

Nothing New under the Sun?

Essays on the Economic History of Intellectual Property Rights in Music

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis consists of an introductory chapter, five separate articles and an article which has the function of a summary in Swedish. The introductory chapter provides a general background to the economic history of intellectual property rights in music.

Article 1 studies the early history of music copyright. It covers the evolution of copyright law regarding publishing of printed music. Beethoven, Schumann and Debussy are used to exemplify the economic importance of new laws.

Article 2 depicts the evolution of performing rights in four European countries. It maintains that the economic growth from the Industrial Revolution created new arenas for music from which composers demanded their fair share of revenues. Furthermore, the article discusses why it took several decades before Germany, Britain and Sweden implemented the French system with a collective licensing of performing rights.

Article 3 focuses on how technological innovations regarding the distribution of music have influenced intellectual property laws. It discusses the argumentative positions of various stake-holders when the printing press, the gramophone, the radio and the cassette tape were introduced.

Article 4 describes the financial evolution of the Swedish Performing Rights Society/STIM between 1980 and 2009. It shows how the loss of income from record sale has been compensated by increased income from broadcasts. Furthermore, the article shows the winner-take-all character of the royalty income distribution.

Article 5 includes a unique data set presenting the financial situation for Swedish composers of art music between 1990 and 2009. Its main theme is the monetary incentive for new output.

KEYWORDS: Intellectual property rights in music, music copyrights, performing rights, cultural economics, winner-take-all,