

**For the favour of publication (sent by e-mail)**

The Editor,  
The Times,  
3. Thomas More Square,  
London E98 1TY.

17<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Dear Sir,

**The future of the EMI Archives**

The likelihood of a takeover of EMI Music by Citigroup and a subsequent buyer in the near future raises fears regarding the future of the EMI archives - both those held by the EMI Archive Trust (a charity established in 1996 and holding material generated up until 1946), and post-1946 material which is currently held directly by EMI.

Why is this material important? Because it chronicles the history of the British recorded music industry and the activities of Britain's leading music company (and one of the main global players in this sector). The archives include millions of paper documents, photographs, and printed ephemera. The collection of master recordings is particularly important, providing unique coverage of the development of recorded music since its inception. EMI also holds one of the most important archives for the early consumer electronics industry, from early phonographs and radios to the development of television.

The willingness of the EMI in the past to allow scholars and other interested individuals access to this material has allowed the stories of both the company itself – a unique British success story - and of the artists which it nurtured to be told, from Nellie Melba to the Beatles and beyond, by way of Sir Edward Elgar and many other significant creative figures too numerous to mention.

There is a real danger that, like the archive of another major record company, RCA-Victor, which destroyed numerous priceless master recordings and much documentation in the early 1960s at Camden, New Jersey, the EMI archives will be similarly and summarily disposed of. On the other hand the recent announcement that the Universal Music Group has donated significant holdings to the Library of Congress sets a notable and positive precedent.

It is therefore imperative that any new owner of EMI gives a firm commitment as part of its acquisition to maintain the integrity of the company's archives, and, where appropriate, to make this material accessible for serious study. This is also relevant for the material under the control of the EMI Archive Trust, which already enjoys charitable status partly for allowing public access to its holdings.

The EMI collections are one of the most important archives for the British creative industries and their destruction would be a devastating loss not only to the history of recorded music but to our broader cultural heritage.

Yours faithfully,

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