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INTERNATIONAL

Junk Aims To Widen Universal Frontiers

BY ALEKSEY KRUZIN

MOSCOW—"It was just 10 years ago that Americans and Russians had missiles pointed at each other," Universal Music Russia managing director David Junk says. "Now, we've got Russian CDs on sale at Tower Records in Los Angeles."

On April 23, Ohio-born Junk extended his management responsibilities to include the Universal Music International (UMI) licenses in the former Eastern Bloc. In addition to UMI's Russian affiliate, Junk now administers its licenses in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia. UMI's licenses in Iceland, Malta, and Gibraltar are now also accountable to him. Junk reports to London-based UMI president/COO John Kennedy.

The extension of Junk's responsibilities coincided with the departure of UMI VP of Eastern Europe Thomas Hedstrom to the London-based post of COO of Continental Europe at EMI. Hedstrom had also been based in London with UMI, but Junk has opted to over-



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ern Europe, which is logical.

"Russia, with its 150-million population, is a sensible place to have an Eastern European hub, because it's becoming one of the most exciting and progressive repertoire centers in the world. In the long run, it clearly has the greatest potential compared with the other markets in the region. With an IFPI [the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry] board meeting taking place here in June, Russia is now obviously highlighted as

Slovenia and those three Baltic countries are among those scheduled to join an expanded European Union in 2004. But all have levels of piracy above 50%, according to the IFPI, with levels in Lithuania the highest (up to 85%).

Junk suggests that integration with the EU should help in dealing with the regional piracy situation. "Being based in Moscow," he says, "I understand the challenges and opportunities of Eastern Europe, because I'm dealing with them firsthand."

Junk says the recent success of Universal Russia pop duo Ta.Lu. has alerted international labels to the potential of music from Eastern Europe and Russia in particular.

"Until recently," he says, "people haven't really been listening for music from Russia that would sell internationally. Ta.Lu. is changing that. Now we have several world-class producers eager to work with us because they realize that Russia is a repertoire center."

Currently, male pop duo Smash!! and female singer/songwriter Alsou are working with Western producers—Walter Afanasieff (Celine Dion, Kenny

thing. They take their own path, and in a way Ta.Lu. is very symbolic of what Russia is now—and of its freedom. They and their music have done much to bring the East and the West together."

Junk says it was close communication with neighboring territories that helped kick-start the international success of Ta.Lu.

Currently, global shipments of the act's debut album, *200 Km/h in the Wrong Lane* (released internationally through Interscope in October

2002), stand at 3 million units, according to Universal.

Earlier this year, Ta.Lu. became the first international act to top the Japanese sales chart with a debut album. Its debut single, "All the Things She Said," topped sales charts in several territories and peaked at No. 20 on The Billboard Hot 100 in the issue dated March 15.

Junk praises Hedstrom and Kennedy for ensuring that Ta.Lu. was given "an equal chance" alongside the major's other international acts overseas.

Italy Happy With EU Copyright Directive

BY MARK WORDEN

MILAN—Record executives in Italy are satisfied with the country's recent adoption of the European Union Copyright Directive. But they think that effective enforcement, not to mention a series

says, "In the past, publications have offered readers do-it-yourself guides to CD burning and file sharing."

Enzo Mazza, president of anti-piracy group FPM, gives the directive the thumbs-up, even if he admits there is a long way to go. "Let's not forget that