



Merlin Honoured By Spanish Government

- *Merlin Receives Award For Improving Competition In The Music Industry*
- *Award Presented By Spanish Minister of Industry, Tourism and Trade*

MERLIN, the global rights agency representing independent labels and artists and virtual fifth major, has been honoured at the International Forum on Digital Content (FICOD) in Madrid. The award for "**Improving Competition For Independent Music Companies**", presented to Merlin board member Mark Kitcatt by Sr. D. Miguel Sebastian, Spanish Minister of Industry, Tourism and Trade, recognises the work that Merlin is doing to enhance the ability of independents to access the online space, and to develop the digital market.

Speaking from London, Charles Caldas, Merlin CEO said *"We are delighted to have received this award and that the tremendous efficiency and global reach that Merlin provides those wishing to license the world's most exciting and commercially valuable independent repertoire has been recognised."*

"This is an important validation of the work we are doing and hopefully the start of a broader recognition of the importance of Merlin at the highest levels of government."

Announced at MIDEM in 2007, Merlin was officially launched in May 2008 when it received its members' mandate. Since then Merlin has been actively involved in negotiations with a number of digital services and in October 2008 announced its first deal with the newly launched music streaming service Spotify. With over 12,000 members Merlin represents the largest and most important collection of independent music rights in the world, with a US market share of over 9%, equivalent to that of the smaller majors.

Now in its second year FICOD has quickly established itself as a meeting point for professionals in the fields of television, advertising, film, music, video games, digital publishing, online training, user-generated content (UGC), digital journalism and interactive advertising.

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ABOUT MERLIN

Merlin, the virtual fifth major, represents the world's most important independent music to new generation digital media services. Artists signed to Merlin member labels include Arcade Fire, Arctic Monkeys, Adele, Anthony & The Johnsons, Basement Jaxx, Battles, Bjork, Cat Power, DJ Khaled, Franz Ferdinand, Infadels, Jose Gonzalez, Maximo Park, Mogwai, Morcheeba, Royksopp, Soulwax, Stereo MCs, Tom Waits, Vampire Weekend and The White Stripes.

Merlin offers rights users the opportunity to license collectively the individually unlicensable by creating a single point of contact for those wishing to license from the vast global output of its membership, as well as ensuring its members have effective access to new and emerging revenue streams and that their rights are properly protected. Merlin represents by far the largest and most compelling basket of global independent rights, and so offers the most efficient means of licensing this repertoire.

A global organisation, its members' market share in the US alone is over 9%, equivalent to that of the smaller majors, whilst in Europe member labels released 72% of the top 60 independent albums released in the past three years and commanded a 75% UK market share of the top 75 independent albums in 2007.

Merlin's burgeoning membership includes some of the music industry's most iconic labels. In the UK, Beggars Group (the largest independent in the UK which includes XL Recordings, Matador Records and 4AD), Rough Trade, Domino, Cooking Vinyl, Century Media, Cherry Red, Kitchenware Records and Warp Records are all members. In the US KOCH (the largest independent in the US), Concord, Tommy Boy, Razor & Tie, Saddle Creek, Robbins Entertainment, Dualtone Music Group, Ghostly International and Stones Throw are represented.

In Europe members include [PIAS] Group (the largest pan-European independent), Blanco Y Negro (the largest independent in Spain), Epitaph, Edel, Naive, Wagram, Aggro Berlin, !K7, Kontor Records, Ministry of Sound (Germany), SPV and Gazell. In the rest of the world Merlin represents labels like Brazil's MCD and South Africa's Bula Music. Members also include distributors and aggregators such as Finetunes, State 51, Shock Entertainment, Virtual Label and Kontor.

Announced at MIDEM in 2007, Merlin launched for business in May 2008 when it received its members' mandate. Merlin immediately opened negotiations with a number of services and announced its first deal, with newly launched music service Spotify, in October 2008.

Merlin operates outside the space occupied by Collecting Societies and distributors, redressing the false assumption that for emerging media, only the majors need to be licensed, with the rest free to air.

Merlin operates as a stand-alone company owned by a not for profit foundation.

www.merlinnetwork.org