



News Release

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LIVE MUSIC VENUES IN LONDON TO BE SOLD IF DEAL TO GO AHEAD

The Competition Commission (CC) has formally decided that the proposed acquisition of a controlling interest in Academy Music Holdings Limited (Academy) by Hamsard 2786 Limited (Hamsard) would lead to a substantial lessening of competition in relation to certain live music venues in London, resulting, in particular, in rentals at the venues concerned being higher than would otherwise be the case.

If the acquisition of the controlling interest is to proceed, the merging companies will first be required to sell one of either the Brixton Academy or the Hammersmith Apollo and one of either the Shepherd's Bush Empire or the Forum. These venues represent the closest alternatives to each other in London for artists, agents and promoters of popular live music events and would come under common ownership following the acquisition.

Hamsard will not be permitted to acquire a controlling interest in Academy until there is a binding sale/purchase commitment for the venues in question. The sale will need to be approved by the CC so that it is made to a suitable purchaser(s) and is likely to include venue management and booking teams, contracts with customers and suppliers as well as customer information and contact lists, in order to help ensure the viability of the venues for any purchaser(s).

Hamsard is jointly controlled by Live Nation (Music) UK Ltd (Live Nation) and Gaiety Investments Ltd. Through its ownership of Mean Fiddler Music Group Ltd, Hamsard operates live music venues in London, including the Astoria, and the Forum. It also has a management contract for the Wembley Arena. Academy owns the Shepherd's Bush Empire and the Brixton Academy as well as a number of other venues in London and elsewhere. Live Nation owns the Hammersmith Apollo, and a number of theatres in London. It also owns venues (mostly theatres) in 20 other cities in the UK.

The final report is published today on the CC website www.competition-commission.org.uk, and confirms the inquiry group's provisional findings, which were published in November last year.

Notes for editors

1. The Enterprise Act 2002 empowers the OFT to refer to the CC completed or proposed mergers for investigation and report which create or enhance a 25 per cent share of supply in the UK (or a substantial part thereof) or where the UK turnover associated with the enterprise being acquired is over £70 million.
2. The inquiry group consists of four members: Diana Guy (Group Chairman), Chris Goodall, Professor David Parker and Anthony Stern.
3. The inquiry was referred to the CC on 21 August 2006.
4. Further information on the CC and its procedures, including its policy on the provision of information and the disclosure of evidence, can be obtained from its website at: www.competition-commission.org.uk.
5. Enquiries should be directed to Rory Taylor on 020 7271 0242 (email rory.taylor@cc.gsi.gov.uk.)