

# Veterans thrilled by radio triumph

Record industry veterans Richard Branson and Chris Wright are both celebrating victory after last week's Radio Authority decision to award them new London FM licences.

The victory for Virgin London FM represents the realisation of Branson's long-standing dream of owning an FM station.

A delighted Branson says the Radio Authority decision will allow Virgin to reach a larger audience in London. "Londoners have suffered by not being able to hear Virgin 1215 properly. This will allow them to hear the station," he says.

Branson says it will not simply relay programming from Virgin 1215, but will provide London-based news, features and chat. He is unable to detail how much of the station's music will be taken directly from the AM service. It is understood that programmes such as Russ & Jon's breakfast show will be rebroadcast by the London service.

Chris Wright, who heard of the victo-

## LONDON'S NEW SERVICES

### CRYSTAL FM

Owner: Chrysalis Group. Format: 85% adult orientated rock/15% speech.

Target audience: 25-44 year olds

### VIRGIN LONDON FM

Owner: Virgin Group. Format: 65% rock-based music/35% London-specific speech

Target: 25-44 year olds.

### VIVA AM

Owner: Golden Rose Communications. Format: 35% speech, "Marie Claire on the radio" 65% contemporary pop.

Target: 30-40 something females.

### LONDON CHRISTIAN RADIO AM

Owner: Charitable trust. Format: Predominantly speech on Christian beliefs and values/some hymns possible.

Target: 40-plus.

ry for his Crystal FM bid while in Mexico for an IPFI board meeting, says, "This is fantastic news. As the media capital of

UK, the London licence was very important to us. It means everything. It is the most important thing we have been working on over the last year"

Crystal's sister station Heart FM went on air in the West Midlands a month ago, but Chrysalis Radio chief executive Richard Huntingford says only one-off programmes, such as specially recorded sessions from the Chrysalis-owned Lyndhurst Hall, will be shared by the stations. Heart's managing director Phil Riley adds, "You will hear the same philosophy, but not the same programmes."

Although a date has not been finalised by the Radio Authority, the two stations are expected to go on air next summer as will the two AM stations. Viva - which will operate from the Marble Arch premises of sister station JFM - and London Christian Radio.

As expected, the two FM licences of London's market leading Capital Radio were renewed for a further eight years. Capital programming director Richard Park says, "We are thrilled."

Disconsolate at the news of their failed bid, XFM staff could not hide their disappointment at the Radio Authority's headquarters in Covent Garden on Friday. "It's unbelievable," says managing director Sammy Jacob (far right). "London has stations for jazz, country, soul, rock and pop, but alternative rock, our most exportable music genre, is not represented. "Our bid received more support and media attention than the others, and received strong financial backing from businessmen with sound, proven track records." Sharing his disappointment were: chairman Chris Parry (left), presenter Paul Anderson, presenter Janice Long and station manager Phil Ward-Large.



# Prince is VH-1 turn-on

The man formerly known as Prince became a symbol of a new era at 10pm last Friday when he flicked the switch which turned on the UK's new music TV channel VH-1.

While the attendant masses turned to enthusiastically toast the launch at London's historic Roundhouse venue, the first promo on air was an exclusive preview of the new Prince track, *Dolphin*. It kicked off a first hour on air which appeared to back expectations that the station will be a televisual equivalent of Emap's Mojo magazine.

Following the Minneapolis artist with clips of Sade, Crowded House,

Luther Vandross, Rolling Stones, REM, U2, Eurythmics, Genesis and Youssou N'Dour's Seven Seconds, the new channel confirmed its commitment to a more mature taste in rock.

It is a focus which pleases PolyGram TV MD Brian Berg, who is busy lining up VH-1 for ad campaigns on albums such as *The Best Of Bon Jovi*.

"We will definitely use VH-1 as part of our general mix of satellite advertising," he says. "It's a much easier way of targeting an audience and it should have a strong penetration in the under-40s market." Columbia marketing director Brian Yates is equally supportive of

the channel, which he is using to advertise Roachford's *Permanent Shade Of Blue*.

"I guessed that the first couple of weeks would be when there would be most interest in VH-1 and that would be when the industry and the taste makers would be checking it out," he says.

How many people are actually tuning in will not become apparent for a few weeks yet, according to a VH-1 spokeswoman. But in advance of the first set of audience figures, the station declares itself more than happy after more than 300 viewers called in to last Monday's first request show, *VH-1 For You*.

Prince accuses WEA of holding album Prince has accused WEA of refusing to release his new album, *The Gold Experience*. One of the tracks on the album, *Dolphin*, was the first to be played on VH-1 last week. The promo featured the artist with the word "Slave" daubed across his face. A spokesman for the artist says, "The album is finished and (Prince) wants it released. But his record company don't want to." The album is the first by the artist since changing his name from Prince. WEA was unavailable for comment as *MTV* went to press.

## IMF shelves plans for collection society

The International Manager's Forum has called off its talks with Basco, Re-Pro, the Musicians' Union, Equity and the Incorporated Society of Musicians over plans to form a body to collect public performance royalties for performers. The move from the IMF came on Friday, the day after the five bodies issued a statement announcing plans to set up their own collection society, Manager John Glover, of the IMF, says the bodies need to reach agreement on the structure of the body to reflect the split between featured and non-featured artists. The move comes a year after the EC Rental & Lending Directive gave "creators" a right to equitable remuneration of public performance income. UK legislation is expected to be introduced later this month.

## American amends Phonogram suit

American Recordings has amended and refilled its US lawsuit against former joint venture partner Phonogram. As well as accusing Phonogram of fraud and breach of contract, American, which is now licensed internationally to BMG, alleges fraudulent accounting, restraint of trade and interference in contractual relationships. A Phonogram source says its US lawyers are considering the company's response.

## New Nirvana videos scheduled

MCA will release the first Nirvana video, *Live! Tonight! Sold Out!*, on November 14. The 85-minute title comprises 16 tracks, and live and TV footage of the band including appearances on *Top Of The Pops* and the Jonathan Ross show. The release will follow two weeks after Verse Chorus Verse, which features the band's MTV's *Unplugged* performance recorded last year. The video will be promoted alongside ads for the album in the run-up to Christmas. The two releases follow the suicide of lead singer Kurt Cobain in April.

## Queen fan club launches charity drive

The International Queen Fan Club is launching a national street collection to raise funds for the Mercury Phoenix Trust next month. Members of the fan club will kick off the collection in central London on November 15, with each donor receiving a small sticker emblem of Freddie Mercury emblazoned with the motto, "The Mercury Phoenix Trust. Fighting Aids worldwide." The trust was set up in 1992 by Brian May, Roger Taylor and Queen manager Jim Beach to distribute funds from the Mercury tribute concert at Wembley Stadium.

## Early exit for Radio Authority's Baldwin

Radio Authority chief executive Peter Baldwin has quit his position at the body, six months after Baldwin, who is due to leave the authority at the end of next year, will now leave on June 30. He refuses to comment on circumstances of his departure besides saying, "There comes a time in every situation where there is a right moment to leave."

## EMI writers meet at secret venue

EMI Music Publishing stages its first UK Writers' Week at a secret location in Devon this week. The seven-day event, which begins on Wednesday, is aimed to bring together the publisher's writers to encourage co-writing. Cathy Dennis, Chris Difford and Glen Tilbrook, Garry Christian, Frances Dunne, Jamie Petrie, Jon Lind and Phil Roy are among those expected to attend.

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