Rolling Stones ink new deal with Universal Music, merchandise is key

By Sandra Halliday - 9 July 2018

One of the biggest rock groups to ever come out of the UK music scene is still going strong and has just signed a new “unprecedented” partnership deal of which merchandise is a huge part.

The Rolling Stones on Sunday said they’ve inked a deal with Universal Music Group (UMG) that will be “an expansive worldwide agreement covering the band's iconic recorded music and audio-visual catalogues, archival support, global merchandising and brand management.”

That might not have mattered to the fashion sector once upon time, but the merchandising element makes it hugely relevant. Don't forget, it's not that many weeks ago that Selfridges turned over its key piece of real estate, the Corner Shop, to the band and also filled its windows with video of the Rolling Stones in action.

Announcing the deal, UMG said that “the multi-faceted partnership marks the beginning of a new era of expanded collaboration between The Rolling Stones and UMG.” And it added that “few bands in history have so profoundly impacted global culture as The Rolling Stones. Through their powerful music, live performances, unique visual identity and attitude, the band is renowned throughout the world to audiences of all ages, widely influencing popular culture through art, fashion and film.”

Universal has already worked with the Rolling Stones for a decade and despite the band members being in their 70s, they seem to have no intention to retire just yet, with this new deal signalling an even more intense push behind band-linked products.

UMG will continue to distribute the music catalogue globally while Bravado, its brand-management and merchandise company and the biggest global provider of such services to recording artists, will also have a big role to play. It will handle global retail, digital and mobile wellness, branded merchandise and e-commerce co
part to play. It will handle global merchandising rights, retail licensing, brand management and e-commerce on behalf of the band, including their tongue logo, which, alongside the Smiley face, is one of the most universally recognised symbols that has regularly appeared on clothing product.

The company also said that Bravado will continue “working closely with the band and management to identify new and innovative opportunities for creative collaboration within the worlds of art, fashion, retail, sport, lifestyle and touring merchandise.” Recent programs and collections include partnerships with Paris Saint Germain FC, that Selfridges collab, plus Colette and Zara, and newly designed merchandise for their No Filter European Tour.

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