

Dear Mr Gowers,

I have seen that the large record companies want to extend their grip on mechanical copyrights.

I wish to register my objection to this.

As a record collector of many years collecting a wide range of recordings from the earliest cylinders to recent CD recordings, I am aware how the major companies have throughout the years swallowed up smaller companies. This has been done largely to obtain the 'back catalogues'.

HAVING then obtained these archives they rarely reissue any of the material, unless of course it is a sure fire seller. This means that there are very many reissues of the same old repertoires, but unknown or rare material continues to languish unreleased by them.

Until that is when an independent - often small - label chooses to venture a release of re-mastered and carefully researched material from a private collection that is out of copyright. This applies to all genres of recordings, opera, classical music, popular music, dance bands, jazz and spoken words, etc.

Many of these independent labels are only just economic and profits are low, distribution is hard and labours of love are the norm.

It is my belief that these reissues would cease if the proposed extension of copyrights were to go ahead.

I am aware that the internet throws up many challenges, not least 'how can a major company maximise its profits if people are prepared to exchange material for free?'

Much of the original material is scarce, brittle, or recorded on unstable media. Please do not jeopardise the labours of love that enable these to be reissued in small numbers on modern formats.

Much of the original material will never be reissued if left to major companies. There is a large amount of historic material that is still waiting to be rediscovered and made available to new generations.

I have enabled independent producers to release recordings of artistes who would never be re-released by the major - or indeed medium sized companies. Recordings which have then become sought after by a new audience. But which would never have happened if there was the extra burdens of further royalty payments and the attendant bureaucracy of obtaining clearances.

John Booth

former Editor, TMR - Talking Machine Review