Martin Coffey "Styx Latté"

3915 Brandywine St

Philadelphia PA 19104

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Dear Copyright Folks,

Please do not gut our copyright law. I am a working musician and a graduate of the Class of 2003 from Drexel's music program. Something disasterous happened while I attended college: Napster. Almost overnight, music became worthless. The career I studied for evaporated before I graduated. I am a talented and creative musician and skilled recording engineer. Yet my resume pales in comparison to my potential. Mostly I do stage hand and sound engineer work. I also perform as a percussionist in a kid's show, but it's not as rewarding as using my best talents as a jazz trained drumset player. We depend on solid copyright protection to earn our living. If you gut this law, we can't depend on you, and we won't be able to earn a living.

Inherent copyright protection is a constitutional right that has been further developed by our law system. It requires no understanding of the copyright law to enjoy its protection. From the moment of inception our intellectual property is protected. Forcing us to register each work individually requires far more admin time that is reasonable, especially for a segment of the population that tends towards the creative side of things.

It's already so easy to steal copies of work on the internet that the public demands it as right. It's like the gate crashers at festivals in the 60s. They felt entitled to the show, but they didn't pay. Why pick on the artists? The very reason there is a show at all! Why make it so hard for us to make a living at what we do best that the best of us can't even get motivated to start? Why bother to record anything if it's all going to be taken away from us for nothing?

Without your support of the copyright process, the quality of art will seriously decline, and good artists will be tied up in decades of paperwork.

This is what must be saved from our current law:

1. Automatic protection, even for unregistered works

2. Exisiting terms on existing copyrights must stay the same. No one in the past could predict the

future and to penalize past copyright holders is unfair.

3. Copyright MUST continue to be administered by the government. Privatizing opens the door to corruption, and more likely artists just being taken advantage of with bad business deals.

4. Keep up with the times. Downloading a song from Napster or Bit Torrent is making a "copy of a phonorecord." Just using a phoneline and a computer instead of RCA cables and a tape deck doesn't change this. You can get away with it small scale, but if the government allows it on any large scale, it undermines its own laws, and jeopardizes the income streams of legitimate artists. Similarly, if I draw a picture and post it on my website, then someone downloads it and prints it, it is still a copy. If they hang it on their fridge, I won't care, but if it ends up on the cover of The New Yorker and I don't see a dime, I'll be pretty mad. And I shouldn't have to fill out lots of paperwork to get my money.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Martin Coffey AKA Styx Latté