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Producers pair up for Fame U.K.

Downey, Taylor help form Film and Music Entertainment Ltd.

By LIZA FOREMAN

BERLIN -- Ex-Moving Pictures' publisher/producer Mike Downey and U.K. producer Sam Taylor have joined forces with the German film/music production and acquisitions entity Fame to form London-based Film and Music Entertainment Ltd.

The new production and acquisitions entity, Fame. U.K., will serve as the U.K. office for Fame and is being created out of a merger of Downey's Bridie Films and Taylor's MASS Productions. It will be majority-owned by Fame. (60%) with Downey and Taylor holding the remaining 40%.

Company plans to turn out some four to five English-language pics in the \$4-million to \$15-million budget range annually from a development slate of around 10 projects per year. The London office will also serve as a scouting base for international projects for the German market that would both feed Fame's production activities and its licensing division.

Stephen Daldry ("Billy Elliot") will sit on the three-man advisory board.

Downey is to serve as managing director with Taylor heading up production and Taylor's associate Sam Lavender assuming the title development co-ordinator.

"It's terrific that Stephen is on the board," Downey tells *Variety*. "And that we have support from that sort of level of creators. Stephen is a very inspiring personality and attracts inspiring people. As such he will be a conduit of talent."

Company is planning to tap into both the U.K. broadcasting market and the German private and public tax funds sector for financing as well as relying on its own "cornerstone."

"We are looking at a mix of big budget projects, animation and family entertainment and are putting together some really good projects," Downey says. "We are very confident about bringing major international projects over to shoot in Germany. We have great confidence in the mother ship."

Previous titles from both MASS and Bridie Films will be taken over into the new shingle. These include the Oscar nominated "Before The Rain" and Benjamin Ross's "The Young Poisoner's Handbook."

Fame was created out of the German producer Indigo and Becker & Haeberle, ("Seven Days to production companies Artforce Music Prod., Fame U.K. MBM Medienvertrieb.

Time Out!



Company has been listed on German exchange the Neuer Markt since August last year.

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