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SPRING
ALBUM
PREVIEW

The 79 albums
that will define
the season

STARRING

The Yeah Yeah Yeahs

"Where has all the charisma and the
sexuality and the gnarl gone?" —KAREN O



PEN Pusher

Size isn't everything for some smaller publishers left on the sidelines of big deals. PEN sees this as a business opportunity

By Ed Christman

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s the big get bigger, they leave opportunity on the table for the smaller independent publishers. At least that is the view of PEN Music president/owner Michael Eames, who is positioning his company for growth.

As it is, things are going well for PEN as it approaches its 20th anniversary next year, thanks to all the changes in the industry.

"I call it 'the BMG effect,'" Eames says, referring to the rollup executed by that

company, as it has acquired Bug Music, Cherry Lane, Stage 3, Evergreen and the Virgin Music catalog during the last four years. Beyond that, Sony/ATV is now administering EMI Music Publishing, thanks to its acquisition by a Sony Corp. of America-led consortium.

"A lot of songwriters and catalogs are unhappy with the changes and transition that occur when a bigger company buys a smaller one," Eames says. "They are looking for publishers that can give more personal attention."

The PEN roster and/or catalog includes Wendy Waldman; Lizz Wright; Olivia Newton-John and one of her co-writers and producers, John Farrar; Gina Schock; Earle Hagen; and Allyn Ferguson.

The last two are known for their TV theme songs, with the latter co-writing the "Barney Miller" theme and the former either writing or co-writing themes for "The Andy Griffith Show," "The Dick Van Dyke Show," "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.," "That Girl," "The Mod Squad" and "I Spy"; he also co-wrote "Harlem Nocturne."

In PEN's latest deal, it has signed Don Felder and now handles the six Eagles songs he co-wrote, including "Hotel California," as well as the songs on his first solo album in 30 years, 2012's *Road to Forever*. "We placed his first single off the new solo record in a recent episode of 'Homeland,'" Eames says.

In another deal, PEN signed Gabriel Mann, composer of the theme and underscore for ABC's "Modern Family" and a member of the band the Rescues. PEN will maintain and pitch Mann's solo albums and any of his



PEN Music's
Michael Eames



material not subject to other deals.

PEN has also signed a worldwide administration deal to handle the music from videogame publisher Zenimax Media, whose companies have issued titles like “The Elder Scrolls,” “Doom,” “Quake” and “Wolfenstein.”

Zenimax’s compositions are “incredibly high-quality music, as if from a large feature film,” Eames says. “Their games are so popular that their music is so well-known, it has equity.”

Consequently, while orchestras have covered the music, Eames feels there’s plenty of opportunity to license the music for trailers and other platforms.

Moreover, PEN will assemble a soundtrack of the music to be distributed digitally by BFM. Until signing this deal, PEN had acted as its own digital distributor, placing music directly onto iTunes and using TuneCore for distribution to other digital music providers. Through the digital distribution channel, PEN can sign and develop young songwriters and help build their story.

Finally, Eames says he has been re-engineering PEN, upgrading its administrative infrastructure through a new software platform and forming a strategic relationship with another recently formed publishing company. The platform is called CORE and owned by Zoe Graye Consulting. “We work closely with [Zoe Graye] to further customize and improve its programs,” Eames says. In conjunction with Zoe Graye and Jeffrey Fass’ website design company Linear, “we have built an Internet-based pitch system that integrates fully with CORE so that we can deal with all administrative and creative needs in an all-inclusive package,” which will be rolled out in the next few weeks. ●