



kensington record labels

THE KENSINGTON RECORD LABEL CLUSTER

Much focus has been made recently on 'the silicon roundabout' around Old Street EC2, in terms of the cluster of technology companies in that area, but perhaps one of the most concentrated industries in London are the major record labels. Following Universal Music Groups relocation of all subsidiary labels such as Polygram and Decca Records this year, all the major record labels are now in Kensington, west

of the West End.

Since 2008, following mergers and acquisitions, the six major record labels of the 1980s and 1990s have been reduced to four 'major labels'.

All of these 4 'majors' are now just off Kensington High Street within no more than a mile of each other.

1		WARNER MUSIC 28 Kensington Church Street, W8 4EP	2		SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT 9 Derry Street, W8 5HY
3		EMI 27 Wrights Lane, W8 5SW	4		UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP 364 Kensington High Street, W14 8NS and Beaumont House Kensington Village, W14 8TS

Also, the UK's biggest live music and ticketing company, Live Nation, relocated in 2011 to the Chrysalis former HQ, The Phoenix Brewery, Notting Dale, W10 6SP in Kensington & Chelsea.

HISTORY OF RECORD LABELS IN KENSINGTON & CHELSEA AND HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM



Prior to relocating to Kensington High Street record the labels have always been based in West London. The first was EMI (Electrical & Musical Industries) formed in 1931 in Hayes, near Heathrow, when the HMV and Columbia Gramophone companies merged. Subsequently they were based at **43 Brook Green, Hammersmith, W6 7EF** before relocating to their current address, **27 Wrights Lane, Kensington, W8 5SW**

Perhaps it is the prevalence of recording studios in the west, as well as the independent record labels and record shops that grew out of the reggae and punk scene of Notting Hill, that lead to the record labels clustering in the boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham.

Smaller labels that are now owned by Universal Music Group (the largest major) and their previous locations were:

POLYGRAM, 1 Sussex Place, Hammersmith (sold to Notting Hill Housing in 2001 as their HQ)

ISLAND RECORDS, 22 St Peter's Square, Hammersmith (sold and now occupied by niche west of West End agents, Frost Meadowcroft and architects, Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands)

POLYDOR, 72 Black Lion Lane, Hammersmith, W6 9BE (converted to housing in 2008)

DECCA RECORDS, 347-353 Chiswick High Road, W4 4HS (multi-let offices)

LONDON RECORDS, 57-63 Old Church Street, SW3 5BS (converted to housing)






SANCTUARY RECORDS, 45-53 Sinclair Road, W14 0NS (being converted to housing)

V2, 131-133 Holland Park Avenue, W11 4UT (vacant and To Let)

BERTELSMANN (now part of Sony) **69-70 Fulham High Street, SW6 3JW** (now the Fulham Green office complex)

VIRGIN (sold to EMI), **553-579 Harrow Road**, Ladbroke Grove, W10 4RH (now the Derwent-owned Canal Building let to Innocent Drinks)

REMAINING INDEPENDENT LABELS

5		Rough Trade Records 66 Golborne Road, Ladbroke Grove, W10 5PS	6		Wall of Sound Thorpe Close (under the Westway) Ladbroke Grove, W10 5XL
7		XL Recordings 1 Codrington Mews, W11 2EH	8		Independiente 40 Adam & Eve Mews, W8 6UJ (relocated from Chiswick in 2011)
9		Mute Records 1 Albion Place, Hammersmith, W6 0QT			

RECORDING STUDIOS

METROPOLIS STUDIOS at **Power House, 70 Chiswick High Road, W4 1SY** was purchased by Helical Bar as an investment in 2011 and continues as a studio. The Power House was a former power station for trams built in 1901. Metropolis was the recording studio where Kate Moss was surreptitiously filmed sniffing a line of white powder while Pete Doherty's Babyshambles recorded in 2005. Back to Black by Amy Winehouse and Urban Hymns by Verve were recorded at Metropolis.

TOWNHOUSE STUDIOS, 150 Goldhawk Road, W12 8HH was built by Richard Branson in 1978 as part of the Virgin Studios Group (Sanctuary ran the studios after Virgin was sold to Sanctuary in 1992). Studio 2 was a popular place to record drum sounds in the 1980s as a result of producer, Hugh Padgham's 'gated drum effect' (where the reverb cuts off abruptly rather than fading away), made famous and used so prominently on Phil Collins' single 'In the Air Tonight'. Universal, who bought Sanctuary, sold the studios in 2008 and it has planning for a mixed use scheme. Hugh Padgham is now based at **Stanley House Studios, 39 Stanley Gardens, W3 7SY**.

THE FALL OUT SHELTER, 47 British Grove, W4 2NL in the basement at the rear of **Island Studios 22 St Peter's Square** in Hammersmith was Island Records Studio in the former Victorian Laundry. Artists recording there included Bob Marley and The Wailers who recorded tracks for Exodus under its chimney. The studio is occupied as part of Omnifone's offices in Island Studios.

BRITISH GROVE STUDIOS, 20 British Grove, W4 2NL. Opposite the former Fall Out Shelter is Mark Knopfler's (ex-Dire Straits frontman) studio. This is a modern purpose-built building but houses rare old equipment such as the original EMI consuls, used by Beatles producer George Martin, as well as new technology.

SARM STUDIOS, Basing Street, Notting Hill, W11 1ET was a former church converted to a studio by Chris Blackwell, owner of Island Records. Later the studio was the venue for Band Aid's Do They Know It's Christmas, produced by the studio owner, Trevor Horn, who had chart successes with the bands The Buggles, Yes and Art of Noise. He also produced Frankie Goes to Hollywood and Pet Shop Boys among others.

In St John's Wood are the **ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS, 3 Abbey Road, NW8 9AY** established in 1931 by EMI in an 1830's Georgian townhouse. The studio is most famous for the 1969 Beatles LP named after the studios and was their most successful album, with its iconic cover featuring the band walking across the zebra crossing outside the studio.

Nearby is **RAK RECORDING STUDIOS, 42-48 Charlbert Street, NW8 7BU** created by the produce Mickie Most in 1976 in a former Victorian school. The late Mickie Most produced House of the Rising Sun by The Animals and You Sexy Thing by Hot Chocolate.

OLYMPIC STUDIOS, 117 Church Road, Barnes SW13 9HL, a 1905 built former cinema closed in 2009 but numerous classic albums were recorded by bands such as the Rolling Stones, The Who and Led Zepplin.

SOUND TECHNIQUES, 46a Old Church Street, SW3 5BY in a former converted dairy is now closed. Nick Drake's classic Bryter Layter was recorded there in 1970 as was the Pink Floyd single Arnold Layne.

Artists with their own studios include **Bryan Ferry in Avonmore Place, W14 8RW** near Kensington Village and **Damon Albarn of Blur at 335-339 Latimer Road, W10 6RA**, near the Westway. This studio recently featured in their video for new single, Under the Westway.



METROPOLIS STUDIOS
at Power House (above)



TOWNHOUSE STUDIOS
Goldhawk Road W12 (above)



FALL OUT SHELTER
at, rear of Island Studios, St Peter Square (above)



BRITISH GROVE
Mark Knopfler Studio (above)



SARM STUDIOS
Notting Hill W11 (above)