

## **Creators Address the European Commission to Defend their Rights**

*Brussels - 23 February, 2006 – A delegation of six prominent songwriters and music composers met with Commissioner McCreevy, on February 21<sup>st</sup>, to share their views on the future of authors' rights and collective management in the digital environment. Creators fear that the recent European Commission's initiatives (i.e. the Recommendation on cross-border licensing issued in October 2005 and the recently published Statement of Objections) may undermine cultural diversity and their longstanding and effective relationship with authors' societies. In the spirit of Jacques Delors' words "culture is not a commodity", Commissioner McCreevy reassured creators that the European Commission does not intend to limit or denigrate authors' rights. Creators are now committed to continue the dialogue with the Commission to adopt the best online licensing scheme.*

*"For the very first time authors of music were given a chance to address the European Commission with issues that primarily affect them and to present the case for the protection of authors' rights in the online environment," said **Pia Raug** – Danish songwriter, composer, singer and musician. "Disrupting the efficient authors' rights system that has cultivated the richness and diversity of European culture for 200 years in the digital environment would have devastating economical, political and cultural consequences."*

*"Authors' societies do not infringe European competition law as the European Commission has suggested. The network of authors' societies, based on reciprocal representation agreements, enables all users without discrimination to have equal access to the world repertoire," said **Konrad Boehmer**, Dutch composer and Professor of Music History. "When producers, publishers, broadcasters, telecom operators, to name just a few, are being integrated and controlled by major multinational groups, one has to wonder who the real monopolies are."*

*"In these days of an increasingly powerful music industry, authors' societies represent creators' unique collective bargaining power for securing a fair remuneration for the use of their works anywhere in the world," said **David Ferguson**, British music composer and Chairman of the Creators' Rights Alliance and the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters. "At the bottom of the value chain, creators are even more vulnerable in the digital age. Authors' societies remain the only safeguard for protecting our rights and accessing the marketplace."*

*"Authors' societies were created by and for creators to collectively protect their interests. We compose music at individual risk and most of our revenues depend on the efficiency of our authors' societies. We wholeheartedly support the transparency and governance for our societies, as recommended by the European Commission," said **Laurent Petitgirard**, French composer of symphonic music and soundtracks. "We fear the consequences of this Recommendation may undermine the position of authors' societies faced by major music labels and publishers."*

*"We fear that the recent EU initiatives will have a negative impact on the vast majority of creators and 'niche' markets. 'Inter-brand' competition between European societies will not benefit music fans. On the contrary, competition risks being detrimental to creators'*

*remuneration, thus seriously jeopardizing local music industries, as well as hampering the renewal of today's dynamic and diverse European culture,"* said **Bendik Hofseth**, Norwegian composer, saxophonist and singer. *"Music fans and music creators will lose out."*

*"Local societies are indispensable in properly serving the interest of local creators. Even in a 'small' market, local societies can prove to be efficient economic players,"* said **Mike Hanrahan**, Irish songwriter and guitarist. *"The EU Recommendation risks leading to the emergence of 2 or 3 major societies controlling the market. Authors would be forced to assign their online rights to societies far from their home and without proper scrutiny of the management of their works. This can only lead to an inefficient service and have negative impact on creators as IMRO members already experienced it. Since IMRO achieved independence from PRS London in 1994, membership has grown five fold, turnover has virtually trebled and net costs have been significantly cut."*

Commissioner **McCreevy** concluded by fully recognising that without authors and their creative contribution the entertainment industry would have nothing to sell. With creators finally involved in the consultation process, the Commission is committed to continuing a democratic dialogue giving equal opportunities to all players. Creators understand that transparency and cross-border licensing are key objectives on which to build future online licensing framework.

## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

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The songwriters and music composers who met with Commissioner McCreevy are all members of **CIAM**, the International Council of Authors and Composers of Music. Chaired by Pia Raug, CIAM is a professional forum within CISAC tackling questions concerning the moral and professional interests of music creators. The meeting was organized following to a resolution and a letter sent by CIAM in October 2005 to express its concern over the EU "Recommendation on Cross-border Collective Management of Copyrights and Related Rights for Legitimate Online Music Services".

Creators, authors' societies and their representatives CISAC – the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers – and GESAC – the European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers – fully recognize that the emergence of new technologies and distribution methods require that authors' societies regularly adapt their licensing framework. Together they are committed to pursuing discussions with the European Commission in order to develop the best online licensing solution. Any future scheme would have to maintain an equitable equilibrium between the interests of users, creators and the public as well as to recognise the value of creators' rights.

Biographies (pictures available upon request):

- **Pia Raug (Denmark)**. Chairperson of the International Council of Authors and Composers of Music (CIAM) since 2003. Songwriter, composer, singer, musician, author and writer. Vice chairperson of DjbfA's (Danish Authors of Jazz-Beat and folk music), member of the Danish Artists Council, the Danish State Feature Film Council and of KODA. Winner of the various prizes and of the Grants from The Danish States Arts Foundation. Pia actively supports the cause of creators and cultural diversity.
- **Konrad Boehmer (Holland)**. Composer, professor of music history and new music theory at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague where since 1994 he has been director of the Institute of Sonology. His works include concert music (chamber and symphonic), music theatre and electroacoustic music. Konrad has been awarded with the Dutch AVRO-award, the Vth Paris

Biennale, the Rolf-Liebermann prize and the Pierre-Bayle-Prize. His works have been featured in festivals and theatres all over the world, such as the Théâtre National de l'Opéra and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Nat. Opera België in Brussels, the Festival International de Musique Expérimentale (Bourges), the Hamamatsu Festival in Japan and many others. Konrad is member of the board of BUMA and the Dutch Composers' Union.

- **David Ferguson (UK).** Chairman of the Creators' Rights Alliance and the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters, David is a composer with 27 years experience in rock-and-roll and TV. He also serves on the board of British Music Rights and is one of the writers on the board of both MCPS and PRS. He has written the music for over 180 documentary programmes getting a BAFTA and an EMMY nomination. In drama productions, David has worked on TV serials, BBC adaptations and several TV ballets, among others. Through his chairmanship of the CRA and his membership to the BACS, he has developed a comprehensive knowledge of the rights issues that affect not only composers but a myriad of other creators and has extensive background knowledge of issues facing music writers and copyright owners today.
- **Mike Hanrahan (Ireland).** Songwriter, guitarist and Chairman of IMRO, Mike has spent 17 years with Stockton's Wing, touring throughout Europe, USA, Canada and Australia. He wrote several hit songs for this band, including Beautiful Affair, recently voted into the all time Top 75 Irish songs by the RTE. Mike has produced and toured with Ronnie Drew writing many hit songs and critically acclaimed theatre shows. He has recorded several albums with Stockton's Wing, Ronnie Drew and in solo. Chairman of IMRO and member of the Board since 1994, Mike embraces the digital age with all its wonderful possibilities and is deeply committed to the rights of the creator.
- **Bendik Hofseth (Norway).** Composer, saxophonist and singer, Bendik is also a Professor at the Academy of Music in Kristiansand, Norway and member of TONO. He toured all over the world as a regular member of Steps Ahead participating in the release of 2CDs: NYC and Yin-Yang. He has also released 8CDs with his own music, personal blend of genres and styles, collaborating with artists such as Tony Levin, Junior Wells, Talvin Singh, Django Bates, Nana Vasconcelos and Norwegian musicians. Bendik has performed extensively around the world with John McLaughlin, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rickie Lee Jones, among others. He has written numerous commissioned pieces for different ensembles and several film, theatre and TV scores.
- **Laurent Petitgirard (France).** Composer of symphonic music (over 20 pieces) and soundtracks (150 works), Laurent has also a world famous career as conductor having played at the Opéra national de Paris, the Bamberger Philharmoniker, Berliner Symphoniker, la Fenice and many others. His first opera "Joseph Merrick dit Elephant Man" was first performed in 2002 at the State Opera of Prague which was also recorded by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo. He received for this work, the SACD Music Prize in 2001. President of the Board of SACEM from 2003 to 2005, he is a member of the Institut and the Académie des Beaux-Arts since 2000. Laurent has recorder close to thirty records, mainly classical works both as conductor and composer.

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