

From: [REDACTED]
To: FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty
Cc: info@copyrightalliance.org
Subject: intellectual property rights
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2010 12:39:45 PM

Dear Ms. Espinel:

The Copyright Alliance has informed me of this welcome invitation from the Obama Administration to share my thoughts on my rights as a creator.

My husband and I have been songwriters/composers all our lives. It is a cliché – but it must be said – making a living in the arts is an oxymoron. And so, over the years, we have had two careers, one that fed our bodies and one that fed our spirits. Both were predicated on a great deal of hard work.

Nevertheless, we have persisted. We have a small studio in our home where we have made several albums and created music for various cable TV shows. All of our efforts have made us about enough money per annum to feed a gerbil.

Over the course of the past decade, we have seen remuneration for our work go from bad to worse. There are music libraries that can license music for – literally – nothing, sharing only \$10 – \$20.00 per "sale" – some of the music libraries actually share licensing fees with their composers, but these are becoming less prevalent and the licensing fees are mostly under \$100.00 per track. Each track is, on average, the result of about 100 hours of work. (I leave it to you to figure out the hourly wage.)

All of this is made even more frustrating by the growing cultural expectation that everyone be able to obtain whatever music they wish to download – for free.

The radio conglomerates are arguing that they are providing "free marketing" for music, and therefore, they should not have to pay fees for playing it. (That will not prevent them from collecting ad revenues, though). Restaurants and retail establishments are trying to avoid paying in to performing rights organizations for the privilege of using our music to sell their goods.

I've just completed my own album. Our best marketing strategy at

this point is to simply give it away to everyone we can think of and put it up on our Web site in hopes that we may be able to create an audience for it. This is a very long shot, but it's the only one we've got.

Eventually, many musicians will simply abandon their craft, out of frustration or out of necessity -- or both.

Can you tighten up copyright laws and enforcement so that, at the very least, our hard work is not literally stolen and sold at a profit by Internet piracy? I don't know what kind of power you may have, but I respectfully ask that you do everything you can to at least protect what is left of the artists' right to simply make a living at their craft. For those who don't think it's important, I suggest they try watching their favorite TV show or movie sans music.

Sincerely,

Robin Munson
Toluca Lake, CA
songwriter/composer