

Diane-Moss-M-20050226113003

To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

Date: 02/26/2005

From: M. Diane Moss
Title: Secretary
Org: Puget Sound Folk Harp Society

Comment:

I am the director of a small, non-profit music festival in Washington State. As part of our annual event, we distribute arrangements of music for all attendees to play in ensemble. Because of copyright issues, we strive to use pieces in the public domain. However, on two occasions, pieces which were presented to us as "traditional" were actually composed pieces under copyright. In both cases, it was extremely difficult to find the copyright holders... hours of research turned up much conflicting information. Both of the pieces had been recorded and published as "traditional" by a number of artists, yet other sources mentioned composer names that were associated with the tunes. In one case, it took six months to track down the current copyright holder (the composer was deceased, but the tune had once been used on a BBC television show and copyright had derived from that). In the other case, after several years, I finally found a living composer (residing in Ireland). In both cases, permission was granted for our group to distribute an arrangement of the tune in question, but the amount of work that was required to obtain simple contact information was truly daunting. If I were not a stubborn researcher with a zeal for doing "the right thing" I might also have given up and simply written "trad." across the top of our arrangements. I would applaud any effort to make it easier to find out if a work were under copyright, and to make it simpler to contact copyright holders. Thank you.