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## **Spitfire, Hammer form HS Media**

### **New company to launch foreign sales arm**

By [PAMELA MCCLINTOCK](#)

Dutch producer John de Mol's Cyrt Investments is making a further foray into the film business, acquiring Nigel Sinclair and Guy East's L.A.-based Spitfire Pictures and merging it with famed Brit horror studio Hammer to form HS Media.

Backed by \$100 million in private equity money, new company will initially produce six to eight films per year. HS Media also is launching a foreign sales arm and a distribution operation outside of North America.

Spitfire and Hammer will remain separate brands run by one management team.

The U.K.'s Hammer is home to such classic horror franchises as "Frankenstein" and "Dracula."

Upcoming projects at Spitfire include Sarah Michelle Gellar starrer "Possession," Mike Myers feature "Keith Moon" -- a biopic of the Who drummer -- and Phillip Noyce's bigscreen adaptation of tome "Moral Hazard."

Spitfire also has a documentary unit, which has produced "Amazing Journey: The Story of the Who" and Martin Scorsese's "No Direction Home: Bob Dylan."

Cyrt made its first foray into the movie biz last year when it bought Hammer and tapped Liberty Global execs Simon Oakes and Marc Schipper to run the studio.

HS Media also intends to produce for TV and digital platforms.

Cyrt chair Frank Botman joined Sinclair, Oakes and East in Cannes to announce the launch of the company. Foreign sales arm will have a presence at the American Film Market in the fall and will make its Cannes debut next year.

Team stressed that the market is ripe for new suppliers after the shuttering of New Line Cinema, Warner Independent Pictures and Picturehouse. They also said HS Media stands apart from other ventures

because of the strength and prosperity of Cyrté, which is part of Delta Lloyd Asset Management.

Sinclair and Oakes will serve as co-chairs and co-CEOs of HS Media, while East has been named prexy-chair of the executive board and of the new sales and distribution arm. Schipper has been appointed chief operating officer of HS Media, while Andy Mayson has joined as chief financial officer and managing director of sales and distribution.

Spitfire's Tobin Armbrust will head worldwide production of HS Media, while Spitfire's Alex Brunner will lead U.S. operations.

HS Media has a combined library of more than 300 titles, with Hammer titles making up the vast majority. Company is mining the Hammer catalog for possible remakes.

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