

NEWSLINE
THE WEEK IN BRIEF

Kevin Liles has exited as president of Def Jam Recordings. The announcement was made July 8 in a press statement from Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio "L.A." Reid.

In the statement, Reid noted Liles' contributions in establishing the Def Jam brand and thanked him for his help "during the transition period since I came to IDJ."

Following former Island Def Jam chief Lyor Cohen's appointment as head of Warner Music Group's U.S. division, Liles resigned from his post in February. He later returned to the label.

At deadline, no further details were available regarding Liles' future plans or his possible successor at the label. **GAIL MITCHELL**

Tommy Mottola's Casablanca Records has entered into an agreement to produce soundtracks for Miramax Films, according to published reports. The soundtrack to "Pride and Prejudice" will be the first produced under the agreement, according to the New York Post. It will feature Ashanti. Casablanca will also produce the soundtrack to "Shall We Dance," which stars Jennifer Lopez and Richard Gere. According to the Post, sources say Mottola and Miramax chief Harvey Weinstein are also teaming up to produce a Broadway version of Pink Floyd's "The Wall." As of press time, Mottola could not be reached for comment. **LEILA COBO**

Alicia Keys is the first artist confirmed to perform at the inaugural international pop music concert staged at the Great Wall of China. Wall of Hope—China 2004 will take place Sept. 25 at the Wall's Ju Yong Guan North Gate in Beijing. The concert—which coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Great Wall restoration project—represents the first in a series of benefit concerts planned for China's major metros.

TV personality Cynthia Garrett (HBO's "Buzz") is among the confirmed hosts for the concert, which will be taped for international TV broadcast. Proceeds from the invitation-only event will benefit the China Children and Teenagers' Fund. **GAIL MITCHELL**

The Federal Communications Commission wants radio and TV broadcasters to tape their programming between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. and keep the tapes as long as three months to make it easier to investigate indecency complaints. Such a procedural change, announced July 7, would remove the burden from citizens who now must provide the commission with a tape of their own or a full written transcript of a program they allege is indecent. Comments are due July 30. A spokesman for the National Assn. of Broadcasters says the trade group is reviewing the proposal. **BILL HOLLAND**

An aggressive program of store openings in the United Kingdom and Japan, plus public demand for DVDs, allowed HMV Group to increase profits and cut £100.8 million (\$182.7 million) from its net debt in the past financial year.

In its results for the 52 weeks ending April 24, the U.K.-based retail giant reports that its year-end net debt had fallen from £158.6 million (\$287.5 million) to £57.8 million (\$104.8 million). Last year, the group reported a similar-sized reduction, down from £253.6 million (\$459.7 million). It plans to make another £50 million (\$90.6 million) repayment in July.

Group sales rose 5% to £1.79 billion (\$3.24 billion). Operating profit rose by 11.1% to £131.5 million (\$238.4 million). Group CEO Alan Giles says the results underline "the competitiveness of the group's specialist retailing model."

Sales at HMV U.K. & Ireland grew 7.2%, and HMV Asia-Pacific sales rose 1.4% to £280.9 million (\$509.2 million). HMV North America's sales fell 2.2% to £153.6 million (\$278.4 million). The North American division will shutter its final U.S. outlet by the end of 2004 and will focus on its 100 Canadian stores. **TOM FERGUSON**

The NPD Group has launched new home video tracking system VideoWatch. The system will track home video sales and rentals at traditional brick-and-mortar stores as well as other such distribution channels as subscription services, pay-per-view and video-on-demand.

Specific research that VideoWatch will provide includes market-share information, demographic data and customer profiles. VideoWatch will also track potential target markets for titles, studying whether movie theater viewers are likely to buy or rent particular releases and whether renters are likely to buy a particular release.

VideoWatch research will be available on a monthly basis and include historical data going back to October 2003. **JILL KIPNIS**

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Reciprocal Deals Link SoundExchange, PPL

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

LONDON—U.S. digital rights body SoundExchange and British sister society Phonographic Performance Ltd. recognize collecting overseas royalties as a priority.

The two societies last month signed reciprocal agreements that will see their members—artists and labels—benefit from revenue collected for the usage of their works in each other's territory.

"We believe our mission is to collect and distribute royalties, and that includes foreign royalties too," Washington, D.C.-based SoundExchange executive director John L. Simson says.

SoundExchange collects royalties on behalf of its members for the digital streaming of their works from U.S. webcasters and satellite and cable broadcasters. PPL collects royalties for the public performance in the United Kingdom of music on behalf of artists and labels.

In the United States, SoundExchange collects only from digital streaming, as terrestrial performances by broadcasters are not subject to artist royalties.

PPL chairman/CEO Fran Nevrlka says, "It is important to have reached this agreement with SoundExchange because this is about the U.S. market. Historically, performance rights were not in place, but now, with the [the United States' Digital Millennium Copyright Act], we have for the first time access to a whole new set of rights."

SoundExchange will pay PPL for all digital royalties earned by artists represented by PPL and its partner societies.

SoundExchange has similar arrangements with

SENA in the Netherlands and RAAP in Ireland. Simson says SoundExchange has already started to receive payments under the SENA agreement, which will be distributed later this year to its members.

PPL has reciprocal deals with societies in such countries as Germany, Canada, Australia, France and Italy.



NEVRKLA: 'WE HAVE ACCESS TO A NEW SET OF RIGHTS'



SIMSON: PPL DEAL FOLLOWS SIMILAR OVERSEAS PACTS

SLOW GROWTH

Nevrlka says he does not expect a significant revenue stream from the United States in the beginning, but his view is that "income will clearly grow from the U.S. We are just at the beginning. We are convinced foreign revenue will become a significant income stream for us."

"Fran and I share the philosophy that foreign royalties should be paid to the rights owners," Simson says. "We have a very productive relationship, and our common goal is to better serve our members."

Nevrlka agrees. "I like working with John and his team. They are very pragmatic. They like to find solutions to problems, and we like that. There's a good mind-set. It is a very uncomplicated, friendly, down-to-earth business relationship."

Nevrlka and Simson agree that these agreements are "a starting point" in their relationship. Both executives insist their collaboration should extend beyond simply collecting and distributing royalties.

"We would like to work with our American colleagues in promoting the notion that performance rights should be implemented in all areas," Nevrlka says. "They are way behind Europe with that regard,

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Swindel Joins Gibson

Label Vet Will Lead Entertainment Relations

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Veteran music industry and entertainment executive Jim Swindel has joined Gibson Guitar as executive VP of entertainment relations.

He will oversee all U.S. entertainment relations offices, which are responsible for artist relations, product placement, promotions and broadcast programming. Gibson's entertainment relations directors in Europe and Asia will report to Swindel.

Gibson's U.S. entertainment relations offices are located in Nashville; Orlando, Fla.; Austin; San Antonio; New York; and Beverly Hills, Calif. Swindel will be based in Beverly Hills, reporting to Gibson CEO Henry Juskiewicz.

"Jim Swindel comes to us with an



SWINDEL: STRENGTHENING GIBSON'S PROFILE

array of entrepreneurial executive experience and a record of success in the music industry," Juskiewicz said in a statement. "His background in the recording and entertainment arena and with major artists will fur-

ther strengthen Gibson's profile around the world."

From 2001 until this year, Swindel served as executive VP of marketing and sales for ArtistDirect Records in Los Angeles. There, he was responsible for all aspects of product marketing, including creative, packaging, advertising and public relations. From 1999 to 2001, Swindel served as president/ chief marketing officer for Amplified Entertainment in New York.

At the majors Swindel held posts as senior VP of sales and joint venture operations at Arista Records and president at Qwest Records. He also held management posts with Virgin and Island.

Gibson manufactures musical instruments including the Gibson, Epiphone, Baldwin and Slingerland brands.