

## [ IN BRIEF ]

### ABBA STAR HITS OUT AT PIRATE BAY

Proceedings have ended on the third day of the Pirate Bay file-sharing trial, a case that has prompted Abba star Björn Ulvaeus to criticise demands for Internet freedom.

The case finished for yesterday (Feb. 18) at lunchtime following the defendant's lawyer's introduction to the defence case at the Stockholm district court. The four men - Hans Fredrik Neij, Göttfrid Svartholm Warg, Peter Sundé and Carl Lundström - were set to be cross-examined yesterday.

They are accused of making copyrighted material available to others. They deny the charge and say there is nothing illegal about the BitTorrent tracker.

Writing on the Swedish Web site Newsmill, Ulvaeus - executive producer of the "Mamma Mia!" movie - lambasted those defending the "freedom" of the Internet in relation to the Pirate Bay case. Abba is Sweden's most successful musical export.

"It is easier and cheaper to steal than to download legally," he writes, describing the service as offering "the 'freedom' to be lazy and mean."

"Is it really so damn difficult to pay your way?" he asks, stating that compensation for authors and funders of projects is vital to their success.

The defendants face up to two years in prison if they are convicted. They also face compensation and damages claims of 120 million kronor (\$14.3 million). Plaintiffs in the case include Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., MGM Pictures Inc., Columbia Pictures Industries Inc., 20th Century Fox Films Co., Sony Music Entertainment, Universal and EMI.

The trial follows a May 2006 raid by police on

10 locations in central Sweden; servers and computer equipment were seized and the site was temporarily shut down. The Pirate Bay has an estimated 22 million users.

—Andre Paine, London

### FONTANA INKS DEAL WITH MCCONAUGHEY'S J.K. LIVIN

Fontana has signed an exclusive distribution deal with actor Matthew McConaughey's recording label, j.k. livin. The first release under the deal will be reggae artist Mishka's debut album, "Above The Bones," released Feb. 17, which McConaughey helped produce.

j.k. livin, is the name of McConaughey's production company and line of products which includes men's, women's and baby apparel as well as hard goods such as Frisbees, can coolers and stickers.

—Cortney Harding, N.Y.

### CAVE RECRUITS BAD SEED

Ed Kuepper has slotted into the line-up of Nick Cave's band the Bad Seeds, taking the guitar position left vacant by Mick Harvey (Billboard.biz, Jan. 22).

Kuepper, a founding member of Australian punk group the Saints and post-punk outfit Laughing Clowns, will join the Bad Seeds for headline slots at German festivals Southside (Neuhausen Ob Eck) and Hurricane (Scheessel) in June, and at Oxegen Festival in Ireland the following month. Other European dates will be announced in due course.

The German born singer and guitarist rose to critical fame with the Saints, which was famously described by Bob Geldof as one of the

three bands that shaped the 1970s, the others being the Sex Pistols and the Ramones. He split with the Saints at the end of the decade, and got to work with his experimental act Laughing Clowns.

Kuepper embarked on a solo career from 1984, which has seen the release of more than 20 albums and several film and soundtrack projects. His latest studio recording was "Jean Lee and the Yellow Dog" in 2007.

Multi-instrumental Harvey issued a statement last month explaining he was leaving the Bad Seeds after 25 years for a "variety of personal and professional reasons."

—Lars Brandle, Brisbane

### LEGENDARY ROCK OPERA TO HAVE THEATRE DEBUT

Rock opera Quadrophenia, created by the Who's Pete Townshend, has been adapted into a stage production for the first time and will hit theatres in the U.K. from May 9.

Staged in association with Industrial Language Ltd, the production has been written by Jeff Young and will be directed by Tom Critchley with music supervision and arrangements by John O'Hara.

The production will begin at Plymouth's Theatre Royal and conclude Sept. 29 at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre.

Originally released as an album in 1973 by the Who, Quadrophenia is a coming-of-age tale based in London and Brighton, set in the mod era of the 1960s. In 1979, it was made into a film, starring Sting, Phil Daniels, Leslie Ash, Toyah Wilcox and Ray Winstone.

—Jen Wilson, London