

A&M makes UK comeback

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The famous brand founded by Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss, but which closed this side of the Atlantic as a stand-alone label nearly decade ago, is being reactivated as a UK repertoire source. It will be headed by former Polydor head of A&R Simon Gavin and Loog label boss James Oldham, who becomes A&R director.

The pair will report to [Universal Music Operations](#) president David Joseph with A&M positioned to sit alongside sister Polydor labels Fiction and Fascination. Joseph adds, "Simon and James have a very clear vision of the type of long-term artist they wish to attract. I know they will shape a label with the quality and spirit evident throughout the history of A&M."

Gavin says he remembers buying records by The Police on A&M and the label still retains enormous heritage. "I think A&M is a new label with an old name and when competing with other labels it is great to have this history on our side. It gives the A&R person a real identity and the artist a defined home," says Gavin, who in his 12 years at Polydor has signed Ms Dynamite and Daniel Bedingfield. "Rolling Stone once described A&M as the classiest label on the planet and that's what we aspire to."

Like the A&M of old, home to acts from Burt Bacharach to Squeeze, A&M in 2006 will operate a broad spread of genres from bands to pop projects. "We want the best of all genres and will be selective and focused in our signing policy. It's got to be a spread. We want quality, to break new UK artists and make great albums," he adds. Gavin says that he hopes material signed in the UK will then be picked up by A&M in the US, although A&M's international repertoire is unaffected by the relaunch and will continue to be marketed through Polydor's Associated Labels division.

Making the first A&M UK signing for eight years, Gavin and Oldham will launch the new label's roster with London outfit The Hours. Former NME journalist Oldham, whose four-year-old Loog imprint will remain active for one-off projects, says "The Hours are the perfect band to kick off with. It's gritty, ambitious pop music and we're delighted to be working with Geoff Travis and Jeanette Lee on the management side."