



MERLIN DEAL HERALDS BOOST FOR MASTER QUALITY AUDIO

World's leading independent labels strike multi-year agreement to encode masters in MQA

London, 15 May 2017 – MQA and Merlin, the global digital rights agency for the independent label sector, have today announced a multi-year agreement that will support the world's best-known independent labels to encode their master recordings in MQA's industry-leading technology.

The partnership will boost the uptake and growth of master quality audio streaming, and paves the way for Merlin member labels and their artists to remain at the forefront of the market.

MQA is an award-winning technology, which delivers master quality audio in a file small enough to stream or download. By delivering the sound of the studio, MQA enables the listener to step into the artists' original performances.

Launched commercially in 2015, the MQA format is currently available on TIDAL, and is compatible with a rapidly growing list of hardware products including Pioneer, Technics, Onkyo, Bluesound, NAD, Meridian, Mytek, Krypton, Brinkmann, Aurender, Cary Audio and MSB, with many more announcements in the pipeline. MQA is in ongoing discussions with other delivery partners to enable streaming of master quality files.

Merlin acts collectively on behalf of thousands of independent record labels and distributors from more than 50 countries, allowing them effective access to new and emerging digital revenue streams. On their behalf, Merlin has agreed global deals with the world's most important new-generation digital music services, including Deezer, Google Play, KKBOX, Pandora, Soundcloud, Spotify, VEVO and YouTube.

Mike Jbara, CEO of MQA, said:

"MQA's commitment is to provide exceptional sound quality from the studio recording all the way through to the consumer. We're excited to work with the leaders of the independent community to further fuel the availability of master quality recordings for music fans."

Charles Caldas, CEO, Merlin, commented:

"We are delighted to be partnering with MQA. From our own data, we know that Merlin members' repertoire performs best on paid-for subscription tiers, and it's to this high-spending consumer demographic that hi-resolution audio will have the greatest appeal. Consequently, today's future-facing agreement makes perfect sense – offering our independent label members a fast track entry point to an exciting segment of the streaming market, and ensuring they remain at its forefront."*

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* Merlin analysis 2016: usage of Merlin members' repertoire on audio streaming/subscription services is 27% higher on paid tiers compared to free ad-funded tiers. Survey summary [here](#).

MQA Press Contacts

lisa@mqa.co.uk

sarah@mqa.co.uk

Merlin Press Contact

Sam@namepr.co.uk

Press Site for MQA

URL: www.mqa.co.uk/press

About MQA:

Using pioneering scientific research into how people hear, the MQA team has created a technology that captures the sound of the original studio performance. The master MQA file is fully authenticated and is small enough to stream, while also being backward compatible, so you can play MQA music on any device. MQA's award-winning technology is licensed by labels, music services and hardware manufacturers worldwide and is certified by the RIAA. MQA is a UK-based private company.

MQA is an industry member of A2IM, AIM, DEG and most recently the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), an organization committed to innovation around consumer experiences. CTA is best known for its consumer research, innovation webinars and flagship event CES.

For more information visit www.mqa.co.uk

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About Merlin:

Merlin is the global digital rights agency for the world's independent label sector.

The organisation's members command in excess of 12% of the digital recorded music market and embody more than 20,000 independent record labels and distributors from 51 countries and all continents.

These include Beggars Group, Secretly Group, Domino, Sub Pop, Epitaph, Anti Records, Entertainment One, Redeye Worldwide, !K7, Kobalt Music Recordings, [PIAS], Merge, Warp, Hopeless Records, Armada Music, Mad Decent, Eleven Seven Music, Naxos and Curb Records, representing some of the world's most important and successful artists.

Merlin acts to ensure these companies have effective access to new and emerging revenue streams and that their rights are appropriately valued and protected.

Since commencing operations in May 2008, Merlin has licensed key digital services including SoundCloud, YouTube Red, Spotify, Pandora, Google Play, Deezer, Vevo and KKBOX.

Merlin has reached a number of high value copyright infringement settlements on behalf of its members with, amongst others, Limewire, XM Satellite Radio and Grooveshark.

Merlin has been selected as the 'Independent Champion' at the A2IM Libera Awards for two years running.



Merlin has offices in London, New York, and Tokyo, with a head office in Amsterdam.

www.merlinnetwork.org

