vital social and historical record that is in danger of being lost.

I would be grateful if you could find a way of ensuring recordings such as these can still be issued as presently, without having to rely on the current owners.

For example prior to the rule change the owners of the rights should have to make available a list of all the "masters" they hold - and have them available for inspection. Any not held could then be issued as currently. Many relatives (by now distant relatives) are only too happy for their ancestors work to be reissued and are not interested in receiving royalties that would, in any event, be miniscule. The 50 year rule could also be extended to include living artists - rock n roll started in 1956 and many of those artists are still alive.

I am sure you can appreciate the potential, considerable, downside to these proposals and urge you to prevent this happening.

Yours Sincerely
Colin Charman