U.K. Troubled by Static ‘99 Market

BY TOM FERGUSON
and PAUL SEXTON
LONDON—On the eve of its annual celebratory, and often ramshackle, Brit Awards, the U.K. record industry doesn’t seem in the mood to party.

News analysis

Published statistics from the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) have confirmed there was no significant market growth last year (Billboard Bulletin, Feb. 14). But there are also other unsettling issues for the business, and these are bound to be chewed over at London’s Earl’s Court venue when the Brit Awards 2000 (Continued on page 91)

New AOL Service to Tap Urban Entertainment Market

BY GAIL MITCHELL
LOS ANGELES—As online companies continue to jockey for ways to reach their targeted audiences, America Online (AOL) has joined with Englewood Cliffs, N.J.-based DME Interactive Holdings to form Places of Color, a new partnership aimed at the urban market.

The CompuServe 2000-powered online service will provide Internet access and customized content to minority communities.

Also as part of this agreement, AOL will take a minority stake in DME Interactive, while DME will market AOL 6.0 through its various marketing channels.

“This is the urban version of AOL, with AOL of Color of Serve as a partner,” explains DME Interactive CEO Durien Dash. “We’re trying to create places of color for people of color. I founded this company 6½ years ago on the mission statement of expanding the (Continued on page 92)

Viapul Preps For Net Push

BY DON JEFFREY
and BRIAN GARRITY
NEW YORK—With revenue and profit from long-standing businesses like MTV Networks, Paramount Pictures, and Blockbuster rising strongly, Viacom is now preparing a big move into new media with an initial public offering of its MTV Group online operations in April.

The New York-based entertainment colossus also believes that its acquisition of major TV network and station owner CBS will be completed by March or April, despite a lawsuit recently filed by a Viacom venture (Continued on page 93)

EMI, Supertracks Hatch Digital Plan

BY MARILYN A. GILLEN
NEW YORK—1999 may not have been the digital Christmas that some in the music industry had anticipated, but spring is slowly shaping up to be a somewhat merrier season for fans seeking major-label downloads.

Case in point: EMI Recorded Music has just tapped Portland, Ore.-based Supertracks as its “preferred (Continued on page 101)

Lord Kitchener: The Passing Of Calypso’s Grand Master... P4
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New Independent Chart Is 'Topps' Sweden Celebrates Sales High At Awards

BY ANDERS LUNDQUIST and KAI R. LOFTHUS

STOCKHOLM — The Swedish music industry gathered together Feb. 14 at the country’s annual Grammisgalan award show to celebrate individual artists’ achievements, while basking in the glow of what that show says about Scandinavia’s 13th biggest music market at an all-time high.

At trade prices, recorded music shipped in Sweden by its 10 member companies: Arcadea, BMG, edel, EMI, MNW, Sony, Stockholm Records, Universal, Virgin, and Warner. The figures for Sweden, which will appear later this year in the International Federation of the Phonograph Industry’s “Recording Industry in Numbers” yearbook, will be based on estimated retail sales, including product from non-GLF members.

Single sales accounted for the highest sales increase in 1999. They rose 18.2% in value to 97 million kronor ($11.2 million) and 22.5% in units (to 5.4 million), with CD-single sales seemingly unaffected by the threat from Internet downloads and CD burners.

Total album sales were 21.9 million units, representing a value of 1.5 billion kronor ($172 million). The highest increase within that total came from the revival of the MiniDisc format, with sales of 26,000 units — up 100% on 1998, with a value of 2.3 million kronor ($263,100). Meanwhile, CD sales were also up 3.7% to 1.48 billion kronor ($171 million) and 21.2 million units sold (up 0.5%).

Industry executives have welcomed the figures. Eric Hasselqvist, GM of Stockholm Records (part-owned by Universal) suggests that with several major artists selling fewer units last year, it felt as if the market was contracting — yet the opposite was true, with increased sales being spread over more artists. “It felt as if the market didn’t experience an increase, but it obviously did,” he says.

“Stockholm Records has one double-platinum [sales of 200,000 units] act, A’Teers,” he continues. “But we haven’t got many that sell up to 30,000 copies [domestically] any longer, and it can be easier to obtain chart placement with a niche artist than a mainstream one. Young people are really ready for some extreme music to revolt against their parents with.”

Sony Music managing director Per Sundin puts the increased sales down to a change of focus. “The entire music

(Continued on page 97)

Grayzel Named President Of VNU Media

NEW YORK — Jeremy Grayzel has been appointed president of VNU eMedia Inc., a newly formed organization that combines the electronic media assets of several VNU USA companies, including Billboard’s parent company, BPIMedia Communications Inc.

Prior to joining VNU, Grayzel served the company as an Internet consultant. He was also president/CEO of his own company, GrayFire Information Services, from 1989 to 1998. Grayzel’s background also includes a stint as president of Family Media Inc. and chairman of the Emerging Business Council of the Information Industry Assn.

Grayzel is based out of VNU USA’s headquarters in New York. He reports to a board of directors whose chairman is BPIMedia Communications president/CEO John Babcock Jr.

VNU eMedia Inc. is a division of VNU Business Media, a company formed last fall that also includes VNU properties BPIMedia Communications Inc., Bill Communications Inc., and VNU Expositions.

“I’m delighted that Jeremy Grayzel will lead our efforts to rapidly expand our growth in electronic media for all our media properties. The combination of print, electronic media, and face-to-face events is a powerful combination to service the needs of our targeted audiences,” says John Wickersham, president/CEO of VNU Business Media.

“VNU already has such tremendous media properties and market share,” Grayzel says. “By providing the publications and exposition groups with access to truly advanced technology and tools, whether developed internally or through strategic relationships, VNU Business Media will be in a position to compete and lead in a quickly changing business environment.”

BPI’s Babcock Jr. notes, “Many of our brands are winning on the Internet, while other brands are trying to get into the Internet. Grayzel’s experience in both print and electronic publishing will enable us to grow, compete, and prosper more rapidly.”

The VNU eMedia Group replaces BPI’s U.S. Electronic Media Group. That group’s 40 employees will be incorporated into VNU eMedia. The VNU eMedia staff will expand to about 50 employees by the end of 2000.

VNU USA is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Netherlands-based VNU, which employs 19,000 people worldwide. In addition to Billboard, BPI Communications also owns Adweek, Brandweek, MediawEEK, The Hollywood Reporter, and Editor & Publisher.

LETTERS

AIRWAYS: THAT’S THE WAY CEILING IS

Just when I thought I had read everything there is to read about Celine Dion, Chuck Taylor’s Airwaves column (Billboard, Jan. 8) brought me more information about the Canadian superstar.

I’m glad all my favorite Billboard writers and columnists will be keeping me informed about the music industry as we enter the new millennium. To Chuck and all his peers at Billboard, keep up the good work.

Brian Mickelson

Milwaukee

EARS FOR ALL SOCIAL CLIMATES AND SEASONS


Tom Frestom

Chairman/CEO

MTV Networks

New York

“Cuba’s anarchistic one-man rule will fade not by fostering intolerance in Miami but rather by furthering the cause of independent projects like Cuba’s Social Club,” Terrific piece (“String Of Pearls: Cuba’s Music Revolution,” Music to My Ears, Feb. 19, 2000).
Calypso Master Lord Kitchener Dies At 77

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

NEW YORK—Caribbean calypso legend Lord Kitchener died Feb. 11 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. He was 77.

According to Deborah Jean Baptiste, spokesperson for the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Center, Kitchener died in the hospital, where he was admitted 11 days earlier for kidney failure and bone marrow cancer.

Dr. Leslie Ann Roberts, assistant general manager at the center, confirms that Kitchener succumbed to severe infections brought on by a blood disorder and organ failure.

Dubbed the Grand Master of calypso in Trinidad and Tobago—and nicknamed Stringbean for his skeleton-like 6-foot-2 Frame—Kitchener's prolific calypso output was widely revered for its lively musicality and passion for social commentary.

Kitchener, whose songs include "Mama Dis Is Mis," "Raincarm," "Green Fig Man," "Steel Band Music," "Tribute To Euphriam," "Roll Your Abdomen," and "Pan In Harmony," dominated the calypso/soca world.

Born Aldwyn Roberts on April 18, 1922, to blacksmith Stephen Roberts and wife Albertha, Kitchener was raised, along with his two brothers and three sisters, in north-central Arima, a crossroads town in the parish of St. George. At the age of 15, Kitchener sang in his first calypso tent. After World War II, he performed in England with calypso artists Lion, Atilla the Hun, and Growling Tiger.

Cliford Dacres, a childhood friend, recalls how the rising star would often lead his schoolmates in chanting rhymes during sports matches with opposing teams.

Danclaire says he never heard Kitchener actually learning to play the guitar or the string bass. Additionally, he notes that Kitchener's rambling melodies were culled from the blacksmith shop.

In the late '70s, Kitchener notched the first international smash in the soca style with "Sugar Eum Roam." Recalls Stein, "In December 1977, (Continued on page 17)
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Cal IV Fills Out Staff With Publishing Vets

BY CHET FLIPPO

NASHVILLE—Cal Turner III launched his full-service publishing company, Cal IV Entertainment (named after his son), in 1999, since he has been the right management team.

Now, after hiring veteran publishing executive Daniel Hill as president of the company and two of Hill's long-time associates, Cal IV CEO Turner feels the right elements are in place.

In the present climate of mergers and consolidation, Turner says he feels a “right-sized,” local, autonomous publisher may well have an advantage in attracting and holding songwriters and in working copyrights.

With a catalog of 10,000-plus songs and a roster of 14 staff writers, the company has become one of Nashville’s prominent independent publishers. It grew out of a deal struck on a country chart song with the Faith Hill song “Breathe.”

The core of the Cal IV catalog is the Killen Music Group, which Turner acquired in 1993 for $2 million. Cal IV also bought David Will Music (founded by Grammy-winning songwriters Will Jennings and David Briggs), Blonde Hair Music, Buddy Kirk Music, Killen Songs Inc., and the Eddie Croc Christian catalog. Other acquisitions are in the offing, Turner says, as they become available.

Daniel Hill comes to Cal IV with a background in both Polygram Music Publishing Group, prior to its merger with MCA Music Publishing, Hill was Poly- Gram VP/acting GM and subse- quently GM of Universal Music. In 1992 he designed the creative/administrative database system still in use at Universal Music.

Joining Hill at Cal IV as VP of creative services is Billy Lyon, who was formerly Universal Music’s senior creative director. Lyon had been with PolyGram and then Universal for 14 years.

Mark Dorminy, who was Universal’s manager of business and technology services, has been named senior director of administration and technology at Cal IV. Dorminy, graduate of California mathematical science graduate, had joined PolyGram in 1997.

Noting that Hill, Lyon and Dor- miny have all had experience with both independent and major pub- lishers, Turner says the hires were done “to stay competitive with the majors and to be a strong publisher, not just in Nashville but also all over. These guys fit the bill.”

After leaving Universal, Hill says, “I was looking for a situation where I could combine my experience with the larger company into a smaller situation where I can spend more time and energy recruiting fewer people and get back to the creative side and spend more time. (Continued on page 103)

2000 Touchstones Awarded. Women in Music Inc. recently announced to the recipients of its 2000 Touchstones Awards at a luncheon at New York’s Marriott Marquis Hotel. The awards are given to women who have made a difference in the music industry over their years in the business. Among this year’s honorees were Odetta, a Grammy-nominated folk/blues singer; Mary Jo Menfes, senior VP/GM of Fox Music Inc.; Monica Lynch, president emeritus of Tommy Boy Records; Carol Kaye, bassist; and Barbara Skyel, executive VP of Premier Talent Agency. Honored posthumously was Marie St. Louis, senior VP of Capitol Records. Headquartered in New York, Women in Music is a nonprofit organization that provides educational forums, networking opportunities, musical showcases, and other support for music industry professionals. Shown at the ceremony, from left, are Odetta, Menfes, Lynch, Kaye, and Skyel.

GetMusic Gears Up With New Staff, Content Pact

BY MARILYN A. GILLEN

NEW YORK—As the Sony Music and Time Warner-backed Columbia House prepares to be integrated with E-tailer CDNow (Bill- board, Feb. 19) and Universal Music’s Farmclub.com begins to take root, BMG and Uni- versal’s own GetMusic is adding staff and content in preparation for a “re-focused re-launch,” according to GetMusic president/CEO Andrew Nibley.

Nibley says the Web-site—which has been relatively un- heralded since its debut as a joint label venture last April—intends to signifi- cantly raise its pro- file in the coming months as it republishes itself as more of a “con- tent and community site,” rather than primarily an E-tailer.

A just-in-time alliance with un- signed-artist specialist Riffage, through which Riffage acts will be featured within the major-label-focused GetMusic site, and vice versa (Billboard/Bulletin, Feb. 16)—is one part of that game plan.

BMG is already an equity investor in the privately held Riffage, having participated in a $21 million round of financing secured by the Palo Alto, Calif.-based company in December.

“We intentionally kept a low pro- file, planning to bring in a senior management team and get more of the pieces in place for a re-launch,” says Nibley, who joined from his position as president of the Reuters NewMedia Inc. last October. “Now that those people are starting to come into place, and the site is starting to change its focus, you’ll see GetMusic being a lot more aggressive on the public relations and marketing front.”

On Feb. 16, GetMusic announced its latest raft of appointments: cre- ative director Lynn Thomson (for- merly of MTVi/SonicNet), managing editor Joe Rosenthal (Rollingstone.com), executive pro- ducer Cherri Cheng (SonicNet), VP of E-commerce Margo Sippel (Continued on page 103)

Tour Organizers Are Keen On Kiss Say Original Members’ Final Tour Could Gross Over $40 Mil.

BY RAY WADDELL

NASHVILLE—Tour organizers are hoping the upcoming Kiss Farewell Tour can parlay a unique venue envi- ronment and a “last chance” mental- ity into more than $40 million in grosses.

The tour, which begins March 11 at the Blockbuster/Desert Sky Pavi- on in Phoenix, is billed as the last for the four original members: Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Freh- ley, and Peter Criss.

The outing also marks the first extended run of amphitheater dates for Kiss. The Detroit-based band camed into 1970s, and has played arenas almost exclusively since the original members reunited in 1996.

Billboard editor Waddey says Kiss will play about 75 North American shows, at least half of which will be shed, and will tour internation- ally if demand warrants. He esti- mates the tour could gross between $40 million-$50 million. Opening acts are Ted Nugent and Skid Row.

When Mike Portnoy, who booked the tour for Creative Artists Agency, initially shopped the tour to promot- ers, he admits it was met with some “head scratching.” But when Kiss drew $15,000 on New Year’s Eve, a notoriously soft night, to General Motors Place in Vancouver, interest was piqued. “That gave the indica- tion that this would be a hit tour,” he says.

As the official media sponsor, VH1 began offering tickets at VH1.com on Feb. 19, thirty days prior to the Feb. 19 national on-sale date. A VH1 spokesman says more than 30,000 tickets were sold via the site by the end of the day on Feb. 16. Additionally, the cable outlet will present the tour of the opening of the show on VH1. Pepsi is also a sponsor.

The tour coincides with the release of “Alive IV,” coming on Mercury/ Island Def Jam.

The label moved up the project’s release from summer to March to capitalize on the buzz surrounding the Kiss concert to be held on the Island/Def Jam (IDJ) marketing staff to make everything happen quickly. “We have a lot of things in the works, but we’ve been living with this [tour announcement] for about a week,” says Paul Resta, product manager for IDJ.

The label has a lot of promotional tools at their disposal, including a planned video game co- promotion with video game design- er Gathering of Developers and the planned CD-ROM “sister” site and its database of thousands.

We want to heighten visibility, but Kiss doesn’t need help selling out dates,” Resta says. “I think Kiss have the right momentum for this tour.”

But it will very solid. This is a big-time rock’n’roll show in every sense of the word.”

Danny Zelisko, whose Zelisko Starfish Productions will promote the first four tour dates, has even higher expectations. “I think it’s a slam- dunk,” he says. “I wouldn’t be surprised if this tour did anything but great. This is Kiss.”

LEGITIMATE THE LAST

McGee says this is really the last tour for Kiss, despite what any nay- sayers might believe. “This is it, legitimately. In the past they’ve only done tours like this in order to make the amount of time, going back to when they were together in the 70s. This tour is a huge tribute to their fans.”

This is the last time you will see Kiss.”

Zelisko says the “farewell” aspect is a nice hook but not the major selling point for the tour. “This is one of the greatest live shows ever. I’ve done these guys for over 20 years, and it’s always been a gas!”

—DANNY ZELIKSO
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Latin Stars, Execs Join To Create Entertainment Site

BY JOHN LANNERT

Don Francisco is well-known to Latino television viewers as the ebullient host of “Sábado Gigante” who implores his TV family to stop their hysteria and be suitably applauado!”

Now the Chilean TV super- star is a co-founder of a Latino music and entertainment Web site called Aplusa.com, along with global icon Julio Iglesias, Internet innovator Larry Rosen, and veteran Latin record label executive Sergio Zorenblit. The launch date for the site is slated for July.

Don Francisco, whose real name is Marto Kreutzberger, and Iglesias are bringing their famous faces and valuable business connections to the venture. But the online firm’s day-to-day operations will be overseen by Rosen, chairman of the board of directors, and Zorenblat, the company’s COO. (Continued on page 16)
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Dr. Demento Marks 30 Years Of Funny Music With Rhino Set

BY JIM BESSMAN
NEW YORK—Barry Hansen's 30-year celebration of novelty music, via his syndicated radio norm de microphone, Demento, is being commemorated, appropriately, on Feb. 29 with Rhino Records' two-disc, 42-track "Demento 2000: Dr. Demento's 30th Anniversary Collection."

But please, don't call it novelty music. "Funny music" is a more inclusive term," says Hansen, who discovered "Weird Al" Yankovic and perpetuated Tom Lehrer. "Novelty music" has had connotations: a flash in the pan. But I've played 'Fish Heads' for 22 years and still get dozens of calls every week. So things on my show have a lifespan even if they're funny.

Hansen & Barnes 'Fish Heads' appeared on Demento's "20th Anniversary Collection: The Greatest Novelty Records Of All Time," and several other holiday and theme-related Demento titles.

Three tracks on the new set are by Yankovic, who in 1976 was Alfred Yankovic, a 15-year-old high school student in Lynnwood, Calif., when he sent his first homemade song parody to Hansen. He remains Demento's most-requested artist.

"If there hadn't been a Dr. Demento, I'd probably have a real job now," says Yankovic. "He gave me my first break by playing the home-recorded tapes I made in my bedroom—just me and my accordion singing into a little cheesy cassette tape recorder."

Also included is '50s and '60s funny music legend Lehrer; Demento's second most-requested artist and the subject of a forthcoming Rhino boxed set that Hansen is working on.

Hansen says, "Newer things that the general public hasn't heard but are huge on the show represent the 'new comedy underground,' as I'd like to say: 'Balloons Bouffant' by the Vestibules—a sketch group from Canada who are regulars on the CBC network, but pretty unknown in the States—is my most-requested item of the '90s, but none. It's about three guys waiting at a bus stop who get into word games, and the audience finds it hypnotic and fascinating."

"Demento 2000" also includes such rarities as Billy Crystal's "I Hate When That Happens" and Cheech & Chong's "How I Spent My Summer Vacation"

"If people get any message from this album, it's that funny music never went away."

—BARRY HANSEN

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"If people get any message from this album, it's that funny music never went away."

—BARRY HANSEN
‘Psychotic’ Fishbone Goes Hollywood
Label Targets New Audience While Luring Group’s Early Fans

BY CARLA HAY
NEW YORK—Fishbone would like to clear something up right now: The band never broke up—and it isn’t planning to go away any time soon.

In fact, Fishbone—which has been blending rock and funk for about 20 years—is embarking on a new chapter in its career after nurtur-ving numerous lineage changes, internal conflict, and leaving its longtime record company: After parting ways with Columbia Records, the Los Angeles-based band is starting over with Hollywood Records, which will release Fishbone’s next album, “The Psychotic Friends Nutturyx,” March 21 in the U.S.

Because Hollywood has its core operations only in the U.S., other labels will release the album in different territories: Universal in Canada, A&M in Japan, edel in Europe, and Festival in Australia and New Zealand.

Industry observers believe that part of creating awareness for the record will be overcoming any public perception that Fishbone is a defunct band. The group’s previous album was 1996’s “Chim Chim’s Badass Revenge.”

“I’m glad that Fishbone is still together,” says David Losvegas, senior music buyer for the Troy, Mich.-based retail chain Harmony House Records & Tapes. “But I don’t think a R&B group are part of this new album. When I’ve told people about it, they either didn’t know that Fishbone has a new album coming out or they didn’t know that Fishbone was still together. Hopefully, Hollywood Records can correct the problems that the band has faced in the past.”

StreetBeat/Pandisc’s Hardway/Harrow Mixes Drum’n’bass/Jazz

BY LARRY FLICK
NEW YORK—With his StreetBeat/Pandisc collection, “A Positive Sweat,” British multi-instrumentalist Dan Harrow is aiming to blur the lines between traditional jazz music and drum’n’bass rhythms.

Recorded under the alias James Harrow, the album is due March 25, and it deftly blends skimming, computer-generated drums with horns and a wide array of acoustic instruments. “We’re soliciting jazz retailers on this project, as well as the dance and pop accounts,” he says.

When it was released in the U.K. late last year on the independent Hydrogen Dukebox Records (from which StreetBeat/Pandisc has licensed the set), it met with critical acclaim from both dance and jazz sectors. “This market is different from the States in that there’s more cross-pollination between genres,” says John SGA, executive director of Chrome Discs, an indie outlet in Manchester, England. “It will be interesting to see if Americans will be open to something so imaginative and adventurous.

In the label’s bid to reach the right U.S. audience, LaFargue says that emphasis will be placed on lifestyle marketing—with a specific focus on clothing boutiques, coffeehouses, and cocktail lounges.

He adds that college radio and club DJs will be offered a CD and 12-inch pressing of the single “Grow” later this month. The track, which features a guest vocal by Amanda Ghost, has been remixed by Justice and Magnetic.

Another key element of the marketing for “A Positive Sweat” is the mini-tour of the States by Harrow with several musicians. “It’s always great fun to take these tracks and see what form they’ll take onstage,” he says. “In that respect, we do function very much like a jazz band. There are bits on the laptop that are programmed. But mostly we let things flow naturally.”

Blowfish Mark Bryan Swims Solo With New Set; Osbournes Launch Divine Label

A BLOWFISH GOES SOLO: When a member of a famous group releases a solo album, it’s often held to the same sales expectations as a new album from the act. Hence, when Mark Bryan, guitarist for Atlantic Records group Hootie & the Blowfish, started recording his own songs, he wasn’t even sure he wanted them to come out.

“It didn’t even occur to me to release the album,” he says. “I recorded it separate from Atlantic. It was just me. I did it on my own. I wasn’t hinting that I did it. I just did it to do it and thought I’d release it when the time is right.

After playing the album for Atlantic Group co-chairman/CEO Val Azzoli, Bryan says, the label decided to pick it up and will release "40 On The Rail" March 14.

The album clearly shows the input Bryan has had on Hootie material, while also saluting his musical influences, such as the dB’s, Hüsker Dü, and Don Dixon, who produced the album. Among the first guests on the set are former dB Peter Holtsapple, who frequently tours with the band, and Cowboy Mouth’s Fred LeBlanc.

The album, which was recorded in 1997, features 18 tracks, including a 10-minute song, or another. Whether it was me singing them or not, they were recorded for an album and didn’t make it or we did them live,” says Bryan. “I don’t want people to think I’m doing this in spite of Hootie. I’m doing this to give these songs a life. I’m a legitimate song writer, and I have these things to say. That’s really more what this is about than an attempt at a big solo career.”

I was never looking to have any plans to tour behind the project. “I’m in a band already, and we just got off tour last summer. I’m going to chill at home and be a daddy,” says Bryan, who has two small children. However, he does plan to promote the album by making a number of in-store appearances and radio station visits. “I’d rather approach it like that than by calling [Atlantic senior VP] Andrea Ganim and say, ‘Wig is what or whatever,’ ” he says.

Triple-A and roots-music stations will be serviced with a track called “Tripping You Pretty” at the end of February, while other formats will receive different cuts.

While he’s quick to point out that he has no plans to leave Hootie & the Blowfish, the solo record is a good way to cleanse his musical palate. “It helps me go back to Hootie refreshed,” he says. “Everyone in the band is doing little solo things. Once we’ve purged ourselves of our individual creative needs, we can go back to the band. We know we’ve got that side of us, and we can go back to the democratic songwriting thing.”

STUFF: Sony Music Entertainment (SME) has opted not to hold the usual post-Grammy blowout this year and instead will have a small dinner for artists hosted by SME chairman/CEO Thomas D. Mottola. A Sony Music representative says, “Sony Music has decided to have a private dinner party this year because it felt that a smaller gathering would be more fun for its Grammy nominees, and, at the end of the day, it’s all about the art,” the music, the Grammy and the nominees anyway, especially for the nominees and award winners.

As the marriage between rap and metal continues, Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne have launched Divine Recordings, a joint venture with Priority Records. First releases for the label will be “Nativity In Black 2,” a Black Sabbath tribute album featuring Megadeth and System of a Down, "Rocketomy" by Tony Iommi. Scott Givens, former VP of artist development for Roadrunner, has been named GM of Divine. Last January, SFX purchased 50% of Sharon Osbourne Management and also agreed to co-fund a new label run by Osbourne. She did not return calls by press time.

Speaking of SFX, it has lined up a number of spring/summer tours featuring top teen acts. Already on the docket are the majority of the dates for Britney Spears’ tour, which starts March 8 at the Peninsula (Fla.) Civic Center. SFX is also in discussions with both ‘N Sync and Backstreet Boys (Billboard, Feb. 18). Former Twin Tone Records co-founder/co-owner Peter Jesperson has joined Los Angeles-based indie New West as VP.

OSCAR NEWS: Nominees for the best original song in the 72nd annual Academy Awards are “Save Me” by Aimee Mann from “Magnolia,” “Music Of My Heart” by Diane Warren from “Music Of The Heart,” “Blame Canada” by Troy Parker and Marc Shaiman from “South Park: Bigger, Longer And Uncut,” “When She Loved Me” by Randy Newman from “Toy Story 2,” and “You’ll Be In My Heart” by Phil Collins from “Tarzan.”

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Vollenweider Takes Global, Collaborative Approach On Sony Set

BY JIM BESSMAN
NEW YORK—Andreas Vollenweider's new album, "Cosmopoly," due March 21 from Sony Classical, departs from previous work as a collaborative, global endeavor summed up by its title.

The Swiss harpist, whose novel mix of pop, jazz, and classical instrumental music virtually defined the new age format upon his emergence in the early '80s, says the term "cosmopoly" represents a "cosmo-political approach to life" evolving out of years of global touring and related musical and cultural exploring.

Fittingly, Vollenweider plays the Celtic harp, Chinese harp, Bavarian folk harp, baby koto, ocarina, 12-string guitar, and clay double flute on "Cosmopoly," in addition to the modern concert harp. He is also accompanied by diverse artists, including Bobby McFerrin, longtime supporter Carly Simon, trombonist Ray Anderson, fiddler Mindy Johsyn, Brazilian singer/songwriter Milon Nascimento, South African jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, Spanish flutist Carlos Nunez, the Neapolitan Solis String Quartet, Chinese dulcimer player Pingxin Xu, Basque accordionist Kepa Junka, and Armenian instrumentalist Djivan Gasparyan, along with longtime associates Christoph Stiefel on keyboards and Walter Keiser on drums.

But Vollenweider, whose pre-inclination to take control creatively. "Everything was done in four weeks, mostly first takes and spontaneous collaborations, which is why I credited other musicians as co-writers. My studio has the newest technology, where we could actually record 24 hours without changing tapes, so there was never any pressure."

The recording process never stopped, Vollenweider continues, not when his kids came to watch, "not to drink tea, not when a dog passed by." The only time he felt technically challenged was when he juxtaposed his harp, "a simple, archaic, diatonic instrument," with Gasparyan's and Ibrahim's "chromatic harmonic changes"—but all parties quickly found common instrumental ground.

Sony Classical president Peter Gelb praises the resultant "Cosmopoly" for its "extraordinary departure" from Vollenweider's recent releases. "He's made a wonderful record of collaborations with some outstanding and high profile artists from around the world, providing a striking vehicle for reaching a larger public."

Generating public awareness of Vollenweider's current vibe is key, notes Gelb. To this end, the P.O.W.-booked artist, who is managed by Impact Music in Zurich and Depth of Field in the U.S. and published through AVAP Music (SUISA) in Switzerland, will play a media showcase March 30 at Joe's Pub in New York. Vollenweider, who has already toured Europe with Gasparyan and performed in Brazil with Nascimento, expects to have "Cosmopoly" album guests on hand at his New York date as well.

Sony Classical is targeting public radio, world music, and jazz radio outlets with the disc, says Gelb. "One of the interesting aspects of the album is that it appeals to more than one musical genre, so we're pushing all the formats we possibly can," he says.

Al Santos, air personality at smooth jazz station WJZW Washington, D.C., is excited about the potential of "Cosmopoly" for his "Sunday Jazz Brunch" program, which plays world beat and new age music along with smooth jazz.

"He's been doing world music before there was even a category for it, so it's good to see him back doing projects with other international artists of his caliber," says Santos, pointing to the album's optimal timing in light of increasing exposure for world music.

Sony Classical plans to further promote "Cosmopoly" on its Web site and is developing plans for working it aggressively at retail, Gelb adds.

The domestic release of "Cosmopoly" will not include the bonus CD, "Annex 1 & 2," which contains other material recorded during the album sessions. The disc is available in some countries as part of a double-CD package and in others as media giveaways.
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Rosen, who founded online music site N2K before merging it with CDnow, declines to offer financial specifics of Aplauso.com. He says only that the site is "a multimillion-dollar investment."

Now negotiating with technology companies and record labels to create the site, Rosen says Aplauso.com will be modeled on N2K, "which, of course, contained the three Cs: content, community, and commerce."

While dot. coms geared toward Latin entertainment have been popping up lately like pimples on a high school freshman, Rosen says he and Rozenblat provide unmatched expertise for establishing a new Latin Web site.

"What I bring to the table is the experience of having gone through this process already of actually having built a platform, in terms of infrastructure and customization," says Rosen. "Sergio is bringing his whole Latin American experience as a record executive to the project."

Rozenblat, most recently executive director of the Latin Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, also was VP/GM of WEA Latina, manager of Arturo Sandoval, and an A&R executive with CBS Records International, now Sony Music International.

Rosen says the content of the trilingual site (Spanish, Portuguese, and English) will be tailored exclusively to visitors interested in Latin American music, movies, and television. Adds Rosen, "There also will be community elements, which would include chats and fan clubs. We also would bring in technologies, such as Internet radio, that would be focused on Latin America and Latin music."

Rosen says E-commerce will eventually become part of the mix, which would involve offering CD e-tailing, custom CD compilations, and product downloads.

The engineer behind N2K's initial public offering in 1997, Rosen says Aplauso.com could go public in the future.

'We also would bring in technologies, such as Internet radio, that would be focused on Latin America and Latin music' — LARRY ROSEN —
wile in Barbados, I met Eric Idle, who turned me on to a record. The record was ‘Sugar Bum Bum.’ “Under the spell of ‘Sugar Bum Bum,’ “ continues Stein, “I flew to Port-of-Spain in February of 1978, where for several nights running I visited Lord Kitchener’s tent to see and hear him play some of the best calypsos—as well as to hear the newly emerging soca music from artists like Lord Shorty.”

After that, Stein says, he made a pilgrimage back to Trinidad every year, and “always on my first night, I’d head straight for Kitchy’s tent. Year after year, I heard the best times, like ‘Pan In A Minor,’ ‘Symphony In G,’ ‘Nora,’ ‘Ibee’s Melody,’ ‘The Road,’ ‘Jews,’ and ‘Gimme The Thing.’”

Stein says he also got to hear the artist perform some of his earlier recordings, including “Flag Woman” and “Miss Tourist.”

After “Sugar Bum Bum,” Kitchy, as he was often called, enjoyed steady hits with songs like “Iron Man” (1989) and “Parkway” (1990). In 1989, he was inducted into calypso’s Sunshine Awards Hall of Fame in New York. After a career that encompassed 60 years, 14 of which were spent living in England, Kitchener retired from stage performance in 1999; he continued composing songs, though “Kitchener seemed ageless, full of vitality,” remembers Stein. “When I last saw him, I swear he hardly looked any older than when I had first seen him perform 22 years before.”

“To me, all I cared about was that Lord Kitchener was one of the greatest live performers I’ve ever seen,” he continues. “His lyrics were always humorous and up to the minute, reflecting the highest standards in calypso.”

“In my time, I’ve sung for Harry Truman at Walker Field in 1945, and for Princess Margaret at London’s Chesterfield Club in the 50’s,” Kitchener told Billboard Editor in Chief Timothy White in 1983 (Music to My Ears, Billboard, Jan. 30, 1983). “But in the early days at home, performers like me were outcasts. It’s only in recent years that our own country has given official recognition to calypso, but I’m thankful.”

“For 55 years,” he continued, “I’ve tried to make calypso more intelligent, and make soca more danceable. Long ago, today, and tomorrow, that is my job.”

Offers Stein, who is scheduled to fly to Port-of-Spain Thursday (24), “I was very shaken and saddened by the news. I’ll still be going down for Carnival, but with Kitchy gone, this year the real Carnival will be in heaven.”
there was plenty here for us to bring to his core club base.”

The first cut issued from the set was “Bodyrock,” which was remixed by Olive.

“It was the perfect way to reintroduce Moby to the street,” says Marlon Creaton, manager of Record Kitchen, an indie retail outlet in San Francisco. “It had a kickin’ beat and the kind of hook that was truly irresistible. This was one of those records that benefited from being released overseas first. It got the DJs jazzed.”

Moby is signed to Mute Records for the U.K. and continental Europe. “Play” was first released internationally on May 17, 1999. The album has reached the top 10 in a number of international territories, including the U.K., Italy, Germany, and Sweden.

In addition to drawing praise from club DJs, “Bodyrock” earned respectable modern rock and triple-A radio airplay, peaking in the top 10 of Billboard’s Modern Rock Tracks chart.

“It had just enough of a rock feel to work for us,” says Zak Tyler, music director at the rock-driven WTPT-Grooveville, S.C. “Once we put it on the air, the phones went crazy. We eventually wound up going several cuts deep into the album.”

“Bodyrock” also gleaned ample TV exposure. It was utilized in the fall commercial campaign for ABC-TV’s “Dharma & Greg,” and it’s been placed as the opening theme to the NBC-TV sitcom “Veronica’s Closet.”

Along the way, Moby has also appeared on a handful of talk shows.

Additionally, the track was accompanied by two videoclips. The first, directed by Frederick Bond, was created for Europe. According to V2 product manager Rachel Mintz, a more “American, street-sawy” video was created by Steve Carr: “to suit the tastes of programmers here.”

While V2 worked “Bodyrock,” Moby toured extensively. He started with a six-week string of club dates in the U.S., which was followed by an equal number of weeks in the U.K. and continental Europe. “He doesn’t like to have a minute of downtime,” says Mintz. “That’s a dream for us, because no one can really sell a record better than the artist himself.”

For Moby, who is managed by Marc Weber at MCT Management, the hustle of touring and promotion is “part of the fun” of making music. “Being in recording mode can be an isolating experience. Emerging from that mind-space with a piece of music that I’m proud of is quite energizing. Why wouldn’t I want to do everything I can to share the results of my work?”

As “Bodyrock” started to run its course, programmers begin gravitating toward several other cuts on “Play”: the soul-influenced “Natural Blues,” the solemn, warmly ambient “Porcelain,” and the percussive, elu-lient “Honey.” “Ultimately, the feedback on ‘Natural Blues’ was so strong that it became the most logical single choice,” Mintz says.

The label started feeding the track to modern rock and triple-A programmers in late November, with an eye toward a top 40 launch at the end of March. “We got a little taste of top 40 interest with ‘Bodyrock,’ but we didn’t want to dilute our focus at that time,” Mintz says. “At this point, the project evolved comfortably, and we are ready to go to the next level with this new single.”

Moby has shot a video for “Natural Blues” with director David LaChapelle that has already begun getting active play on MTV and VH1.

Adding to the single’s visibility is yet another string of concerts by the artist. He’s been in Europe since the start of 2000. He returns to the States in mid-March, and he’ll likely be on the road through the summer. As with all of his tours, that stint will be booked by Marsha Vlask of MVO Booking.

“The truth is that we plan to be working this record through next Christmas,” Mintz says.

Industry recognition includes two Grammy nominations. The artist has been cited in the best alternative music performance and best rock instrument performance categories, for “Play” and “Bodyrock,” respectively.

“It’s such a gift to have people support your creative endeavors,” Moby says. “I never take it for granted. I’ve always said that I make music that pleases me, and that’s true. It’s such a nice perk when others can appreciate it too.”
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SLIPKNOT FINDS MAINSTREAM AUDIENCE WITH I AM SET

(Continued from page 11)

Slipknot lead singer Corey (also known as 8) explains the band's growing popularity. "We just stuck with it, and we were able to stay out on the road," he says. "The first six months after our album was released, we sold records especially through word-of-mouth. Our band was an underground thing. Our record sales have started to pick up even more lately, because so many kids have gotten to see us play and we're getting more exposure."

Slipknot formed in 1995 and a year later self-released its debut album, "Mute. Feed. Kill. Repeat." The band was signed to Roadrunner in 1997, and its self-titled album was co-produced by the band and Ross Robinson, whose credits also include Korn, Limp Bizkit, and Sepultura. The "Slipknot" album bears the I Am imprint, which is Robinson's A&R/production company.

The band members are all known only by a first name and a number: turntable operator Sid (aka 6), drummer Joey (1), bass player Paul (2), percussionist Chris (3), guitarist James (4), samples/media operator Craig (5), percussionist Shawn (6), and guitarist Mick (7).

The band is managed by Steve Richards of Los Angeles-based No Name Management and booked by Dave Kirvy of the Agency Group. Slipknot's songs are published by EMI April Music/Music That Music (ASCAP). In addition to album sales, Slipknot has experienced an underground hit on home video: Its first longform home video, "Welcome To Our Neighborhood," debuted at No. 1 on Billboard's Top Music Videos chart in the Nov. 27, 1999, issue. The 20-minute video, which has a retail price of $12.98, includes live concert and interview footage, along with the uncensored clip for "Spit It Out."

Months after its release, "Welcome To Our Neighborhood" has maintained top 10 sales on the Top Music Videos Chart and has been certified gold (60,000 units sold) by the Recording Industry Assn. of America.

Meanwhile, the band's latest single, "Wait And Bleed," which is also on the "Seven" soundtrack, has been gaining airplay. It stands this issue at No. 37 on the Mainstream Rock Tracks chart.

The "Wait And Bleed" video has been getting exposure on national networks. The Box and MTV's Slipknot is scheduled to perform Friday (25) on "Late Night With Conan O'Brien." One of the radio stations where "Wait And Bleed" is in heavy rotation is mainstream rock WCCO Hartford, Conn., which has been playing Slipknot for months. "It's a monster song," says WCCO-FM Michael Piccozzi of the track. "It's a great hook, and people are really responding to this song. We get so many calls for it."

Piccozzi adds, "There was a time when people were saying that Korn was too loud and aggressive for radio. But Korn is light compared to Slipknot. People are just embracing harder music now. I also think that Slipknot's success shows people that it can happen on an independent label like Roadrunner."

"It's easier to express yourself if you're not so conscious of how your face and hair really look."

-COREY-

Roadrunner senior director of marketing Cory Brennan recounts the artist development for Slipknot. "We started in May 1999 through an extensive street and Internet marketing campaign," Brennan says. "The band played on the 1999 Ozzfest tour, and we distributed a two-song cassette sampler on that tour. After their set, the members of Slipknot would go out in the crowd, in full costume, and distribute the cassettes themselves."

"College and metal radio were a big factor in setting us up," he continues. "But the best way we found to market this band was through anything visual. We had an alternative means of getting the word out about Slipknot with the home video."

"Touring has been the most important factor in this band's success," he says. "The band got as close to the fans as they could, and everything had a snowball effect."

Brennan notes that Roadrunner has also utilized Slipknot's two official Web sites (slipknotl.com and slipknotl.com) for E-mail newsletters to fans and for Webcasts. Slipknot's next single, "Spit It Out," is tentatively scheduled for release in April, according to Roadrunner.

Skeptics might dismiss Slipknot's mask-and-costume image as gimmick, but lead singer Corey disputes any notion that Slipknot is a gimmick band. "Our image is a byproduct of what we do," he says. "We figured it's easier to express yourself if you're not so conscious of how your face and hair really look. It seems like a lot of bands bow down to the rock star god and become pretentious. We're not afraid to say exactly what we want."

Donald Lawrence, independent music buyer for Aron's, a retail store in Los Angeles that specializes in alternative and heavy music, says the band's notoriety is helping sales. "The Slipknot album has been a steady seller for us," says Lawrence. "People are hearing about Slipknot's shoes, and they're curious. The kids who are buying Slipknot's album are looking for something different, and they found it."

Corey describes the band's audience as "maladjusted kids who found something they can identify with through us. I take it seriously that fans have taken their time and money to buy our records or see us play live, and we want to thank everyone who's done that. That's why our live shows and music are so intense. I want to accomplish as much as I can with the time I have because this can be taken away at any time."

After a one-off date Thursday (24) in New York, Slipknot will be on a European tour beginning Saturday (25) in Nottingham, England, with the tour ending in early April. Slipknot will then play select dates in Canada.

According to Roadrunner's Brennan, another U.S. tour is being planned for April. Brennan says that Roadrunner has set its sights high for Slipknot. "Our ultimate goal for this band is world domination," he says.
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Peter Case Sings The ‘Flying Saucer Blues’

Touring Is Key In Marketing Singer/Songwriter’s Fourth Vanguard Set

NEW YORK—Vanguard recording artist and Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter Peter Case will release his seventh solo effort and fourth Vanguard release, “Flying Saucer Blues,” on April 16.

The project follows his critically acclaimed 1997 release, “Full Service No Waiting,” and it’s produced by Andrew Williams (Old 97’s, The Williams Brothers). Case enlisted a renowned lineup of studio musicians, including Greg Lief, Sandy Chila, and Andrew Williams, for his latest effort.

Featuring 11 tracks, “Flying Saucer Blues” spares Case’s image-rich, acoustic tales with roots-rock arrangements—which justifies his self-proclaimed stance as a “rock’n’roll folk singer.” Of his songwriting, he says, “You must look inside yourself for something that lights up. The idea is to find something you feel is worth singing about. You have to capture your imagination. Then you hone that stuff until it is undeniably strong. Hopefully, that means the song has things that will keep bringing people back to listen to it.”

It’s that philosophy that Case will carry when he hits the road this spring to promote the project. Touring will be a key element to the marketing of the project.

“It’s the thing I enjoy doing the most,” the artist says. “Recording is great, but it’s all about bringing music directly to the people—in a wide variety of ways.”

Last June, Case sang at the Hollywood Bowl with George Martin and the Hollywood Orchestra in “A Celebration Of The Beatles,” with solo performances of “Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds,” “Walrus,” and “All You Need Is Love.” He recently performed a kids’ show at McCabe’s Guitar Shop in Santa Monica, Calif., and recorded two performances of “Crazy ’Bout A Dog,” written with his daughters, and “Why Oh Why,” a Woody Guthrie song. Both are available in MP3 or QuickTime downloads on the Vanguard Records Internet site (vanguardrecords.com).

Case began his musical career in 1976 when he joined guitarist/songwriter Jack Lee and drummer Paul Collins to form the Nerves, a short-lived but influential band. In 1980, along with Eddie Munoz, Los Ramirez, and Dave Pahou, he founded the Plimsouls and signed with Elektra Records in 1981 and then with Geffen Records in 1983.


As The Crow Flies: With a strong fan base and a growing franchise, it looks like three times is indeed a charm for Koch Entertainment, which on March 25 will release the soundtrack to “The Crow: Salvation,” the third installment of the action series “The Crow” (see story, page 71).

The previous two “Crow” soundtracks, both released by Hollywood Records, collectively have sold 5 million, according to Koch. And although the label previously hadn’t been involved with the franchise, “Salvation” seemed a perfect fit for Koch, which has been stepping up its soundtracks profile of late with several projects, including the upcoming “American Psycho.”

“We knew the history of the project and that the second soundtrack sold markedly less than first one, by about 50%,” says Koch president Bob Frank. “But for us as an independent, that does not scare off. Sales of 500,000 to 1 million units is not a risk for us, whereas with a major it is a multimillion investment.”

Also helpful were early meetings with movie producer/soundtrack executive producer Jeff Most, who already had much of the creative direction in the bag. Most, who has produced all three “Crow” films and had a strong hand in the first soundtrack, says his goal this time around was to keep the music fresh while remaining true to the franchise’s roots.

“We wanted to retain the general edgy feel of rock combined with a little more electronica underpinnings,” Most says. “And we also wanted to not have the record play song-for-song sounding like every act and song are alike. We wanted to cross-pollinate different types of music.”

The result is 16 tracks, all previously unreleased or remixed versions, which command listeners to sit up and take notice. Among the acts represented are Kid Rock, Rob Zombie (whose “Living Dead Girl” was remixed by Nine Inch Nails’ Charlie Clouser), Days Of The New, Filter, whose radio version of “The Best Things” is the first single.

The idea of picking the film with unreleased music resonates strongly with Most, who already is knee-deep in the creation of the fourth “Crow” installment.

“This dates back to my view of soundtracks as a buyer before I got into the business,” he says. “I want to provide fans with something new and special apart from a cut from an album they may already own.” Most says he also wants to create a separate universe for moviemakers, and having existing songs might serve to base the audience out of a given scene.

“I don’t want them sitting there thinking, “Who sings this song, again?” or “I remember making out with my girlfriend to this song,”” he says.

The Envelope Please: The nominations are in for the 72nd Academy Awards, and the category of best original score stands as a shining example of film music achievement. With the exception of Michael Kamen’s enchanting score to “The Iron Giant,” a personal favorite, this edition wholeheartedly concurs with the committee’s selections.

All five of the composers on this year’s list previously have been nominated, but none more than the venerable John Williams, who marks his 38th nomination with “Angela’s Ashes.” Williams is now the most-nominated living person. Gabriel Yared, nominated for “The Talented Mr. Ripley,” won his first Oscar bid in ’96 for “The English Patient.” The other contenders are Thomas Newman for “American Beauty,” Rachel Portman for “The Cider House Rules,” and John Corigliano for “The Red Violin.” My money’s on Newman.

Happily, the able, the ready to get its hands on all five score albums. Remember, it was only last year that Virgin came to the rescue with its better-late-than-never release of Nicola Piovani’s nominated (and subsequent Oscar-winning) score to “Life Is Beautiful.”

In early February, Fishbone completed a two-week promotional tour of Europe. Throughout this month, the band has been playing select West Coast club dates on the "Nutt- stalk Harvest Festival 2000 tour, which also features Trulio Disgra- ciass, Laundry, Vicky Calhoun, and Blowsy. Fishbone is tentatively set to begin a full U.S. tour in April or May.

Fishbone is booked in the U.S. by George Hilz of Variety Artists Inter- national and outside the U.S. by Martin Horne of International Tal- ent Booking. The band—whose music is published by Nuttsaet 5 Music (BMI)—is scheduled to make an appearance on an episode of "Donny & Marie" that will tape March 3 and telecast March 23.

Harmony House's Levesque says, "Fishbone was way ahead of its time, and the band has influenced a lot of other bands that have sold more records, such as the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Rage Against The Machine. I hope that Fishbone will finally get the deal that they trained us to value the music and to shape the band's sound. It's a source of pride that a lot of artists we've influenced and who've influ- enced us wanted to be on this album too."

Brown Comes Alive. RCA pop ingenue Jennifer Brown is starting to draw attention to her single, "Alive," which has already been in her native Swe- den. The track, co-written by Brown with Billy Mann, is featured on the singer's debut disc, "Veru," which is due March 21. "Alive" is already getting airplay on several TV programs, including NBC's "The Voice," the WB's "Felicity," and Fox's "Get Real." Brown has just completed an eight-week tour of Scandi- navia and will begin a promotional trek through the States in early March.
Steve

GETTING

"Turn," for U.S. release March 7 on Sire Records.

"Turn," produced by Steve Berlin of Los Lobos, was a No. 9 hit last year on the Canadian album chart, and the set was named album of the year at Canada's 2000 East Coast Music Awards. The awards show also honored Great Big Sea as entertainer of the year (for the fifth year in a row) and group of the year. Not bad for a band formed in the fishing village of Petty Harbour, Newfoundland.

Great Big Sea is touring Europe for the remainder of February, and the band launches a U.S. tour March 15 in Syracuse, N.Y.

Other tour dates include March 17 in Boston; March 18 in New York; March 22 in Philadelphia; March 24 in Cleveland; March 26 and 27 in Louisville, Ky.; and March 29 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Sound of SoniQue: British dance artist/DJ SoniQue is the first artist on Jimmy and Doug’s Farmchub.com, a record company that aims to discover artists through its web site. The company also has its own TV series, “Farmchub.com,” a weekly show on the USA Network, and SoniQue appeared on the show’s premiere episode Jan. 31.

SoniQue’s album, “Hear My Cry,” was released Feb. 15 in a partnership with several records, Caffeine Records, Jimmy and Doug’s Farmchub.com, and Republic/Universal Records—but it is considered the first official release from Jimmy and Doug’s Farmchub.com.

The album’s first single, “It Feels So Good,” is a multi-format hit, having made an impact on several charts: The Billboard Hot 100 (where it stands this issue at No. 17), Hot Dance Music/Club Play, Hot Dance Music/Maxi/Singles Sales, Top 40 Tracks, Hot 100, and Hot 100 Singles Sales. The video for “It Feels So Good” has also gotten played on MTV, VH1, and the Box.

Baca is Back: Susana Baca’s 1997 self-titled album was a No. 10 hit on The Top World Music Albums chart. The Afro-Peruvian singer returns with the album “Eco de Sombras,” due Feb. 29 on Luaka Bop Records.

Baca has previously toured the U.S., and she is expected to launch another U.S. tour after the release of the album. Meanwhile, the album has been shipped to college radio and National

The Heatseekers chart lists the best-selling titles by new and developing artists, defined as those who have never appeared in the top 100 of the Billboard 200 chart. When an album reaches this level, the album and the artist’s subsequent albums are immediately removed from the chart and the list is updated to reflect new activity.

Brand-New Day. Country newcomer Jennifer Day co-wrote four of the 11 songs on her debut album, “The Fun of Your Love,” set for release March 7 on BNA Records. The singer—a native of McAlpin, Fla.—was signed after her demo tape made its way to Joe Galante, chairman of the RCA Label Group in Nashville. She was signed to RCA subsidiary BNA two years ago at the age of 16. Day’s style has been compared to the late Patsy Cline’s.

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Billboard's annual list of the top 100 albums of 1997 includes various artists, such as Groove Armada, who released their debut album, "Vertigo," which featured a mix of electronic and house music, and The Hollies, who released their album "Sweet Inspiration," which included a cover of The Hollies' "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." The list also includes works by The Hollies, The Hollies, The Hollies, The Hollies, The Hollies, and The Hollies. The list also includes works by The Hollies, The Hollies, The Hollies, The Hollies, The Hollies, and The Hollies.

ALBUMS:

**SPOTLIGHT**

- **GROOVE ARMADA**
  - Album: "Vertigo"
  - Genre: Electronic, house
  - **EDITORIAL**: Groove Armada's debut album "Vertigo" is a milestone in the electronic dance music scene, featuring a mix of electronic beats and house music that has influenced many artists since its release. The album includes popular tracks such as "Sand In My Mind" and "Vertigo," which remain favorites among fans of electronic dance music.

**VITAL REISSUES**

- **Various Artists**
  - Album: "The Mambo Kings"
  - **EDITORIAL**: The original soundtrack to "The Mambo Kings" featured a mix of Latin music, including works by artists such as Los Van Van and Celia Cruz. The album remains a classic in the Latin music genre, and its reissues continue to attract fans of the genre.

**SPOTLIGHT**

- **DAME DAVOULAS**
  - Album: "Soul On Soul"
  - **EDITORIAL**: Dame Davelous' "Soul On Soul" album is a soulful mix of smooth jazz and R&B, featuring tracks such as "Flirt" and "Soul On Soul." The album was released in 1997 and remains a favorite among fans of soul music.

**COUNTRY**

- **PHIL VASSAR**
  - **EDITORIAL**: Phil Vassar's "Tequila Sunrise" album is a mix of country and pop, featuring hit singles such as "Tequila Sunrise" and "I'm Just a Lucky Boy." The album was released in 1997 and remains a favorite among fans of country music.

**ARTISTS & MUSIC**

**SPOTLIGHT**

- **BOWERY ELECTRIC**
  - **EDITORIAL**: "Switched on" is a pop album that features a mix of upbeat and melodic tracks. The album includes popular tracks such as "Switched on" and "Time to Move On," which remain popular among fans of pop music.

**COUNTRY**

- **PHIL VASSAR**
  - **EDITORIAL**: Phil Vassar's "Soulful" album is a mix of country and pop, featuring hit singles such as "I'm Just a Lucky Boy" and "Tequila Sunrise." The album was released in 1997 and remains a favorite among fans of country music.
CONTINENTAL CHRISTIAN
THE GREAT DIVIDE & R&D

Dirk & Spirit

PRODUCERS: Marc McCrea

Broken Records 2005

Known primarily as a country act with alternative rock leanings, Dirk & Spirit is one of those bands that refuses to be musically pigeonholed. No longer aligned with Atlantic, the group now records for its own independent label. A collection of gospel songs—and aided by a wonderfully gritty quality—"Dirk & Spirit" finds the Great Divide’s distinctive musical personality shining brightly. Among the album’s highlights are the catchy “I’m So Glad,” the lively “The Mo’Boat,” the jauntily moving “Armour” and “Hund Down Head,” which features a wonderful performance by Susan Gibson (who penned the Dixie Chicks’ “Wide Open Spaces”). For people who like their Christian music McDowell and feel comfortable with both old-time, edgy charm, the Great Divide & Friends has delivered a collection of both music and message, affecting records of the year.

REVIEWS

E N R I Q U E I L E G S S E S E X B Y W I T H Y O U ?

PRODUCERS: Mark Taylor, Brava Rawlings

CREDENTIALS: C. P. Eggleston, M. Taylor


PARTY!

REMEMBERS: Juan Martinez, Fernando Garay

DURATION: 45:00

In what seems like a hot minute, heart-throb Enrique Iglesias is out of the gate with his third English-language single following the tempestuous “Bamboleo” and “Rhythm Divine.” Again, this is a Paul Barry (Mark Taylor composition with Brian Rawlings assisting on production), the guys who produced his previous singles (after making Chey’s “Believe” the most popular song of 1999). This track has potential to further establish Iglesias as a major force on the charts—like the choruses are madly catchy, his performance is as dynamic and playful, and the instrumentation is splashed with a full beat and appealing Spanish pulsation. But one has to question if Iglesias is going to wear out this signature sound and leave himself too narrowly focused in the pop scheme. Perhaps his third release should have been one of the sumptuous ballads on his current album, just to add a little variety to the repertoire. That’s not to say that this particular song is stale, but with Cheryl still riding the dance waves with the same vibes, one wonders if any major fan with his Mobile and “When the Heartache Is Over” also written/produced by the team, may now decide to add another similar-sounding record (though it’s record to feel it’s still missing its chance with the Turner track). Perhaps the best option here is the Video Version, although certainly no one is going to deny the song’s potential, and it features a breakdown with segments from the Thunderpuss 2000 remix, a la “True Romance” or “Under the Bridges” from Def Jef’s “Chevy Chase” which indeed would be a stroke for this one go by the wayside: it’s truly a classic song that needs to be developed, and the sound of “Rhythm Divine.” Radio, it’s in your hands.

TRACY CHAPMAN TELLING STORIES (There Is A Four-Song EP)

PRODUCER: David Benkenbaum

BULATION 3:57

So many years after Tracy Chapman won a Grammy as best new artist, and while her career has not been one that has persisted consistently with the music itself, their messages have continued to ebb with a niche audience that does not abide by the current pop standards. Her latest, the upcoming album “Telling Stories,” is an acoustic poppycker that reminds us all why Chapman is one of the great storytellers of our time. As always, there are no gimmicks here, just a straightforward tale of a person who does what’s necessary to make life at least appear to be full and justifiable. This is one of those records that’s hard to sell in a bottom-line-driven radio environment where, if it doesn’t click in a spin or two, it’s quickly gone. On “Year” Chapman may take some decisions from both labels and programmers to truly make listeners find the music. This tells us they do, a wide audience can’t help but realize that Chapman has yet to disappoint, in a world...
JESSICA SIMPSON
Where You Are
(3:45)
PRODUCERS: R.J. Reynolds, Scott Buchman
WRITERS: R.J. Reynolds, Mark Sarfati, Steve structured.
SINGERS: Jessica Simpson
PUBLISHERS: Bell American Music, EMI Music

Published 25 years ago to critical acclaim, "The Blues" stands up today as a historical document, albeit a slender one.

Writer Anthony Connor and the late photographer Robert Neer worked with and photographed a number of blues artists, ranging from the legends to the unknowns, and presented their findings in straightforward, unvarnished form—just pictures, quotes, and a few song lyrics. No attempt was made to make this a comprehensive oral history of the blues or even of blues artists themselves; the quotes are loosely organized by subject matter.

Thus, the book opens with Brown's "Wanna Be An Angel," M C G h e describing his definition of the blues is followed by John Lee Hooker's theory of the blues, then the words to B.B. King's "Why I Sing The Blues." King himself was not interviewed for the book, although he was photographed. Likewise, Lightning Hopkins is represented only by a song and a picture.

Obviously, this is not a scholarly work. It does function within its framework as a record of some of the musicians. Subjects discussed range from songwriting, treatment by the police, and leaving the South to married life, the nature of audiences, and self-defense. Here's Bo Diddley: "I was married to a mean broad once. I woke up one night and that chick was sitting up in bed looking at my picking her fingernails with a brand new switchblade. Forty thirty in the morning...I knew why she was watching me. She was trying to figure out where to start cutting."

The photographs are largely remarkable, especially those of performers; photography shines in the completely candid nature of some of the images of the artists.

In the section where the artists discuss drugs and alcohol, Big Mama Thornton lolls playfully on a New York hotel room bed, with her two bottles of Old Grandaddy, 100 proof, and a half empty gallon of corn liquor. Weeds, pills, needles—I don't need nothing like that to get out on the stage and sing."

The book, then, exists as a time capsule of personal blues memories by artists whose lives and careers spanned the first three quarters of the 20th century. Johnny Shines, for example, traveled with the legendary Robert Johnson: "He used to go and play with my old Grandaddy, 100 proof, and tell me stories about Barbara Allen."

"Robert was just born to sing and play the blues.

CHET FLIPPO
TONY TONÉ TONÉ'S WIGGINS 'Eyes' His Solo Debut On Motown

By Jeff Lorez

WIGGINS

This May 8, Dwayne Wiggins, one-third of seminal R&B trio Tony Toni Toné, is the first to admit that he never used to consider himself a particularly political person. But then along came a cat that went from the house to the studio and never paid too much attention to anything else, he says.

"Strange Fruit"—the first single from his March 28 debut Motown album "Eyes Never Lie"—is unquestionably political. Borrowing from the harrowing folkie Holiday song of the same name, the Wiggins track deals head-on with racism.

The song was inspired by an uneasiness turn of events in Wiggins' life in March 1999 that currently has him suing the Oakland County (Calif.) Police Department for civil rights violation. The Wiggins' vs. the city of Oakland, was filed in Federal District Court in San Francisco.

Ironically, the same incident led to the songwriting/er/musicians landing his first solo deal. "I was happily sitting in bed drinking a bottle of Evian water," recalls Wiggins, "I got a 911 call and I knew my door was open and a cop was choking me. It lasted about a minute."

"I thought I was being car-jacked because I didn't believe he was a cop," Wiggins continues. "Then I guess he recognized me and saw a young lady was sitting there [who has since left his company, Destiny Child]. He started apologizing, saying he thought I was swallowing some drugs. If you think about it, it could have turned into a different situation."

A complaint was brought by Wiggins to a citizen's review board, which he heard a hearing on the matter in summer 1999 and ruled in Wiggins' favor. Wiggins followed up with his civil suit.

Deeply shaken and determined to bring his experience to light, Wiggins wrote his jazzy hip-hop/R&B lead single, which he planned to promote independently. It was during a taping of a Tony Toni Toné's BET Tonight show that Wiggins met Motown president/CEO Kedar Massenburg who expressed his interest in signing the artist as a solo star.

Just as Tony Toni Toné's (whose members include Wiggins' younger brother Raphael Saadiq and cousin Tim Christopher, the latter of whom is featured on this album) was noted for its distinct, often tongue-in-cheek musical approach, Wiggins makes it clear he hasn't lost his sense of humor. That's particularly evident on his remake of Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me To The Moon" and the telling "R&B Singer."

"Fly Me To The Moon" is just me trippin,' says Wiggins. "It's a good way to start the album, because it says, 'Expect the unexpected' There are a lot of different sides to me. I'm not just your average R&B singer."

Indeed, the mix of music on "Eyes Never Lie" shifts between funk, hip-hop, folk, jazz, and vintage R&B. Hootie & the Blowfish's Darius Rucker is featured on the Grammian Central Station remake of "Hair," retitled "Music Is Power," while sax man Najee blows on the jazz reading of "Strange Fruit." And Carlos Santana contributes his talents as co-writer on "Move With Me."

While with Tony Toni Toné, Wiggins was often featured on such classic soul ballads as "Whatever You Want." Yet Wiggins knew he let's Make A Baby," and "Don't Sleep," which profit from strong arrangements by Claire Fisher, best known for his work with The Artist Formerly Known As Prince. "Those songs get to the essence of what I'm about," says Wiggins. "I work. Let's Make A Baby" with [comedian] Jamie Foxx, who can really blow, and play the keys. It was more funky originally, then I took it to that Curtis Mayfield vibe."

Outside of his Tonies work, Wiggins has been establishing himself as a freelance songwriter/producer, working most famously with Coldplay's "Yellow." That success led to the release of his solo album and his brother's status as a fellow solo Motown artist and member of new alternative hip-hop label Stash's first release (with Dawn Robinson and Ali Shaheed Muhammad), the ongoing question is: Does this signal the end of Tony Toni Toné?

"Man, don't believe all the hype," Wiggins responds. "It's cool, it's all about the music. We'll do another album. We talked about it."

"People get confused with the Tonies' makeup," says Motown's Massenburg. "It's not just Raphael. It's Raphael, Tim, and Dwayne. Dwayne's not a powerful singer in the conventional sense, he's a stylist who has personality in his music. He's a true artist in every way. The word average doesn't apply. That was crucial to me signing him. What I did with DAngelo or Erykah Badu, the Tonies were pioneering that with "Somebody.""

"We want to break him through colleges and people seeing him live," adds Massenburg. "Even before anything's released, we already have him out on Motown's [11-market] black college tour."

NAACP HANDS OUT MUSICAL IMAGE AWARDS TO EVE, MCKNIGHT, HOUSTON, JONES, OTHERS

IMAGE-BUILDING: Congrats to all who received NAACP Image Awards awarding the Feb. 12 tapping of the 31st annual festivities. The telecast airs at 8 p.m. EST April 8 on Fox. As we honor our own, though, I have but one simple wish: How about the powers that be taking the show live next year?

That aside, the following winners included Eve (outstanding new artist), Brian McKnight (outstanding male artist), Whitney Houston (outstanding female artist), Destiny's Child (outstanding duo or group), Will Smith (outstanding rap artist), Quincy Jones (outstanding jazz artist), Vickie Winans (outstanding gospel artist/traditional), and Yolanda Adams (outstanding gospel artist/contemporary).

Among national awards went to "Wild West" (outstanding music video), Eric Benet's "Spend My Life With You" (outstanding song), and the soundtrack to "The Best Man" (outstanding album). Prosaic also to legend Smokey Robinson, who was inducted into the Image Awards Hall of Fame.

Speaking of honor local: On Tuesday (22)—Grammy eve—six new inductees will be awarded at the 6th Annual Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The 2001 roster includes "Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Mississippi Delta Blues" album," the Z.Z. Hill-recorder/George Jackson-penned "Down Home Blues" (single), author Samuel Charters' "Country Blues" (literature), Stevie Ray Vaughan and Johnny Otis (performers), and agent/manager/producer/promoter Dick Waterman (nonperformers).

NEW CHARTS MANAGER: On Feb. 28, Billboard and Airplay Monitor welcome new R&B/hip-hop charts manager Stephanie Lopez. Her background includes stints as national director of promotions and marketing for R&B and adult R&B at EMI and A&M; over the last year she consulted for various labels, including them Hollywood Records.

INDUSTRY BRIEFS: Motown says a new Stevie Wonder album is coming in September; this will be his first set of all-original material since 1985's "Conversation Peace"; flowering hip-hop/rap De La Soul ("Me Myself And I") is currently being promoted on its first studio album since 1996's "Stakes Is High." The upcoming "Art Official Intelligence" will feature guests Burna Boy, Redman, Busta Rhymes, and Chaka Khan. Also, best wishes to Dr. La Soul front man and new father Posdous on the birth of son Kassai...Rhino weighs in April 25 with three new volumes in its "Smooth Grooves" series. Volus of the Grooves: Smooth Jazz "sussers contemporary jazz practitioners as Dexter Wansel, Lene Ritenour, and Stanley Jordan...Mary J. Blige, Faith Evans, and Carl Thomas are set to perform at the 13th Annual Soul Train Awards gala at the Mandalay Bay (aka the Notorious B.I.G.) Foundation's 2nd annual benefit dinner. The March 28 affair, staged at Pier 60 at Manhattan's Chelsea Piers, will honor the principals of the FUBU clothing line.

By the Book: Producer/songwriter Kashif's Brooklyn Boy Books and Entertainment bows two new February products. Software program "Hit List/Hit Shop Organizer" covers just what its title implies, while the tongue-in-cheek "I'll Do My Damn Self"—written by Kevin Harewood—outlines everything aspirants should know about starting an independent label. April 8 is author Ronin Ro's "Street Sweeper," the first book in [S] Affiliated's series of hip-hop-inspired fiction that sets out to foster literacy. Founded by actor Wesley Snipes and publisher/president Mark Gerald, [S] Affiliated has teamed with Def Jam Records to develop a soundtrack CD to each new book (released every month) and coordinate with clothing line FNB Nation for sales support and various cross-promotions...The "Top R&B Singles 1942-1999" are chronicled in the fourth edition of Joel Whitburn's ongoing series detailing Billboard's R&B singles chart history.

TUBE TIME: Rhino and Don Cornelius Productions are the forces behind VH1's "Soul Train: The Dance Years," based on Rhino's four-CD box set of the same name, premiering in the years 1976-79. The half-hour special airs Feb. 19-20 with vintage performance footage of Marvin Gaye, Barry White, the Trammps, and others...Sweet Home Alabama: Former Alabama member James Horner has partnered on the soundtrack to "Freedom Song," an original TNT movie starring Danny Glover. Exploring the impact of the civil rights movement, the film premieres on Feb. 27...Sony Classical released the soundtrack Feb. 15.

Celebrating Curtis: A memorial tribute for R&B pioneer Curtis Mayfield is being held Tuesday (22) at First A.M.E. Church of Los Angeles, located at 2270 S. Harvard Blvd. The service starts at noon.
Norman Connors is Back For ‘Eternity’

1st Set In 4 Years, Released by Right Stuff & Artist’s Starship

BY GAIL MITCHELL

LOS ANGELES—For Norman Connors fans, the four-year wait between albums has been as long as an eternity. Now “Eternity” rolls March 21 in the form of a new Connors album that also launches the producer/drummer/songwriter’s Starship Records, a joint venture with the Right Stuff/EMI.

The progenitor of such jazz-infused R&B hits as “Once I’ve Been There” and “You Are My Starship,” Connors began recording in 1972 and released his top 10 single, “Valentine Love,” on the 1976 Buddah album “Saturday Night Special.” After stints on Artists and Capitol, the Philadelphia-bred musician signed with Def Jam, releasing “Easy Living” in 1996.

Noted for bringing to the forefront such artists as the late Phyllis Hyman (“my favorite vocalist for life”), Michael Henderson, Jean Carne, and Dee Dee Bridgewater, Connors continues that tradition on “Eternity,” which he produced. New artists in the Connors spotlight this time include vocalists Denise Stewart and Donald Tavie—the latter of whom is also Connors’ engineer.

Meanwhile, the “Eternity” guest list reads like an R&B/R&B Who’s Who. In addition to Connors, Henderson, and Brown, artists on board include Peabo Bryson, Gerald Albright, Angela Bofill, Gary Bartz, Bobby Lyle, Lisa Fischer, Ray Parker Jr., Paul Jackson, Onaje Allan Graham, and Marion Meadows.

“I call the musicians and artists I work with the Starship family,” Connors explains. "So this album was a matter of getting together with great people and putting them together with new people and new sounds. My favorite songs are classics now, so the title ‘Eternity’ came to mind. I wanted to do another album that’s going to be out here forever. I used the old and the new, and it came out beautifully.

Featuring the Starship Orchestra, the 14-track “Eternity” offers a cohesive mix of originals and R&B classics. Among the noteworthy tracks are the Albright-written “So Hard To Say Goodbye,” a cover of the Fonzie’s top five 1970 R&B hit “ Didn’t I (Blow Your Mind This Time)” with Fischer (a 1994 Grammy winner for “How Can I Ease The Pain”), and “Cobra” featuring Norman Brown, a remake of Connors’ own “You Are My Starship”.

Recalling the recording sessions for the album, Connors says, “I’m so elated over Lisa Fischer, she did ‘Don’t Let Me Be Lonely’ in one take. That first take was it. And I always wanted to do ‘Starship’ again, and Peabo did a great job. As for my son, he’s a hip-hop producer who thought he’d never get a chance to record with me. But he came up with something, and I put a melody on it.”

My Starship” featuring Peabo Bryson in the Michael Henderson role, covers of Tony Braxton’s “You’re Makin’ Me High” and Donny Hathaway’s “We’re Still Friends,” and "K.C.,” co-written by Connors’ 25-year-old son, Kvasi.

R&B

Tom Cortwright, VP of product development for the Right Stuff, says the label is planning to take full advantage of Connors’ musical reputation. “We’re really banking on his name, going for both urban adult and smooth jazz radio.

This two-pronged approach will promote the commercial single “Didn’t I (Blow Your Mind This Time)” to adult R&B stations, while the smooth jazz campaign will focus on the cut “River Of Love.” Additional promotional plans include spring/summer domestic and international tours (Connors did about 50 concerts last year), as well as a Web site presence.

Cortwright, who says videos are being discussed for phase two of the campaign, notes the label is already receiving “a nice reaction from retail.”

Jeoff Stoltz, The Wherehouse chair’s senior jazz buyer, is among that contingent. “Norman Connors has been a core smooth and urban jazz artist. We’ve always done well with him, so I don’t see any reason why this shouldn’t be a big album. We have high expectations for it.”

For his part, the self-managed Connors—whose music is published through BMI—is anxious to build on his long-term dream, Starship Records. Notes Cortwright, “While we have expertise in catalog, marketing, sales, and distribution, Norman has a lot more expertise in areas other than music.”

Connors, whose Starship partner is Josi Nordan, says the label is preparing to sign keyboardist Bobby Lyle. "I would say our label is focused on urban adult contemporary and jazz. But who knows? In the future it might even go a little rap.”

Assistant in preparing this story was provided by Jim Pesselnick in Los Angeles.

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Connors, whose Starship partner is Josi Nordan, says the label is preparing to sign keyboardist Bobby Lyle. “I would say our label is focused on urban adult contemporary and jazz. But who knows? In the future it might even go a little rap.”

Assistant in preparing this story was provided by Jim Pesselnick in Los Angeles.

Tom Cortwright, VP of product development for the Right Stuff, says the label is planning to take full advantage of Connors’ musical reputation. “We’re really banking on his name, going for both urban adult and smooth jazz radio.”

This two-pronged approach will promote the commercial single “Didn’t I (Blow Your Mind This Time)” to adult R&B stations, while the smooth jazz campaign will focus on the cut “River Of Love.” Additional promotional plans include spring/summer domestic and international tours (Connors did about 50 concerts last year), as well as a Web site presence.

Cortwright, who says videos are being discussed for phase two of the campaign, notes the label is already receiving “a nice reaction from retail.”

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## Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

**FEBRUARY 26, 2000**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>No. 1</th>
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<th>Title</th>
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**New & New Again**

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**Alternative R&B Artist By Artist**

By Gail Mitchell

Los Angeles—Washington, D.C., singer-songwriter Aaliyah, who moved to Los Angeles in 1997 to make her mark as a songwriter. Now just three years later, the background singer is preparing for the April 4 release of her first solo album, "psysoul," on Hollywood Records.

Smith, a former member of a local D.C. female band, is no stranger to the public eye—or ear. She's made recurrent appearances on the "Ally McBeal" TV series, singing background for artist Victoria Beckham. Smith also landed a national Gap commercial. In the meantime, other pop-soaked wavers have provided support for such artists as Somethin' For The People (SFP), Ginuwine, and current Grammy nominees B оборудование, Eric Benét, Macy Gray, and Whitney Houston.

With production support from SFP's Sauce, Ali Shaheed Muhammad (A Tribe Called Quest, Badass Ice Cube), and Malakuloo Chinnah (Erykah Bach), among others, Smith wrote or co-wrote all 12 tracks and co-produced three

Calling her alternate R&B set "lyrically liberal," Smith says the title reflects personal experiences, "I don't want to cat college kids, if people think I'm crazy. It's supposed to be kind of funny, but there are some serious parts. I just like to play with different characters through my voice, going to different places from R&B to jazz to rock and classic hits."

The album's lead single, "Psyhosoul," was released last November; the second single, "Good N Strong," tentatively hits March 21. The album track closest to Smith's heart, though, is the ballad "Stop Askin'," because I wrote it from a really true place."

Marketing of the Smith project under the direction of Hollywood's co- senior VP/GM of urban music Byron Phillips and Michael Taylor—put under way in July 1999 with the distribution of sampler CDs at the Essence music fest. But to avoid any aura of a label's grass-roots efforts having included postcards, fliers, and E-cards. Playing off Smith's Gap connection, the label has also tied in with major retailers who service the Gap, Banana Republic, and other fashion venues.

In addition to doing several earlier promotional gigs, Smith—managed by Lilia Wui, with whom she's formed production company Psyk! Inc.—wraps a tour with Macy Gray at the end of February.

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**Complied from** A National Sample of Retail Store Sales Reports Collected, and Provided by **SoundScan**

**Visit www.americanradiohistory.com** for more information.

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**BILLBOARD FEBRUARY 26, 2000**

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**R&B/REGGAE CURRENT AIRPLAY**

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<td>Whitney Houston</td>
<td>A&amp;M/Quincy Jones</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;DON'T KNOW WHY&quot;</td>
<td>Norah Jones</td>
<td>Blue Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>&quot;HOT LOVE&quot;</td>
<td>Jadakiss ft. Lil Wayne</td>
<td>Columbia, Warner Bros.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>&quot;WE'RE NOT IN THE MOOD TONIGHT&quot;</td>
<td>A Tribe Called Quest ft. Lil Kim</td>
<td>Sony/Better Dayz</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>&quot;I CAN'T STOP YOU&quot;</td>
<td>Missy Elliott ft. The Black Eyed Peas</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>&quot;TRIPPING THE LIGHT FOOTHILL&quot;</td>
<td>A Tribe Called Quest ft. Talib Kweli</td>
<td>Sony/Better Dayz</td>
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**R&B/REGGAE RECURRENT AIRPLAY**

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<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>Various Labels</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;THAT'S WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR (FEATURING JAY-Z)&quot;</td>
<td>Elton John ft. Jay-Z</td>
<td>Geffen</td>
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<td>&quot;HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU&quot;</td>
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<td>Crystal Records</td>
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<td>&quot;YOU DON'T KNOW ME&quot;</td>
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**R&B SINGLES A-Z**

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<td>&quot;I CAN'T LET HER GET AWAY&quot;</td>
<td>Missy Elliott</td>
<td>Jive/Capitol</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>&quot;DON'T FEEL BAD&quot;</td>
<td>LL Cool J</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>&quot;SHOUT&quot;</td>
<td>50 Cent ft. Missy Elliott</td>
<td>Aftermath/Capitol</td>
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<td>Virgin</td>
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**Billboard Hot 100**

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**Charts and Rankings**

- Billboard Hot 100
- Billboard R&B/Reggae Current Airplay
- Billboard R&B/Reggae Recurrent Airplay
- Billboard R&B Singles A-Z

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**Additional Information**

- The charts are based on airplay, sales, and streaming data.
- The charts are updated weekly and reflect performance from the previous week.
- The charts are compiled by Billboard, a leading music industry publication.
FEEL WHAT YOU WANT: It’s the old day when we don’t receive a hefty handful of dance-compilation CDs. Now, before ya start thinking, “Oh, how lucky you are, receiving all these complimentary discs,” remember that each disc has to be experienced in order to determine its (intended) greatness.

Unfortunately, too many disappointing these discerning ears. Some, however, manage to take us to another place and time with a variety of ingrediants: ingrediants, and melodies, rhythms, and soulful vocals. What follows is the best of the bunch.

“Soulful Garage Hits — Volume One” (U.S. Garage Mix/Edel Imports/U.K.). This two-disc set puts the spotlight firmly on classic R&B- and house-related rhythms and vocals. Highlights include the Masters At Work remix of Kim English’s “Nite Life,” Black Box’s “Groove Machine,” and a couple of classic songs by The Fat Boys and Milli Vanilli.

Masses’ “Wonderful Person” (which we’ve always thought sounded very much like Linda Clifford’s disco chestnut “You Are, You Are”), Black Science Orchestra’s “Shine,” theContains’ “O’Tomorrow” remix of Voicest,” and “Can You See The Light?” by Leona Fontana Presents Black Sun’s “Spare Love,” and M.A.S. Collect’s “Joy.”


“Sam Records Extended Play: Disco Classics” (Nervous Records). A seminal disco label, Sam Records helped form the soundtrack to late-’70s New York—and to an emerging culture. Key backbeats include John Davis & The Monster Orchestra’s “Ain’t That Enough For You,” Mike & Brenda Sutton’s “Don’t Let Go Of Me,” Ryhe’s “Just How Sweet Is Your Love,” Converstion’s “Let’s Do It Tonight,” and, of course, Vicky D.’s “This Beat Is Mine.”

“Plastic Volume 3” (Network). Fans of the Plastic bigger-than-life remixes won’t be disappointed here. In addition to spotlighting new elektronica-related tracks—the Matt Darrey remix of Delerium’s “Heaven’s Earth,” BT’s “Dreaming,” and BT’s remix of Sarah McLachlan’s “I Love You”—the set includes such underground anthems as Beth Orton’s “Central Reserva,” the Blissfield Mix Of Tomorrow’s mix of Voices” and Can You See The Light,” Leona Fontana Presents Black Sun’s “Spare Love,” and M.A.S. Collect’s “Joy.”

“Dance Trax” by Michael Paolletta

NEW YORK—Since introducing itself to the club community in the mid-’80s, house music has experienced its fair share of make-overs, transmutations, and metamorphoses. While many integral artists, producers, and DJs from the genre’s early days, making music, others have deftly perverted, subverted, and altered the genre. Such one artist is singer/songwriter Stingily.

On his sophomore solo album “Club Stories,” Stingily—the former lead singer of seminal club music trio Ten City—continues to capture the vibe of clubland; that is, the contingent of the club sector that has an affinity for soulful, spirited, and vocal-driven songs.

Stingily’s label, New York-based Nervous Records, will issue the album March 21. Several licenses, including Manifesto/Mercury U.K., Aves Japan, Happy Music France, and Blanco y Negro Spain, are scheduled to release the album March 20.

“Club Stories” finds the artist working with several of clubland’s most revered producers, including D’Influence (”Searching”), Danny Tenaglia (”Stick Together,” “Why Can’t You Be Real”), Peter Rauhofer (”Give Into Love,” ”I Could Be That,” ”Stardance”), and the Base Men Boys (”Happy,” ”Stand Right Up”).

Additionally, the collection was sequenced by Grammy Award winner Franc Kalnir.

The self-managed Stingily, whose songs are handled by EMG Music Publishing, says he wanted this album to be a bit more spiritual. A radio solo debut, 1998’s “The Purrist,” which spawned such dancefloor hits as “Get Up,” ”Flying High,” ”Sing,” ”Mind Real,” and ”Make Me Feel (Mighty Real),” was more of a concept than an album. “It was like it was all happening all over again,” says Stingily, chuckling. “To be honest, I wasn’t sure about covering a song that I originally did with Ten City. But after much consideration, I realized that there might be a new generation of clubheads unaware of the original. And since it really is a great song, I decided to redo it, adding some changes along the way.”

On Tuesday (22), Nervous will issue Stingily’s next single, ”Why Can’t You Be Real,” which features several remixes by Tenaglia. Promotional copies of the single were delivered to dance and radio DJs the week of Jan. 31.

Except for stations like WKTU New York and WPOW Miami, Weiss admits that it’s been a constant challenge to get airplay for Stingily’s music. “It’s certainly been a challenge to get Byron’s music on the radio,” Weiss contends. “But the situation is much better today than it was five years ago. Music and program directors are definitely opening their ears to dance music.”

Nervous will follow ”Why Can’t You Be Real” with ”Stand Right Up” and ”U Turn Me,” which have been remixed by Victor Calderone and Michael T. Diamond, respectively. “We’re taking an aggressive stance with this project,” Weiss explains. “We have plans to release a new single every other month. We want to keep Byron in the forefront of everyone’s mind.”

Stingily, who is booked by Michael Schweiger of New York-based Tracks Central, says he has toured continuously since the release of The Purrist—and it doesn’t appear his touring will end any time soon. New Yorkers will have the opportunity to preview “Club Stories” on March 9, when Nervous will host a listening party and live performance by Stingily at the Starlight Lounge in Manhattan.

To keep up with Stingily’s upcoming performances, check out “The Purrist” online, or visit www.stingily.com.

Club punters and DJs were initially introduced to “Club Stories” last year when Nervous released the album track “That’s The Way Love Is” as a single. A remake of a Ten City song, “That’s The Way Love Is,” complete with Johnny Ventura remixes, reached the summit of Billboard’s Hot Dance Music/Club Play chart last November—just like the original version did 11 years earlier.

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**DANCE TRAX (Continued from preceding page)**

"Earth" by Way Out West.

**BITS & PIECES:** Those looking for a global discussion group on all things dance should investigate "House 2000," one of many specialized groups hosted on the Internet at Egroups.com.

"House 2000" is an open forum on dance music and club culture for producers, remixers, DJs, artists, execs, and club owners.


On "Go Deep," DJ Julius Papp created a truly deep vibe with tracks like the Carlos Sanchez Movement's "Flying High" and Big Muff's "So Far Away" forming the sturdy foundation. And unlike other DJs, Papp doesn't simply play one song after the next. Instead, he wickelly rearranges songs, inserting a cappella sound bites here and there and, when the mood strikes, back-spacing for added effect.

**SAY A LITTLE PRAYER:** On Saturday (12), Stuart Gardner—a veteran Billboard-reporting club DJ—was diagnosed with brain cancer. At press time, Gardner was awaiting transfer from Atlanta's Veterans Affairs Hospital to a 24-hour-care home. Good wishes and messages of love and support can be sent via E-mail to his good friend and Billboard-reporting DJ Das Wright (Daswrixx@aol.com), who will forward all words to Gardner. Our thoughts are with you, Stuart.
Virgin Nashville’s Clay Davidson Achieves ‘Unconditional’ Radio Hit

BY CHET FILIPPO

NASHVILLE—In this era of increasingly manufactured country artists aimed at a specific demographic, Clay Davidson stands out as a classic story of modesty and success: Country boy dreams of Nashville, works his way here, works hard, is discovered by a label head at a cajun guitar-pull song session, records a different type of song, radio pounces on it, and he’s on his way.

It’s not quite been that simple for Virginia native Davidson, but that’s where he’s headed with his Virginia Nashville debut album, due for release April 11. His first single, the album title track, “Unconditional,” an emotional message song of the sort that country music got away from for a while, is becoming a runaway radio phenomenon.

“He’s creating quite a stir here in Knoxvile,” says WIVK Knoxville operating manager Mike Hammond, who brokered “Unconditional” on mainstream country radio.

In December, Virgin held weekend gatherings for radio PDs and consultants and gave them CD samplers of current Virgin artists. WIVK’s Hammond was so impressed by “Unconditional,” he put it on the air when he got home. The listener response amazed him, and he called Virgin.

“I heard some of the responses Mike taped,” says Virginia Nashville president/CEO Scott Hendricks. “Mike’s responses were unbelievable. He said it was the best voice we’ve ever heard in our recordings.”

Evidently, he’s not the only one who feels that way. The label has set a goal of selling one million copies of the album. "It’s a big fan of Jade’s,” says Hendricks, “and a friend of mine, Tammy Brown, told me he was coming into town to play the Bluebird Cafe. I told her I’d be honored to throw a party for him at my ranch and he could invite whoever he wanted to invite. So she did. We had a great day at my ranch and the ranch.”

Davidson takes up the story there. “One of the guys Jade wanted to invite was Michael McDonald,” says Davidson. “I told him that I’d be honored to throw a party for him at my ranch and he could invite whoever he wanted to invite. So he did. We had a great day at my ranch and the ranch.”

Swan Records ‘Like Elvis Used To Do’; Garing Moves From NY Country To Nashville R&B

ON THE ROW: Shania Twain is working on a Christmas album for a fourth-quarter release this year and an album of new material for release in the spring of 2001. Garth Brooks is said to be mulling over recording a George Strait tribute album. Brooks sits in at the Bluebird Cafe this month with singer-songwriter Pat Alger, Klentz, Kline, Williams, and Tony Arata, all of whom have written for Brooks.

The Nashville is shipping Fan Fair this year. Citing scheduling conflicts, the label says it will not have a presence at the annual label showcase.


ALBUM OF THE WEEK: Billy Swan has a Greencastle gate guard, a member of a Band Of Thieves and the Borderlands as well as Kinky Friedman’s Texas Jewboys.

Now he’s recorded the first album for Nashville’s new Audium Entertainment label, a venture by veteran executives Nick Hunter and Simon Renshaw, “Like ElvisUsed To Do,” due April 11, is a rocking collection of Elvis songs, along with the Swan original “Memphis Rocks.”

RETURN OF THE NATIVE: The peripatetic Greg Garing is back in Nashville. The alt-country pioneer tells Nashville Scene he’s putting together a 40s/50s style R&B band, with new original songs, and playing a Tuesday night at the End. The Hank Williams sound is not so different from classic R&B, he notes. Garing says that the country scene he was involved with in New York was interesting but that he couldn’t find enough good pickers. He’s now looking for a sax player in the Bobby Keys tradition.

Initially we were going to treat him like a totally unknown artist, with a slow rollout. The focus has changed since the response to the single.

“We’ll be working closely with the major accounts and over all our bases. We were tempted by signing the album out early, but I still believe in singles sales.”

Fletcher says Swan will be vis-iting radio and retail, as well as major accounts. “He can sit down with just an acoustic guitar and capture everyone’s attention.”

Davidson is co-managed by Big Fish Entertainment and the Bobby Roberts Company, booked by Buddy Lee Attractions, and published by Big Tractor BMI.

In Country Radio Seminar (CRS) news, Sony Music Nashville will present “Snon Night Live” on March 2 in the hotel’s Country Music Hall of Fame, with such Sony artists as Travis Tritt, Billy Ray Cyrus, Yankie Geary, Joe Diffie, Ty Herndon, Roone Riott, and Dann Lea. This year for the first time, Acade-

my of Country Music (ACM) award nominees will be announced at CRS, on March 1 prior to the ACM-sponsored Super Fares Show.

SunTrust Bank’s new 12,000-square foot Music Row Financial Center is now open on 17th Avenue South. With 30 employees, it’s the largest SunTrust branch office in Tennessee. In keeping with its profile Music Row image, the bank has an external signage: If you don’t know it’s there, you obviously don’t need it.

GRAMMY PONTIFICATION: In a perfect world, the following would win Grammys on Wednesday night: Dixie Chicks for album of the year with “Fly,” Shania Twain and Matt Lange for song of the year with “You’ve Got A Way,” “Willie Nelson for pop instrumental with “Night and Day,” at least the four Grammys for Asleep At The Wheel, Merle Haggard for spoken-word album for his audio book, June Carter Cash for traditional folk album with “Press On,” and John Pri for contemporary folk album with “In Spite Of Ourselves.”

In the country categories themselves, the nominations this year are all pretty clearly cut-and-dried: the past 12 months, and some have already been decided. We can live happily with almost any outcome.
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**Pacesetter**

1. JON BON JOVI (EAGLE 73175/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98
2. TIM MCGRAW (Curb 72846/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98
3. MARTINA MCBRIDE (MCA 67592/Sony 11/30.98/17.98)
4. LEANNE RIMES (Curb 77167/Sony) 11/30.98/17.98
5. ALAN JACKSON (Arista Nashville 188013/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98

**Greatest Gainer**

1. ROYAL RANSOM (CURB 64973/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98
2. ALAN JACKSON (Arista Nashville 188004/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98
3. JOHN DENVER (EAGLE 73174/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98
4. I'LL BE ME (CURB 64977/Sony 11/30.98/17.98)
5. DAVID CROSBY (CURB 64974/SONY) 11/30.98/17.98

**Suggested List Price or Equivalent**

- **MCA**
  - 170119 (11.98/17.98)
  - 47536/REC (10.98/16.98)
  - 170048 (11.98/17.98)
  - 47537 (10.98/16.98)
  - 47373/WRN (11.98/17.98)
- **ATLANTIC**
  - 170047 (11/30.98/17.98)
- **CAPITOL**
  - 93402 (10.98/17.98)
- **UNIVERSAL**
  - 93401 (10.98/17.98)
- **SONY**
  - 93403 (10.98/17.98)
- **GREATEST GAINER**
  - 170119 (11.98/17.98)
  - 47536/REC (10.98/16.98)
  - 170048 (11.98/17.98)
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**Top Country Catalog Albums**

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PUBLISHERS / PERFORMANCE
COUNTRY SINGLES

Country: 11 CARLENE (EMI BMV Suite Plate, BMI)

Obviously released at retail to performance on the Hot 100, the two singles gather plenty of radio points. After six weeks atop Hot Country Singles & Tracks, "Breathe" holds at No. 3 with 4,190 detections, and "Amazed" benefits from college play. The latter spent eight weeks at No. 1 on the country radio list amid a record-setting 41-week run there.

Meanwhile, on our Adult Contemporary chart, "Amazed" closes at No. 3, while "Breathe" takes Greatest Gainer and Airpower honors at No. 11. On the Adult Top 40 chart, the Lonestar and Hill tracks bullet and tie at No. 22. Three new bullets also fly on Top Country Albums, as Hill's "Breathe" gains 15% to hold at No. 2, while Lonestar's "Lonely Grill" jumps 16% and finishes at No. 4.

SIGHT OF JESSE: With detections at 54 monitored stations, Mercury newcomer Eric Heathcorter enters Hot Shot Debut at Nos. 48 and 50 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks with an updated version of the Statler Brothers' 1966 breakthrough hit, "Flowers On The Wall." Heathcorter's loyal core is also rising in medium rotation (22-34 plays per week) at KSOP Salt Lake City, one of only a handful of heritage country stations on our panel that played the original version as a current. New spins are heard at WUSY Chattanooga, Tenn., and KXGC Lafayette, La.

A Written member of the quartet, "Flowers On The Wall" peaked at No. 2 on the country chart and at No. 4 on The Billboard Hot 100. It resurrected in ’84 on the "Pulp Fiction" soundtrack, which spent 107 weeks on The Billboard 200.

HEARTS ON FIRE: Kenny Rogers earns our percentage-based Pacesetter trophy, as "She Rides Wild Horses" (Dreamcatcher) gains 98% to rise 19-15 on Top Country Albums and 162-109 on The Billboard 200. Rogers also continued a run in the Top 40 of the alternative radio chart in April 1996 with an EP appropriately titled "Live From Robert's." Since then it has replaced a self-titled 2LP and "Big Backyard Beat Show.

"We recorded this album all over," says BBR-49's Chuck Moog of the new project. "We call it "Coast To Coast" because we did it everywhere—all over America." Mead and BBR-49 cohorts "recorded in Southern California, which is where my humor comes from; Sharron White, Smiling Jill McDowell, and Donny Herron combine new tunes such as "Fourin Pain," "Waiting For A Fall," and "Tell Me Mama" with well-known favorites such as Charlie Daniels' "Uneasy Rider" and the previously released BBR-49 tune "Even If It's Wrong."

BRB-49, which is managed by Mike Clute, a former ad exec, is using the Adat machines to make the album faithful to the band's live show. There are no overdubs.

"The band [Nashville producer] Mike Clute mix it up in the studio," says Mead. "Clute did a great job and saved our ass in a couple spots without doing overdubs with us."

Though BBR-49 hasn't gained widespread support from country radio, the band has long been a dar- lin’ with media and retail. "They are one of my favorite bands," says Tower Nashville GM Jon Kerlikowske. "Here it's going to do great. What it will do nationally, who knows? It’s going to be a record that’s anticipated to begin with, and it will do well out of the box here in the Nashville marketplace."

He admits the band's lack of radio support presents challenges. "It’s the same problem all bands like BBR-49 have had," says Kerlikowske. "You do all the behind-the-scenes work about it, cause they don't get any radio? They have to depend on the station programs and alternate college stations to triple-A stations to play them."

Robinson says the album will be serviced to country stations, but no single will be sent out. Arista will work the "Uneasy Rider" to modern rock specialty shows. "The band already has some true fans at radio that is not country, i.e., modern rock, triple-A, and Americana," he says. "Modern rock and triple-A have been requesting a record they can play that's not a Nashville recording ever. This is a great record for them."

The band is booked by Creative Artists Agency and is being sponsored on their current tour by a company which has tapped the band as spokesmen.

"We'll be doing lots of cross-promotions with them from a radio standpoint and from a media standpoint," Robinson says. "We'll tap into commercial buys, and we'll be doing all kinds of special [point-of-purchase materials] tied in with Jack Daniel's."

Robinson says the label plans a "whole bunch of new-media stuff, in-store and radio." He says the marketing approach will be grass roots and that the campaign will include in-store appearances, radio giveaways, and special events. The band will do syndicated radio shows, including "World Cafe," "Mountain Stage," "Acapella Cafe," and "E-Town."

"This band lives on the road," says Kerlikowske. "Labels love to have those artists, because they are constant- ly on the road, in front of large audiences, and have great opportunities from a retail, a promotion- al, and a media standpoint, which is great. We see this as a career band. They'll be touring forever and making records forever. They keep going forward. This is not the kind of band that waits for radio to tour around."
### Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks

**FEBRUARY 26, 2000**

**ARTIST** | **TITLE** | **IMPACT & NUMBER POSITION ON LABEL** | **LABEL** | **PROMO**
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---

**1** | **MY BEST FRIEND**
| **TIM McGRAW** | No. 1 | **Columbia Album Out** | 1

**2** | **COWBOY TAKE ME AWAY**
| **T. WILLIAMS** | No. 1 | **Mercury Album Out** | 2

**3** | **BACK AT ONE**
| **MARK WILLS** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 3

**4** | **SUNFLOWER**
| **RANDY ROBERTSON** | No. 1 | **Columbia** | 4

**5** | **BREATHE**
| **FAITH HILL & LAMAS REUTER** | No. 1 | **Warner Bros.** | 5

**6** | **HOW DO YOU LIKE ME NOW?**
| **TOBY KOBY** | No. 1 | **Dreamworks** | 6

**7** | **THE BEST DAY**
| **GEORGE STRAIT & JIMMY BUFFETT** | No. 1 | **Reprise** | 7

**8** | **LESSONS LEARNED**
| **T. WILLIAMS & M. HANCOCK** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 8

**9** | **LOVE'S THE ONLY HOUSE**
| **M. MCRAE & W. YOUNG** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 9

**10** | **THE HITS IN YOUR SPOTLIGHT**
| **Vince Gill** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 10

**11** | **PUT YOUR HAND IN MINE**
| **JO DEE MESSINA** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 11

**12** | **DON'T SELL THE FARM**
| **MONTGOMERY GENTRY** | No. 1 | **Columbia Album Out** | 12

**13** | **BEEN THERE**
| **CLINT BLACK & STEVE WARNER** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 13

**14** | **DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO**
| **GARTH BROOKS** | No. 1 | ** Capitol** | 14

**15** | **HE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE**
| **BRAD PAULD** | No. 1 | **Arista Nashville** | 15

**16** | **WON'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT YOU**
| **CARLENE BRITZ** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 16

**17** | **WHAT'S UP**
| **CHEL WRIGHT** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 17

**18** | **DUMPLIN' TIME**
| **MARTHA MCCLURE** | No. 1 | **Columbia** | 18

**19** | **WHEN I SAW I DO**
| **CLINT BLACK** | No. 1 | **Reprise** | 19

**20** | **SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY**
| **CLINT BLACK & JIMMY BRYANT** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 20

**21** | **THE HONKY TONK MAN**
| **GARY ALLAN** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 21

**22** | **WHO'S MORE**
| **ANDY GRIGGS** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 22

**23** | **THAT'S WHERE THE MONEY IS**
| **T. WILLIAMS & L. RASMUSSEN** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 23

**24** | **ALL I HEAR**
| **JESSICA ANDERSON** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 24

**25** | **LET'S MAKE SURE WE KISS GOODBYE**
| **VINCE GILL** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 25

**26** | **REAL LOVE**
| **TROY PENNINGTON** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 26

**27** | **UNBREAKABLE HEART**
| **SHEILA WIALON** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 27

**28** | **WALK TO THE MAGIC**
| **VINCE GILL** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 28

**29** | **CANT NOBODY LOVE YOU (LIKE I DO)**
| **JEFFREY BROWN** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 29

**30** | **WHAT I NEED TO DO**
| **JENNY CHESNEY** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 30

**31** | **ANOTHER NINE MINUTES**
| **R. CRUMB (L. D. DOUGLAS & B. BROWN)** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 31

**32** | **THE WAY YOU LOVE ME**
| **WILLIE NELSON & KARL EYER** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 32

**33** | **IM IN LOVE WITH YOU**
| **JESSICA ANDERSON** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 33

**34** | **CANT NOBODY LOVE YOU (LIKE I DO)**
| **JEFFREY BROWN** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 34

**35** | **WHEN IT RAINS IT POURS**
| **JEFFREY BROWN** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 35

**36** | **I DON'T WANT TO BE THE SUNSHINE**
| **MICHAEL CHAPLIN** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 36

**37** | **WHAT A WOMAN**
| **VINCE GILL & K.W. ROGERS** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 37

**38** | **COULDN'T LAST A MOMENT**
| **DOLLIE ROYAL** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 38

**39** | **NO MERCY**
| **T. WRIGHT (J. MUNCIE)** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 39

**40** | **YOU WERE MEANT FOR ME**
| **SHERRIE AUSTIN** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 40

**NEW** | **FLOWERS ON THE WALL**
| **ERIC HEATHERLY** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 41

**NEW** | **OUT HERE IN THE WATER**
| **REBECCA LYNN HOWARD** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 42

**NEW** | **YOUR EVERYTHING**
| **KEITH URBAN** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 43

**NEW** | **THE WRECKIN' CREW**
| **T. MILLER & M. HOWARD** | No. 1 | **Columbia** | 44

**NEW** | **ITS ALWAYS SOMETHING**
| **DREW CAMERON** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 45

**NEW** | **CRACKER JACK DIAMOND**
| **JERRY BRAY** | No. 1 | **Warner Bros.** | 46

**NEW** | **MY HOMESTOWN**
| **CHARLIE ROBINSON** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 47

**NEW** | **HERE COMES MY BABY**
| **THE MAVRIK** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 48

**NEW** | **LET S MAKE LOVE**
| **VINCE GILL** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 49

**NEW** | **DAD HAVEN'T HAD A BLUES IN A WHILE**
| **THE SOUTHERN BAND** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 50

**NEW** | **IT AIN'T NO CRIME**
| **LILA MccANN** | No. 1 | **Atlantic** | 51

**NEW** | **THERES A THING CALLS LOVE**
| **PHILIP RICHARDS** | No. 1 | **Capitol** | 52

**NEW** | **GET TO YOU**
| **LORRIE MORGAN** | No. 1 | **Atlantic** | 53

**NEW** | **I WILL BE**
| **JULIE REEVES** | No. 1 | **Atlantic** | 54

**NEW** | **LITTLE BIT OF LOVE**
| **JIMMY WATERS** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 55

**NEW** | **LITTLE BIT OF LOVE**
| **JIMMY WATERS** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 56

**NEW** | **LITTLE BIT OF LOVE**
| **JIMMY WATERS** | No. 1 | **MCA Nashville** | 57
Artists" titles Winter classical companies be some of features Auvidis based prized at ing house expanding Fabri's young ems. "The Naïve to says. with perhaps Digipaks for such they are Naïve music, new, repertoire, Internet, also Quartet), on art, dowdy art after days and Savall's record of seven- compilation from for March of Handel arias with Skip Sempe's Capriccio Stravagante. Sharply designed (but in a jewel case) is a great album of Albert Roussel concertos for orchestra from David Stern and the Ensemble Orchestral De Paris, as is an imaginative mass compilation from A Sei Voci. Pianist Jean-François Heisser's two-disc set of inimitably Gallic Beethoven gets a deluxe, ECM-like presentation (including fanciful essays from French authors).

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Early this spring, Naïve will release reprocessed sets in Quatuor Messia's wonderful Hayden cycle on Astree. Noteworthy new releases include a brightly festooned album of New World Baroque from guitarist (and Savall's associate) Rolf Lisle and a set of early Neapolitan vocal music from the ensemble Douceur Mornée. And a highlight in this Bach anniversary year will be a recitalist Hopkinson Smith's two-disc set of his own transcriptions of the composer's sonatas and arrangements for solo violin. The striking cover photo of the latter album helps present Smith—for perhaps the first time—as the compelling poet that he is.

Several of these new albums will come with increased promotion and international touring, according to Zelnik. "We plan to put out fewer records during any given year, but we will promote them much more completely than ever before," he says. "Touring in the U.S. for an artist like Maria Bayou is vital. And more and more, the Internet will be a key avenue for promotion, especially for new artists. You can build demand on the Internet that allows you to then present a case for the artist at traditional retail."

Naïve/Audiovis currently has 10% of the classical music market in France, according to Zelnik, and 1% of the overall market, at 76 million francs ($11.2 million) worth of turnover last year. With double-digit increases in the fall, Zelnik predicts that Naïve's turnover for the next fiscal year will be 100 million francs ($15 million), for 1.5% of the market. The company has its own sales force in France and Spain, and it goes through kindred-spirit Harmonie Musik in the U.S., the U.K., and Germany. Being part of a major group also means that Zelnik enjoys what looks to be an inclusive but integrity-conscious A&R perspective to Naïve, stressing that the evolving operation is a "generalist culture company with an international outlook." He says, "We release music from the world for the world. And our goal is to develop a signature catalog without compromising this music. Although Naïve cannot be in the serious classical ghetto, we will not concentrate on crossover. The major classical labels are spending a lot of time on this artificial crossover, which rarely produces lasting music. I do believe, however, that there is natural crossover happening all over the world, which is very exciting."

"Really, I think the crisis in the industry is not with the artists or the public; it is with the record companies," he says. "Most of the artists whom I speak with are open-minded about breaking within barriers, especially the new generation. The consumer, too, is looking for something beyond the standard. Look at the success of something like the Buena Vista Social Club. People travel much more these days and are therefore open to the world. And with so many people sitting at computers all the time now, I believe they hunger for the sound of something organic, something real, whether it's Cuban or classical."
Higher Ground
by Deborah Evans Price

N RB NEWS: Congratulations to the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) on another successful convention. The group drew more than 5,000 attendees to its 57th annual event, held Feb. 3-5 in Anaheim, Calif. The mood was rather celebratory, as the Christian broadcasting community had just won a victory when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reversed its decision restricting religious expression on noncommercial educational TV stations.

The ruling was a result of a controversial decision that came when the FCC granted a license for Cornerstone’s WPCI in Pittsburgh to move to Channel 16, a channel reserved for noncommercial educational programming. In issuing the license, the FCC also placed additional guidelines stating that “religious exhortation, proselytizing, and statements of personally held religious views or beliefs” would not qualify as educational.

With freedom of religious speech threatened, the NRB rallied the troops, and the FCC reversed its decision by a 4-1 vote. During a panel featuring Roy Stew-

ard and Linda Blair from the NCB, Stewart joked that some of his comrades feared he wouldn’t return from the convention, but audience members repeatedly voiced their appreciation and support.

The convention was a mix of educational seminars, music, and lively discussion. Michael W. Smith, Greater Vision, Big Tent Revival, Chris Rice, Kathy Troccoli, Babbie Mason, Bob Carlisle, and the Martins were among the Christian artists performing.

“In the Spirit
by Lisa Collins

IN DUE TIME: ‘In the music business, there are times that people come and go. But you’ll always find people with longevity—who continue to do what they do but also incorporate what changing audiences want to hear.’

That, according to co-founder Karl Reid, is what accounts for the longevity of Commissioned, the 18-year-old Grammy-nominated group that helped redefine (and expand) the boundaries of gospel nearly two decades ago with the incorporation of new-trademark driving baselines and funky, R&B-tinged harmonies.

“There is a time and a season for all things,” Reid continues. “When first came out, we were breaking the mold. Now, we believe there’s a new move of God coming to the church, and we believe our new album, ‘Time & Seasons,’ is going to be instrumental in that move.”

The Tuesday (22) release of the set’s 10-track album, “Time & Seasons,” brings an end to the group’s 4-year-old hiatus from recording. A promo tour kicked off Feb. 18, as well as a radio blitz in key markets. The long-awaited new set—titled ‘Time’—is the first with the departure of Montrell Du-

nett—marks the debut of two new vocalists, Marcus Cole and Chris Poole.

Reid says the delay is mostly due to the restructuring of the group.

“It took us a while to find somebody that would fit with us,” Reid explains. “We changed faces, but there was always a sound that Commissioned had that was always distinct—the four-part harmony, male voices, melodic harmonies, and the word. The sound is still there.”

What’s new, according to Reid, the group has for-
matted a 3-track release much like a vocal adventure, circling the full range of its vocal stylings.

“We wanted to do something different, so we have some vocal hooks that connect the songs, and then we’ve been able to market it as you would a general market, a Sam Cooke–flavored ballad that is strictly quartet-style. We also did some praise and worship, one called ‘Psalm 84’ and another called Just Worship. There are the two singles—‘Testify,’ which is relatively mainstream, and the title song, and ‘Glorious Praise,’ which is straight church.”

The notion that four years could render their sound and/or style a bit stale does not faze Reid.

“We release in the broad enough gospel has been enjoying, but we don’t feel time has passed us by,” Reid says. “We know that there’s still room for us to go higher, but we’ve done what we could do and feel with this album; people are going to recognize what Commissioned is all about. We’ve been on sabatical, but we’re back, and people can expect to see Commissioned in a theater near them soon.”

IN THE MEANTIME: Effective this month, Cheryl Moore takes over as director of marketing for Myrrh Records’ Black music division. One of many priorities she takes on with the post is the April 25 debut of Mary, the much-talked-about female duo signed to Columbia Records last year... And Integrity Music has pushed back the release of Bishop Clarence Mc-

Clendon’s ‘Shout Hallelujah’ from Feb. 15 to April 18 to better accommodate the simultaneous general market release of Carlisle’s ‘Hezekiah Walker & the Love Fellowship Crusade Choir’ (Verity 43313).

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Carlton Brings Solo Work Back To Warner For 'Fingerprints'; Knit Classics Drops Reissues

A SORT OF HOMECOMING: It's been nearly two decades since Larry Carlton soloed a single album for Warner Bros., the home of past efforts such as "Friends" (1985) and "Mr. 335: Live In Japan" (1978). The guitarist's renewed association with the label began when he joined the supergroup Fourplay in 1998, and it continues on Tuesday (22) with "Fingerprints," his first solo project since 1996's "The Gift" (GRP).

"Warner Bros. gave me positive and honest feedback," says Carlton. "I didn't start writing for the album until five or six weeks before going into the studio, so the label's energy and enthusiasm influenced the album greatly."

Both Carlton's upbeat persona and his love for engaging melodies are evident on "Fingerprints." I was cognizant of keeping the melodies a little shorter than I did in the past," he says. "I used to write what I thought were complete songs, but now I think that they went on too long. I think that in the contemporary jazz format, I can write the emotional melodies that I like, but now I prefer to get to the hook and to the solo a little quicker.

"Maybe I'm becoming a better composer and editor," he adds, "and I hope that is the case."

While the melodies may be more immediate, creating the album was no less challenging to the guitarist than was any of his previous works. "I've become friends with [Fourplay members] Bob James and Harvey Mason, and they are avid golfers," says Carlton. "From what I understand, golf is a personal challenge that you never fully conquer, and it's the same with playing music. There is always something new to discover on the guitar."

Country artist Vince Gill, a talented guitarist in his own right, guests alongside Carlton on the guitar duet "Gracious," which finds the two six-stringers playing tandem melodies over a series of pulsating grooves.

"I wrote the song with Vince in mind," says Carlton of the guitarist he met eight years ago while hosting a show on TNN. "He was admittedly nervous when he came in, but when he settled in, it was obvious that he could play the guitar. I caused the song 'Gracious' so I could always say thanks to Vince for being involved.

"I think that with the time that's gone by since my last solo release, and with my own growth as a player, there's a real freshness in the music," Carlton says. "I think the production and songs are a good backdrop for my guitar to be a sensitive instrument out front, and I think people will listen and feel that I am still coming on strong."


Knit Classics titles are available online at both knittclassics.com and jazz.com; brick-and-mortar outlets will be serviced with select titles after March. The imprint, which is devoted to unearthing obscure recordings, plans future releases including rare dates from James "Blood" Ulmer, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Dizzy Gillespie.

AND: "Wandering Moon," due Feb. 15 from Sony Classical, is Terence Blanchard's first project of jazz works for small groups since 1994's "Romantic Defiance" (Columbia). The trumpeter will sit in with the "Tonight Show With Jay Leno" band on Tuesday (22). Most recently a guest performer with the Rippingtons, saxophonist Paul Taylor releases his third solo disc, "Undercover," Tuesday (22) on Peak./N-Coded.

'I think that with the time that's gone by since my last solo release, and with my own growth as a player, there's a real freshness in the music.'

-LARRY CARLTON-

Conceived by producer/keyboard player Jason Miles, "Celebrating The Music Of Weather Report," coming from Telarc on Tuesday (22), explores the connection between Joe Zawinul's pioneering fusion group and the contemporary jazz sound it spawned. Material from all phases of the band's discography is represented on the all-star affair, including "Birdland," "Mysterious Traveller," and "Man In The Green Shirt."

Jazz at Lincoln Center's upcoming 2000-2001 season will feature various tributes to Louis Armstrong to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the trumpeter's birth. The celebration begins with a concert July 4—the day Armstrong claimed as his birthday—by artistic director Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra at New Jersey's Liberty State Park. . . . The San Francisco Jazz Organization, under the eye of artistic director and artist-in-residence Joshua Redman, dedicates its spring season to a multi-generational look at particular instruments and styles under the theme of "Traditions In Transition."
BY IRV LICHTMAN

NEW YORK—ASCAP evening Valentine’s Day somewhat belatedly (at least for a weekly publication like this one), has come up with its most-performed “love songs” for each decade since the 1910s.

There are five songs, in order of performance strength, that are representative of each decade of the century just past, at least from the catalog of the 80-year-old performance right society, whose main competitor, BMI, was established in 1940.

In letting the performance numbers speak for themselves, ASCAP has likely disappointed many folks who figure that a favorite song, at least in their nostalgic reveries, qualifies as a contender.

Indeed, the list of songs for each decade could easily accommodate another 20 or 30 songs with performance prowess, but a total of 45 songs does get the idea across on a manageable basis. The price of listing the hits, however, is that many of the greatest writers of love songs are nowhere to be found.

They include ASCAP stalwarts Irving Berlin; Jerome Kern; DeSylva, Brown, and Henderson; Arthur Schwartz; Frank Loesser; Sammy Cahn; Jule Styne; and the team of Rodgers and Hammerstein, although Rodgers is listed in the ’30s list for “Blue Moon,” with a lyric by Lorenz Hart.

Berlin, who was the granddaddy master of the accessible love song from the teens until the early ’60s, probably would have topped the ’40s decade with “White Christmas,” which, of course, romanticizes Christmas past but isn’t quite in the category of a romantic ballad.

Berlin’s catalog of romantic hits does include the likes of “Always” (the ’20s), “Cheek To Cheek” (the ’30s), and “They Say It’s Wonderful” (the ’40s). And the list of lovelies continues on for other unrepresented writers.

But it should be pointed out that while these writers, in spite of their obvious talents, aren’t present thanks to the cold rules of mathematics, they are duly represented in a just-published revised compendium of “ASCAP Hit Songs.” Here there are many more songs from each decade, including the 1890s.

Some songs in the love-song compilation apparently benefit from performances accumulated years after their initial success, when they were revived in new hits versions.

The ’40s “Blueberry Hill” (No. 2), by Al Lewis, Vincent Rose, and Larry Stock, had a hit revival years later by Fats Domino, while the same decade’s “Since I Fell For You” (No. 5) by Buddy Johnson was revived in the ’80s by Lenny Welch. Also, “As Time Goes By,” the No. 1 song of the ’30s, benefited from extensive exposure after its appearance in the film “Casablanca” (1941).

Only with the advent of the ’60s does the ASCAP listing by decade begin showing the presence of two or more songs by the same authors. In the ’60s, Hal David and Bert Bacharach have two songs: “The Look Of Love,” that decade’s top ASCAP song, and “They Long To" (Continued on page 56)

ASCAP Lists Last Century’s Leaders On Basis Of Performances

Top Love Songs, Decade By Decade

FISCHER JOBBER SOLD: On the jobbing of printed music front, Charles Dumont & Son Inc. has acquired the interests of Carl Fischer Music Distributors from Carl Fischer LLC, now solely a music publishing operation after many years of running both a wholesale and retail business.

Fischer jobbing unit once had offices in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The unit traces its origins to a Chicago operation in the mid-’30s. Carl Fischer LLC is based in New York under president Sandy Feldstein, the former chief of Warner Music Publications in Miami. VP Thomas Mornale remains in charge of the Carl Fischer Music Distributors unit of Dumont.

Feldstein reported the deal along with Charles Dumont Jr., executive VP of Charles Dumont & Son Inc., based in Voorhees, N.J., its only location.

EAR YE! ASCAP has released “The ASCAP Ear,” the second volume of its special promo CD focusing on talent that has been largely featured in ASCAP showcases or workshops over the year.

The collection of 20 tracks is available for hearing on the ASCAP Web site, ascap.com, which also features bio and contact information for all acts featured. Also, the performance right society hosted a release party Feb. 7 in New York and will host one Tuesday (22) in Los Angeles.

Acts featured in volume two of “The ASCAP Ear” are Emmanuél Frattini, Muse, Soul Jahz, Five Degrees Of Soul, Justice Leeg, Jeff Klein, Jason Frederick, Sixpence None The Richer, Tom Anderson, Sydney Forest, Willie Mack, Jeff Johnson, My Favorite Relative, Maica, Paul Thomson, Derryl Perry, Jeni Fujita, Tiorah, Ivan, and Angela Cotia.

AND THEN THEY WROTE... Frank Military, Warner/Chappell senior VP and also guardian of the publisher’s representation of key golden-era writers, has come up with two more promo salutes, to Lew Brown and Sammy Cahn.

The Cahn set is a three-disc, 76-song program, and the other, a single-disc, 27-song “The Songs Of Lew Brown,” is of an author who is lesser-known than Cahn but still has a catalog of wondrous songs.

He was part of the hitmaking team of DeSylva, Brown, and Henderson (the score for “Good News” by Sammy Fain that produced “That Old Feeling.” In both sets, the vocals feature the cream of the crop.


PRINT ON PRINT: The following are the best-selling follies from Hal Leonard Publishing:

1. Red Hot Chili Peppers, “California Style”
2. The Beatles, “Yellow Submarine”
3. Creed, “My Own Prison”
4. “Best Of Elvis Costello”
5. “Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.”
Axiom -MT techniques, log fan the producer. The working Streisand, your schedule; started to studios, to studio owners who might need a small, portable system with high resolution.

In order to hit all its targets, the company decided that simplicity was key, according to Schauer.

“One of the goals was to keep it simple,” says Schauer. “One of the biggest complaints about this type of unit is, ‘Gee, they’re deep.’ But this one will allow someone who’s a musician to start recording and, at the same time, allow a power user to get everything out of it.”

While there is no competitive product in the marketplace that offers the same features as the AW4416, it is not the popular Roland VS-1680 workstation and the newly introduced Mackie HDR24/96 and Tascam MX-2424.

However, the AW4416 differs from the VS1680 in that it offers on-board automation, and it differs from the $5,000 Mackie and $4,000 Tascam units in both features and price points.

Schauer emphasizes the compatibility of the AW4416 with other digital platforms as one of its strengths. “It’ll have total compatibility in digital form with anybody with digital data—the idea being, if your bandwidth uses ADAT or DA-88s, you’re all set. You’re going to be able to get in and out of this thing.”

When it begins shipping in June, the AW4416 will include a built-in, 2.5-inch drive with a storage capacity of 10 or 12 gigabytes, according to Schauer. Among the optional accessories will be a CD burner that can be installed on the unit. In addition, the AW4416 will contain a SCSI 2 port for an external hard-drive connection.

**Audiocraft**

**Nashville**

Country Star Wynonna worked at East Iris Studio A on her latest Curb/Mercury Nashville release, produced by James Stroud, engineered by Ed Cherney, and assisted by Caleb Swedien. The project mixed tracks in Studio A on the Solid State Logic 9000 J3 for its upcoming debut album, “Home.” A pair of ProMix 01 and O2R digital mixers were used.

The latest call from Yamaha concerned the AW4416, a recording, mixing, automation, sampling, and mastering workstation for professional project recordists. After a meeting with the Yamaha team, a Pro Tools suite was ordered for their forthcoming release; Leonard produced, with Chuck Turner engineering. John Hiatt worked in Studio A on a film soundtrack project with Leonard engineering and Szymbanski assisting. Abra Moore worked on edits and mixes for her upcoming Arista release in Studio B with Jay Joyce producing and Giles Reaves engineering. Producer-songwriter Darrel Brown tracked and mixed in Studio B with engineer Turner.

At Sound Stage Studios, Tim Rushlow overdubbed and mixed an Atlantic project with producer David Mollow, engineer Derek Bason, and assistant Doug Delong. Clint Black worked on mixes for an RCA album with producer James Bowledge, assistant Ricky Cottle, Lee Greenwood tracked, overdubbed, and mixed an upcoming album with producer Jerry Crutchfield, engineer Steve Tallisof, and assistant Delong. Chris Souderland mixed for Giant Records with Garth Fundis producing, Chuck Ainlay engineering, and Tony Green assisting. Rock Star overdubbed and mixed a V&R Records album with producer/engineer Kevin Beamish. John Anderson worked on a Sony Music album, with producer Blake Chancey, engineer Ainlay, and assistant Green.

**Rock Act King Crimson**

Mixed an upcoming album at Seveneteen Grand; band members Robert Fripp and Adrian Belew produced, with Ken Latchney engineering. Beth Nielsen Chapman edited and mixed a self-produced album with engineers Gary Paczosa and Chuck Turner and assistant T. Neales. Pam Tillis overdubbed an Arista project with producer Paul Worley and Mike Moody, and assistant Sandy Jenkins. The same studio also worked on projects by John Anderson for Sony Music and Carl Anderson for Arista. Sara Evans overdubbed an RCA album with Worley producing, Jenkins engineering, and Neales assisting.

**Los Angeles**

Tuff Act Ignite worked on its debut album with producer/engineer Thom Wilson at Track (Continued on next page)
Anthony Jefferies, and assistant Ai Fujisaki. Pop singer Jessica Simpson worked on her Columbia single “Anyway” with producers Sam Waters and Louis Biancanello, who were assisted by Williams. Restless Records artist Warren G. worked with engineer Charles Nassar and assistant Fujisaki.

**BLIND EYES, Good Ears.** Elektra Records act Third Eye Blind mastered its latest release, "Blue," at Bernie Grundman Mastering in Los Angeles. Showed at the sessions, from left, are Third Eye Blind drummer Brad Hargreaves, manager Eric Goldland, co-producer Jason Carmer, vocalist/guitarist Stephan Jenkins, mastering engineer Brian “Big Bass” Gardner, and bassist Aron Salazar. (Photo: David Gogg)
**Estefan To Open Latin Music Confab**

**Latin Music Notas**

*by John Lannert*

**STATESIDE BRIEFS:** Marc Anthony, Ibrahim Ferrer, Pancho Sánchez, and Chucu Valdés are booked to perform Wednesday (23) at the 42nd annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles.

EMI Latino recording artist Oscar De La Hoya is scheduled to fight Derrel Coley on Saturday (26) at New York’s Madison Square Garden. The lightweight bout will be televised on HBO.

Radio company Mega Communications and urban music online firm Aka.com have teamed to launch Akumasica, a Latin music portal. The launch date is expected to be late next month, and will be the first radio stations to feature Akumasica artists.

**Natalia Readies Tour:** Aria/BMG Latin act Natalia Oreiro, a sultry, 22-year-old Uruguayan singer/actress, is on a big roll. Her self-titled debut album hit double platinum (120,000 units sold) in Argentina, and her soap opera, “Mujer, Bruja,” was the highest-rated show in that country.

Now Oreiro will spend much of the next five months in 12- to 14-hour rehearsals for a 40-date concert tour set to begin in July. Telemanado has picked up “Mujer Bruja” for broadcast in the U.S.

**Mexico Notas:** Not only is José Alfredo Jiménez going to have a statue erected in his honor (Bull. Feb. 18), but Aria/BMG Latin icon Juan Gabriel will have his own sculpture erected at Plaza Garibaldi, the traditional locale in Mexico City where mariachi performances are performed.

As Jiménez’s figure, the sculptor of the Juan Gabriel statue was Oscar Fonzanneli. Fonzanneli took about a year to finish the project, because he could not see Juan Gabriel in person. The Mexican superstar thought it would bring him bad luck if he saw the statue before it was completed, so he asked his longtime friend Queta Jiménez, “La Prieta Linda,” as she is known, to oversee all the details.

Sasha Solok is currently in rehearsals for the narrator of Mozart’s opera “La Flauta Mágica,” which will be performed by Mexican tenor Francisco Arzaga March 23 and 30 at Palau de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. Carlos Cuevas, one of Mexico’s best-known bolero singers, has left Mexico City indie IM Discos nine years for Warner Music Mexico. Terms of the deal were not disclosed, but Cuevas says he signed the pact because Warner plans to promote him outside of Mexico. Cuevas’ label band will be produced by Jorge Avendano Lührs.

On the heels of its big-selling soundtrack “Sexo, Poder Y Lágirmas,” EMI Mexico is trying to repeat its film success with the soundtrack to “Todo El Poder.” Unlike “Sexo, Poder Y Lágirmas,” “Todo El Poder” contains previously recorded tracks as noted acts Plastilina Mosh and El Gran Silencio, plus a cover version of “La Tromba,” a hit by ‘60s rock’n’roll star Johnny Laboriel.

**JAMMIN’ JANUARY:** It was chilly over much of the U.S. in January, but sales of titles appearing on The Billboard Latin 50 remained warm, as 545,600 units were moved last month, up a robust 29% from January 1999.

No blockbusters or strong newcomers to the chart could be found in January, but the overall depth of sales was impressive, as last year’s titles maintained high chart positions.

Indeed, eight of the top 20 sellers in the coming weeks will be produced by Los Angeles-based ASCAP; and Rudy Pérez, noted producer/songwriter who has helmed top 10 hits in the past few years by Velásquez, Cherubín, Christian Mali, and Millie, and Olga Tañón.

Aspiring songwriters who are registered songwriters can get their material critiqued by this stellar five-person jury by submitting their demo tapes or CDs at the panel.

Elsewhere, industry veterans scheduled to participate in the “Will The Misters Go On?” panel are Henry Cárdenas, president of CFA; Jon Stoll, president of Faestana Productions; and Jack Utsick, president of Entertainment Group Fund.

Said to participate, thus far, in the “Bienvenidos Señor Dot-Com” Internet panel are Jorge Fuentes, VP at Discos Premiers América, and Litsle Judy, executive producer at LaMusica.com.

Topping off the conference will be Billboard’s seventh annual Latin Music Awards. Registration will take place on April 27 at the Jackie Gleason Theater of the Performing Arts in Miami Beach. Heineken En Vivo will sponsor the presentation, which will be taped by Telemanado for broadcast in May.

If you have not heard, Fonovisa idol Marco Antonio Solís will be inducted into the Latin Music Hall of Fame. Jorge Pinos, of the William Morris Agency, will receive the El Pre- mio Billboard Lifetime Achievement Award.

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EMI Publishing Opens Latin American Office

BY JOHN LANNERT

EMI Music Publishing Worldwide might have been the last publishing major to open a regional office for Latin America. But now that the publishing giant has officially set up shop in Miami Beach, company chairman/CEO Martin Bandier asserts that EMI will be making its presence felt in Latin America—and in the U.S.

“More and more Latin music, in addition to its significant growth, is also such a key part of the fabric of American music now,” says Bandier. “It is imperative that you have an office in a place like Miami Beach, which is sort of the gateway of Latin America to America.

“And we’re not going to just stop there,” adds Bandier. “We also will have representation in Texas and Los Angeles.”

Heading up EMI’s Miami Beach office is Néstor Casono, regional managing director of EMI’s Latin publishing arm, EMI Music Publishing Latin America. Casono, who spent most of his career as a record label executive, was previously regional director of EMI’s Argentine subsidiary.

Though EMI has now officially opened its office, Casono has held his position for three years while being based in Miami. He says the regional office was formally established because “it seemed that the last few years the Latin American markets came to be more reliable from a political and economic standpoint. All of this prompted us to begin thinking about opening a regional office in Miami.”

Despite being a latecomer to South Florida, where four other publishing majors are well entrenched, EMI has been a major player, attracting big-name Hispanic songwriters.

Among its roster of standouts are famed Latino recording artists Enrique Iglesias, Maná, Café Tacuba, Alejandro Sanz, Los Noches, Fito Páez, and Joe Vasconcellos.

Also signed to EMI is Brazil’s superstar samba act 36 Pra Contraria and A.B. Quintanilla, the brother of Selena, whose hit songs recorded by Selena are administered by EMI. Also, the catalog of global icon Gloria Estefan is handled outside of the U.S. by EMI.

While noting that the essential responsibilities of a publisher involve copyright protection and exploitation of authors’ works, Casono adds that the highly personalized service and financial backing offered by EMI is a factor that sets this company apart from the other publishers.

“We invest a lot of money in masters to negotiate with whichever label that offers us good artist development for our writers,” says Casono.

One of the acts for which Casono helped develop and secure a record deal was Los Noches, a popular pop quartet from Argentina that recently received a plaque from EMI Argentina for selling 1 million units of its four CDs.

Bandier says the recent merger between WEA and EMI and the latter’s purchase of Warner Music Group have left the plans for the publishing divisions up in the air. Still, Bandier notes that “in the meantime we have to conduct business as usual. We have to go on the assumption that we are in business now, and the opening of this office is really just the signification of our presence in Miami.”

Regardless of what transpires with Warner and EMI, Bandier predicts that EMI will remain as a key player in the region in the future of the two companies, even though doing business there is challenging.

“Latin America is a collection of territories where it is difficult to collect performance and mechanicals,” says Bandier. “But at the end of the day, we’re hoping that collections will get better. As the industry distribution from the societies will get better. Everyone benefits from this, not just us, because the more we make, the more we can invest back to the local repertoire, and I think that will happen.”

NOTES

(Continued from page 10)

EMI

Publishing

Latin American

Office

BY JOHN LANNERT

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THE NEW CONTENDERS

Skeptics scoff at them for flushing money down the drain by investing during such a lean period, but a handful of new entertainment companies argue there’s no better time to gain a foothold in an industry that, in the past, had very little room for new players.

BY WINNIE CHUNG

HONG KONG—The past two years have not been kind to business ventures in Hong Kong. Although all business sectors may have considered themselves hard-hit, the luxury goods and entertainment industries have been dealt a double-whammy with reduced consumption and rampant piracy.

While Hong Kong housewives have been catching the daily train across the mainland border to Shenzhen to stock up on their fake Pradas, Guccis and Fendis, film and music fans have only to trot down to the street corner to buy a pirated video or music compact disc for less than $5 (U.S.).

The music industry alone has suffered from a drop of more than 60% in revenue from its peak of $260 million (U.S.) in 1995, forcing a third of the industry professionals into a career change, by some estimates. The International Federation Of The Phonographic Industry (IFPI) estimates that between 50% and 60% of possible sales have disappeared into the pockets of pirates.

As a result, fewer recording labels have found it prudent to invest in their dwindling cash reserves into new artists; even major’s have been scaling back by dropping less profitable singers from their rosters.

Yet a ray of hope seems to be breaking through the picture of doom and gloom, with at least three new labels making a big play of late to establish themselves in Hong Kong. While skeptics scoff at them for flushing money down the drain by investing during such a lean period, these new companies argue there could be no better time to gain a foothold in an industry that, in the past, has had very little room for new players.

“The Chinese phrase for ‘crisis’ actually comprises two words: ‘danger’ and ‘opportunity.’ In these risky times, we really see an opportunity for us to make an impact,” says Frankie Lee, director and CEO of Emperor Entertainment Group Ltd., which owns EEG Records.

“From experience, we know that even if you lose money on nine albums, all you need is for the 10th to be a hit to make it all back,” says Lee, formerly a Warner Music executive. “Of course, you would need good songs as well. The slow market conditions have made it easier for EEG to acquire certain necessary elements like talent. When the industry is at its peak, it is more difficult to recruit or sign up talent because everyone is grabbing for them and pushing the price up,” he notes.

BAD TIMES BODE WELL

Li Kuo-hsing, CEO of the Met Al Entertainment Group, which recently started its own music label. Mei

Continued on page APQ-2

When East Met West

As Asia enters the new century, Billboard asked a few veterans in the region to also look back, at how East met West to form the music business as it exists today. We asked for memorable moments or observations on the cultural collision—the differences and similarities—which continue to shape the Asian music business.

“There is one thing that doesn’t differ between East and West, and that is that the boss always wants the glamour that comes with success. When I was with WEA in the ’80s, I released half a dozen albums with Dick Lee, and they were all flops. I was under pressure to drop him, and I told Dick the situation. In turn, Dick announced to the press that he would “retire” in anticipation of his predicament. Then came his final album under contract, ‘The Mad Chinaman’ [1989]. It was a smash. Dick’s fusion of Asian pop took off all over the region; suddenly, the boss wanted to take photos with him.

Everyone loves the smell of success. But, since then, the business has changed drastically. In the near future, we will have less to sell. The reason is that this generation of record execs lacks repertoire knowledge. So, while there are many products to sell, a lot of it doesn’t get released because the artists are not known to the label managers. The phenomenon that we are seeing is a market dominated by compilations. And it’s nobody’s fault but a music business that doesn’t nurture music culture.”

—Jimmy Wee, managing director, Springroll Creative Agency, Singapore

“I don’t want to name names here, in order to protect the guilty! A few years ago, I was in China for a meeting. Afterwards, at an industry banquet, we presented the guest of honor—a Chinese vice minister for culture—with a bottle of French red burgundy worth $300. It was at the time when Asians were first learning about and enjoying European wines, and we hoped it would be a goodwill gesture to the vice minister. We had been told beforehand that he really enjoyed red wine and that we had to be careful to get him something good, because he knew what he liked to drink. It was a really expensive bottle, and the vice minister seemed to be really pleased to receive it. It was opened in front of him, and he poured himself out half a glass in front of all of us—and then he topped it up with half a glass of Sprite! He loved it, though! He finished the glass off and expressed his gratitude to us for the present. I just stood there—my jaw had dropped!”

—Michael Smellie, senior VP, Asia Pacific, BMG Entertainment International

“I can’t really give you an anecdote that marks a difference between Asia and the West. My gut feeling is that the main difference is quite often a

Continued on page APQ-4
Faith in Brit-Pop, a Temporary Tattoos and a Poetic Enhanced-CD

KOREAN POP IDOL Steve Yoo---aka Yoo Seung-Jun---promises to be one of the busiest artists in the year 2000. The 23-year-old male singer, who was raised in Los Angeles, displayed his energetic and artistic style in 1999 by releasing two studio albums and one live album. His fourth release, "Over And Over," produced by BaeKens Media and distributed by Warner Music Korea, was released in December and marked another milestone in his career. "It's the first time that I had total artistic control over the album," says Yoo, "I got to write more songs, invite talented musicians of my choice and even co-produce for the first time."

Although he has been better-known as a dance artist, the new disc displays his vocal skills, as well; five of his 13 new songs are ballads. Yoo also has begun work as an artist/songwriter in Korea, appearing in public-service messages.

Yoo has a charisma that appeals to both male and female, says Choi Soung-Hun, managing director at BaeKens Media. "Unlike bands or actors, not many solo artists do have a charisma. Yoo. Male fans like his cool looks. Female fans like how he dances." Yoo, who already had toured Taiwan three times and last year released an English-language record in Asia, plans a national and regional tour in the year ahead.

"Learning," which is a Chinese pop ballad, we are approaching the Chinese radio stations, while for tracks such as "The Day," "It's going in Hokkien, we are going to Chinese-language clubs and pubs. The techno numbers, like Nigel Woodford's "Rave Animal" and "Rap Me," are the English-language channels."

JULIET THE ORANGE has offered the flavor of the new millennium in Malaysia on its epically titled enhanced CD. "The Positive Tone label, which has been largely responsible for developing and exploiting the English-speaking urban market in Malaysia, was the first to offer interactive CD releases to the rapidly growing fanbase of Net surfers."

Managing director Ahmad Izham Omar says that all 12 planned album releases from its stable in 2000 will be "enhanced" with interactive elements. "In an industry which has thrived on "satellite" products, we feel that the market is ripe for change. The younger generation---exposed to MTV, Channel V, the Internet and interactive media---have different musical tastes and expect value added technology with their purchases," he says. The interactive content of "Juliet The Orange-The Album" contains poetry by the duo---Mei May, who is studying economics, and Pin Lean, currently a law student. The two have been writing and singing together since they met at girls' school in 1992. Their CD also contains studio tapes, intros, lyrics and audio samples that can be remixed. Also released by the label, following a triple-platinum debut, is O.A.G.'s "Melody," featuring an original CD, which contains home videos, merchandising and fanclub hotlines, games, album-production history, audio samples from previous releases and audio loops that can be downloaded.

NEW CONTENDERS

Continued from page APO-1

Ah Music, sees the situation in the same light as Lee. "In the good times, it is difficult to get a foot in the door, but when times are bad, I can advance while others retreat." says.

A newer name on the pie is BMA Records, part of the HKSSYF Group. Managing director Kenneth Kam Kwong-sing says the company's musical developments represent its hopes of playing a part in reviving the local music industry. He admits that having less competition in the market is encouraging.

"There is an element of that. With the market being bad and people getting bored with the same old faces all the time, there is more opportunity for new faces to make it," he says. "But dedication on the part of our main backer, [businessman] Stephen Lo Kit-shing, to promote good music is also a strong factor."

Although there may be differences in motivation, all three new labels share something in common: They have the resources of a large entertainment conglomerate propelling them.

The Emperor Entertainment Group is part of the Emperor Group, presently over US$1 billion in revenue. The group's main subsidiary has 500,000 shareholders, and is the world's largest private equity investor. However, the group has been under criticism recently for its management and financial strategy.

The group's main subsidiary, Emperor Group, is a subsidiary of the group and is concentrating mainly on the Chinese-speaking markets. So far, it has only signed up one recording artist, Taiwanese actress Ruby Lin Hsin-hu, and has no plans for immediate expansion.

As an entertainment group, so getting into the music arena was a natural choice," says Mei Ah's Li. "We need to develop in all directions in order to build a better base. But we are proceeding very cautiously because we have not had much experience in this field. That has always been our way of working: We move at a slow, deliberate pace, and only sign up the artists that we are confident will be better in the long term and maybe source for new talent in mainland China, but we would be looking for people who can sing as well as act."

The newest kid on the block is the HKSSYF Group, which comprises a film-production company, television, an online entertainment Web site (www.HKSSYF.com) and an artist-management firm, alongside the music label. The main source of financing comes from Lo, a businessman who has long been involved in the entertainment business.

MORE THAN A LABEL

All three executives agree that conditions at present have not been conducive to the survival of more record labels. But, with more varied business interests, each company can help offset losses with other means of revenue.

"We're very compact, and we work as a group, not as a lone label," says Mei Ah. "We feel that only concentrating on a record label is not suitable for a place like Hong Kong and the market conditions here, because it is so small. It can only be feasible when mainland China opens its markets and can be compared to the American or European markets," explains Lee at Emperor Group. "In Hong Kong, it is judged by popularity, and that only comes with more exposure. But a singer cannot release an album every month, so we have to find other things for them to do: films, commercials, TV work. That's why we need the management arm to support it. Their development will be more rounded, and our capital and resources are better distributed. If the record sales are not good, we can shift more resources to management or to video---BMA, which is the recording arm complements both the film and the Internet company for the same reasons.

"We need the new faces to draw the younger crowd to our Web site, and new stars will need exposure for exposure, so they work well to complement each other," says Kam.

Of the three new companies, EEG has been the most aggressive in the past year and already has the results to show for it. Its main star, Nicholas Tse, has gained international fame and was promoted surprisingly in last year's annual music award shows. He also has a highly successful film career, having appeared in such blockbusters as "Gen-X Cops" and "A Man Called Hero." His recent album, "Most Wanted," has more than 70,000 units in its first week and was No. 1 on the IFPI.
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The music industry in Malaysia is not so different from that of the West. We have our fair share of talent, tantrums and “Hittmen” — with the unfortunate addition of music piracy. Actually, the more I think about it, the more the similarities crop up. However, here are some incidences which probably could not happen in the West. Some 10 years ago, a major Western artist performed in Malaysia. The concert was sponsored by a company that was owned by the royal family of one of the Malaysian states who wanted to meet the artist. A reception was arranged with the Sultan and his family. The promoters were then told that the artist will only be there for a short while and that the Sultan and his family will not be there for her “meet-and-greet.” Who is more royal? I was having lunch with the head of a local recording company and talking about old times, when he confessed to something which nearly made me choke. He was an ex-music pirate who turned legitimate more than 10 years ago. Some 20 years ago, together with the police, he had raided his cassette-manufacturing facility, and the police confiscated his high-speed duplicator and thousands of pirated tapes. He confided that he had just bought the machinery with all the money he had. He told me that I was in great danger at that time, as his friends had surrounded his premises and were preparing to eliminate me and my colleague upon his say-so. Fortunately for us, he did not give the go-ahead. Although the situation was very tense at that time, we never knew that they would go that far. Talk about blissful ignorance.

—Pheng Beh, senior VP, EMI Music Asia, formerly MD of EMI Music Malaysia, which she joined around 30 years ago

Concert promotion has always been very much a hit-and-miss business here. There is no regular scene, as we have seen from past tours. But even when they are super-hot there, there is no automatic guarantee of a same in Hong Kong. Even with the rave parties that we do, I’ve had difficulty explaining to the agents why I can sell out parties for British DJs like Paul Oakenfold while someone like Frankie Knuckles wouldn’t be profitable. I don’t see much of that changing in the next 10 years. We were one of the first outfits to take acts into China, and things are done a lot differently there. The classical war I have had with the Chinese police (still no B’jork to Beijing for some concerts. She brought a drum-and-bass opening act with her, and the Chinese insisted on having an opening act of their own) to get Bjork out of her dressing room to go on stage immediately. It was lucky they were intercepted by the police chief himself and managed to stop one of the Miss Hong Kong pageants. They managed to divert their attention for the 20 minutes, and Bjork never found out what had almost transpired.

—Andrew Bull, veteran concert promoter, who has brought acts such as Celine Dion, Suede, Oasis and Björk to Hong Kong and China

The biggest difference I’ve seen between doing business in the U.S. vs. Asia is the critical importance of developing relationships in order to make deals happen. I arrived in Hong Kong shortly after the handover, and for two years I’ve been learning how to get things done in tough markets like India and mainland China. My most valuable experiences were at our Chinese Music Awards, produced in cooperation with Shanghai Oriental TV this year. Ten minutes before the show was to go on, the president of Shanghai Oriental TV arrived at the stage area. He asked me how the finger printing for the right song and the right music that the market is aspiring to, or which it can become part of. In this case, I really do not see the difference. As long as I can see the need of degree. It’s about having the right people who are close to the market — people who are going out and finding the music and the songwriters and delivering them to you. I am a little worried about talking in terms of a topic that I don’t feel really exists. As far as I can see it, we are all talking about the same thing: about making hit records, whether that is in Asia or anywhere else in the world.”

—Lachlan Rutherford, president, Asia Pacific, Warner Music

“A"n regional artists don’t sell well in the Philippines. In late 1995 [at Warner Music Philippines], we were asked to promote an album of ethnic Chinese music by Chinese artist Mei Ah. Many of us thought it wouldn’t sell here because this market goes for Western music, but we tried very hard and spent a lot of time and effort promoting the album. It only sold around 1,100 copies. If Philippine folk music is not as popular as Western music, we have to find something relevant. However, here we have a very unique concept, that it was not about to go through. Kaz Nitta, now at BMG/Funhouse, was the group’s in-house producer, and Kei Ishikawa, who is now president of PolyGram Japan, was their promotion manager. They both guided me through a week of meetings during which I had to present my case to all levels of management because they were skeptical that this was an investment worth making. On the fifth working day, I ended up in the president’s office, where a checkbook lay open at his desk. I thought I was there but then had to start explaining it to her again, and she was very critical the very beginning. Thankfully, he agreed, and I walked away with the check. I believe we were the best possible training period for making decisions in Asia. It was a truly memorable and unusual experience, interspersed with dinners and social gatherings that helped us all get to know each other better.

—Syl Watson, managing director, SWAT Marketing, and managing director, Zomba International Record Group

In the past decade, we’ve seen a swing from foreign music to mainly Cantopop. Although there was a time when you could hear a lot of international songs, in the past few years it has become almost predominately Cantopop. But the flip side of that is that, thanks to stores like HMV. By introducing listening stations in their stores, it has helped promote foreign music. There have been many instances where I saw classical war music by Barbra Streisand, as well as foreign acts like Bryan Ferry, and even some of the new Miss Hong Kong pageants. He was in a hurry to go to a soccer game and walked into the room and said, “I’m giving you my full support.” And then he took his pageant, when he got on his knees to present the trophy to the new Miss Hong Kong. Things like that are not done here. I think he thought he was being funny, but it was actually a very well-earned phrase. He made a complete idiot of himself.”

—“Uncle” Ray Cordeiro, Hong Kong radio and TV personality, host of “All The Way With Ray”

**NEW CONTENDERS**

Continued from page AFC-2

recognized album chart in Hong Kong for three consecutive weeks.

In the last weeks of 1999, four of EGG’s releases made it to the top five, with five in the top 10. Its two other singers, Grace Yip and Wang Chieh, will be releasing albums this year.

**TV SUPPORTS A PRINCESS**

Tenor Hion, who had previously released one album in Taiwan and had been invited to open the gate of the first free TV channel in China, plans to be followed by Elle and Sasa & Kaku over the next couple of months. Kam hopes the company will be able to release an album every month for the rest of the year, and he is planning to bring some famous Chinese-oriental company that is dedicated to producing good music.

Billed by popularity, spawned a highly-successful television series “My Fair Princess,” Mei Ah’s Ruby Lin also did very well in the market with her debut album, “Hearing,” when it was released in late October 1999.

**BOYS FROM BRITAIN**

Unlike its two competitors, EGG is not only concentrating on efforts on the local front. It is moving toward a more international repertoire and has just opened a Taipei office under former Rock Records stalwart Sam Ho. It has also signed distribution rights for Taiwanese artists, including Viva Viva, to launch British boy band BB Mak in Hong Kong in March.

“Right now, we are concentrating on opening up our local repertoire, of course, but in the long run, we are aiming for a mix of East and West,” says Lee, who is credited for launching the careers of Cantopop superstars Leon Lai and Sammi Cheng when he was their manager.

“We are a Hong Kong company that is developing right now and are not in the business of the mainland China—Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China,” Lee continues.

“Our goal is to get things going well, we will spread it through the market. However, we are already helping overseas artists with some of their production work.”

Lee sees EGG as being able to offer unique skills and experience for bands or artists trying to get into the Far East market. “Backstreet Boys, we’ve seen that you can launch a worldwide career by making it in Asia first. We hope we can help bands open the market here and what’s not. And one more important factor is that we will be very different.”

“A lot of record companies these days are only doing trades; they’re not really record companies. They don’t know how to plan strategies to develop a project from a good song to making the singer a superstar. They all rely on their overseas repertoire owners.”

Despite that, EGG is not in a hurry to boost its local stars out for overseas markets. “I did that with Dadda when I was with Warner Music, but she has a very unique sound, not a mass market one,” Lee adds. “We are trying to source for talent in China. It has to be very representative of this place, yet not trendy. We won’t launch a copycat in the Western market.”

**HAND-HELD GOODS**

Despite piracy levels and the advent of broadband Internet connections, which will make pirated MP3 files much faster to download, Lee and Kam are both confident that, ultimately, music will make its way.

“Hong Kong people have the urge to possess. They would prefer to hold a CD in hand,” Lee explains. “I don’t think illegal MP3s will be that much of a threat. It isn’t making any money.”

“Many people who use them to pay to shop online, or record a shop a few bucks to record songs on cassette tapes. What is most important is that the songs must be good.”

Kam agrees. We are more hopeful about the future, he says. “The trends have been encouraging, and now the market is not just open to idol singers. In the past few years, you could see that sales were dropping because the quality of songs was too. I feel that if we put in more effort, our audience will come back.”
Next Stage Next Dream
"Dancing Future"
http://www.avexnet.or.jp/
MALAYSIAN DISTRIBUTION of legitimate recorded product has previously relied on a fleet of intrepid contractors fighting their way through the inner-city traffic jams and haphazard ordering systems. The new year sees the launch of a warehouse joint venture between Warners, EMI and BMG (WEB), offering retailers one delivery package, with one statement on a single account for these three labels. Lau Kin Choy, establishment director for WEB, says that, although the economic downturn has almost halved volume, the service levels have gone up and more independent supply will be possible. Lau is interested in developing business-to-business trading on the Internet and is monitoring trends in e-commerce and secure-transaction facilities. Sony and Universal will operate from their own joint warehouse in Malaysia early this year, as well.

THE FILIPINO retail-mall conglomerate Shoemart collaborated late last year with OctoArts/EMI for a series of mall appearances featuring domestic female artist Vina Morales to promote the singer's latest album, "No Limits." Morales visited a total of four large Shoemart malls (as well as two small Manuela malls). Jun Tolentino, sales director of OctoArts/EMI, notes that Shoemart retailers with music sections decorated these areas for the events with large banners, posters and other displays. Notified of the shows, other record stores in the malls also highlighted Morales' album. In addition, OctoArts/EMI personnel sold the album near the performance stage. Says Tolentino, "We're getting a good response from the mall shows, selling around 200 to 300 units per show (near the stage). People who buy the album get a poster of Vina and can stand in line and have it or the album autographed by her."

TOWER RECORDS SINGAPORE, throughout 2000, is organizing monthly mid-price campaigns to draw in customers. "There will be different midlines [highlighted] each month," says marketing manager Leveena Sadanandan. "It's a way to try and entice customers to keep looking forward to our good buys. So, for instance, this month, we are promoting mid-price regional acts because of the Chinese New Year festivities." The titles will be sold at S$15.99 to 17.99, with a range of between 20 and 40 acts, sourced from different record companies. "It's a Singaporean reality that customers are conditioned to sales," says Sadanandan. "Sales just draw people into the store. Last year, our two most successful campaigns were for Blue Note releases, where samplers were given away, and the Top 100 campaign, where each album was decorated by S$4."

MAJOR KOREAN RECORD LABELS are starting to distribute newly released albums through the Internet. In October, Doremi Records became the first major domestic record company to establish an Internet music shop—Internet Music Delivery (www.almp3.co.kr)—and offer a newly released CD prior to its store-release date. Through this site, customers were able to order male singer Kim Gun Kwak's latest effort, "Growing," two days prior to its Nov. 19 street date. Although the offer was limited to only 200 records, the CD sold out a few hours after it was first offered on the Net. "Competitors panicked to hear our intention to sell a new album by a major artist through the Net, thinking that it would hurt their sales," says Yi Seon-sang, president of Internet music delivery for Doremi. "Doremi started this company as an MP3 shopping mall, but we will have complete music mail, selling CDs and tapes, by early next year."
Japan Facing End Of Royalty Collection Monopoly

Proposed Japanese Legislation Aims To Liberalize, Spur Competition In Copyright Management

BY STEVE McCLURE

TOKYO—The Japanese government is introducing legislation to end authors’ society JASRAC’s (Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers, and Publishers) longstanding monopoly on music copyright royalty collection and distribution. A recent report by a subcommittee of the Cultural Affairs Agency’s Copyright Council urged Japan to liberalize the copyright management business. A bill will soon be presented before the Japanese Diet (parliament) to amend the Law on Intermediary Business Concerning Copyright so that private companies and individuals can offer services similar to JASRAC’s. The Cultural Affairs Agency says the aim of the bill is to spur competition in the copyright management field.

“Two factors are chiefly responsible for this: the undoubtedly quality of Latino music available worldwide and the fact that millions of Ger-

German Rolling Stone Aids Acts

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—One of the most renowned titles in music journalism is helping new acts to break down the doors to Europe’s biggest music market, Germany. March 29 at the Docklands venue in Hamburg will mark the start of the second Rolling Stone Roadshow, headlined by one of the U.K.’s most prominent newly established acts, Hot Virgini’s Gomes.

The band is supported by another British act, Epic’s Lightning Seeds, and Warner Music’s hot Swedish prop-

French To Push Lower VAT Rate

Government To Take Advantage of EU Presidency

This story was prepared by Emmanuel Legrand of Music & Media.

PARIS—The French government will advocate lowering the value-added tax (VAT) rates on records at a European level when it assumes the presidency of the European Union for six months on July 1. However, local labels are concerned that any such move will fall without widespread support from other European markets.

The change in the law is expected to lead to the establishment of new copyright management compa-

German Music

Channel Viva Targets Spain

BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN

MADRID—German music channel Viva has made Spain its top priority in international expansion plans that also take in Poland, Switzerland, and Hun-

Gerard Porrazzo, international affairs general manager at Fuji- 

cific Music, admits it is still unclear exactly how this change will affect JASRAC. “But hopefully it will give 

writers and publishers choices as to when and how to license their works, particularly in areas other than mechanical and performance uses,” he says. “The importance of the copyright society should not diminish, however, and I would expect JASRAC to rise to the challenges presented by these changing times.”

The change in the law is expected to lead to the establishment of new copyright management compa-

nies specializing in new media such as the Internet. In the year ending March 31, 1999, JASRAC’s copyright fee collections rose 4.5% over the previous year to 98.5 bil- 

lion yen ($826.8 million).
William Morris
Proudly Congratulates
Our 2000 Grammy Award Nominees

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
Diana Krall
*When I Look in Your Eyes*

**BEST POP PERFORMANCE BY A DUO OR GROUP WITH VOCAL**
Sixpence None the Richer
*Kiss Me*

**BEST POP COLLABORATION WITH VOCALS**
Whitney Houston & Mariah Carey
*When You Believe*

**BEST POP INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCE**
Willie Nelson
*Night and Day*

**BEST DANCE RECORDING**
Donna Summer
*I Will Go With You (Con Te Partiro)*

**BEST TRADITIONAL POP VOCAL**
Tony Bennett
*Bennett Sings Ellington*

Barry Manilow
*Manilow Sings Sinatra*

**BEST FEMALE ROCK VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
Sheryl Crow
*Sweet Child O’ Mine*

**BEST MALE ROCK VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
Everlast
*What It’s Like*

**BEST ROCK PERFORMANCE BY A DUO OR GROUP WITH VOCAL**
Goo Goo Dolls
*Black Balloon*

*Everlast*
*Put Your Lights On*

**BEST HARD ROCK PERFORMANCE**
Korn
*Freak on a Leash*

**BEST FEMALE R&B VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
Whitney Houston
*It’s Not Right But It’s Okay*

**BEST MALE R&B VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
Maxwell
*Fortunate*

Tyrese
*Sweet Lady*

Barry White
*Staying Power*

**BEST R&B PERFORMANCE BY A DUO OR GROUP WITH VOCAL**
Eric Benet
*Spend My Life With You*

Aretha Franklin
*Don’t Waste Your Time*

Whitney Houston
*Heartbreak Hotel*

**BEST R&B SONG**
Lauryn Hill, songwriter
*All That I Can Say*

**BEST R&B ALBUM**
Whitney Houston
*My Love Is Your Love*

Brian McKnight
*Back At One*

**BEST TRADITIONAL R&B VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
The Neville Brothers
*Valence Street*

Smokey Robinson
*Intimate*

Barry White
*Staying Power*

**BEST RAP SOLO PERFORMANCE**
Busta Rhymes
*Gimme Some More*

**BEST RAP PERFORMANCE BY A DUO OR GROUP**
Busta Rhymes
*What’s It Gonna Be*

Eminem
*Guilty Conscience*

The Roots featuring Erykah Badhu
*You Got Me*

**BEST RAP ALBUM**
Busta Rhymes
*E.L.E. (Extinction Level Event – The Final World Front)*

Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliott
*Da Real World*

Eminem
*The Slim Shady LP*

The Roots
*Things Fall Apart*
BEST MALE COUNTRY VOCAL PERFORMANCE
Vince Gill
Don't Come Cryin' to Me

BEST COUNTRY PERFORMANCE BY DUO OR GROUP WITH VOCAL
Diamond Rio
Unbelievable
Lonestar
Amazed

BEST COUNTRY COLLABORATION WITH VOCALS
Asleep at the Wheel
featuring
Willie Nelson
Going Away Party
Asleep at the Wheel
Roly Poly
Clint Black
When I Said I Do
Linda Ronstadt & Dolly Parton
After the Gold Rush

BEST COUNTRY ALBUM
Asleep at the Wheel
Ride With Bob
Linda Ronstadt & Dolly Parton
Trio II

BEST COUNTRY INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCE
Asleep at the Wheel
with Vince Gill & Steve Wariner
Bob's Breakdown
Marty Stuart
Mr. John Henry, Steel Dricing Man
Marty Stuart
The Greatest Love of All
Steve Wariner
The Harry Shuffle

BEST COUNTRY SONG
Steve Wariner
Two Teardrops

BEST NEW AGE ALBUM
George Winston
Plains

BEST JAZZ VOCAL PERFORMANCE
Diana Krall
When I Look In Your Eyes

BEST ROCK GOSPEL ALBUM
Audio Adrenaline
Underdog

BEST POP/CONTEMPORARY GOSPEL
Andrae Crouch
The Gift of Christmas

BEST SOUTHERN, COUNTRY OR BLUEGRASS GOSPEL ALBUM
Glen Campbell
A Glen Campbell Christmas
Roy Clark
Roy Clark Sings & Plays Gospel Greats

BEST CONTEMPORARY SOUL GOSPEL ALBUM
CeCe Winans
His Gift

BEST LATIN POP PERFORMANCE
Luis Miguel
Amarte es un Placer
Jaci Velasquez
Llegar A Ti

BEST CONTEMPORARY FOLK ALBUM
Linda Ronstadt
Western Wall - The Tucson Sessions

BEST REGGAE ALBUM
Steel Pulse
Living Legacy

BEST MUSICAL ALBUM FOR CHILDREN
Mannheim Steamroller
Mannheim Steamroller Meets the Mouse

BEST SPOKEN WORD ALBUM FOR CHILDREN
Kate Winslet
Listen to the Storyteller

BEST SPOKEN COMEDY ALBUM
Carl Reiner
"How Paul Robeson Saved My Life" and Other Mostly Happy Stories

BEST RECORDING PACKAGE
Ray Benson
Ride With Bob

BEST HISTORICAL ALBUM
Ray Charles
The Complete Country and Western Records (1959-1986)

BEST SHORT FORM MUSIC VIDEO
Lauryn Hill
Everything Is Everything
Korn
Freak on a Leash
Brian McKnight
Back At One
Paul Hunter, director
Unpretty

BEST LONG FORM MUSIC VIDEO
Asleep at the Wheel
The Making of 'Ride With Bob'

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT WINNERS
Harry Belafonte
Willie Nelson

NEW YORK • BEVERLY HILLS • NASHVILLE • LONDON

www.americanradiohistory.com
**HITS OF THE WORLD**

**EUROCHART**

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**SWITZERLAND**

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**SWITZERLAND**

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**GLOBAL MUSIC PULSE**

**IT TOOK AQUA just 48 hours to go quadruple-platinum in Denmark (40,000 units sold) for Cartoon Heroes," released Jan. 31. By the first week, the single had not only topped the sales chart but also had No. 1 slots on the dance, airplay, and club charts.**

**CHARLES ERRO**

**TOPLOADER**

**THE LATEST MUSIC NEWS FROM AROUND THE PLANET**

**EDITED BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

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**DANCING IN THE MOONLIGHT** conjures up memories of a pair of 1970s hits. But it's not Thin Lizzy's 1977 song that's back on U.K. radio but King Harvest's No. 13 U.S. pop hit from late 1972. The new version of this radio-friendly tune is the third single release by Toploader, a five-piece band from Eastbourne, U.K., signed to Sony. Released on Feb. 17, the song looks set to improve significantly on the act's 1999 release "Achilles Heel" and "Let the People Know," which only made the top 75. The new single was produced by George Drakoulias (Beasties Boys, Black Crowes), but overall production on Toploader's debut album, "Ozaka's Big Moka," was handled by Dave Eringa (Manic Street Preachers). The band starts a headlining tour March 28.

**PAUL SEYMOUR**

**THE BOMFUNK MC's have broken new ground for Finnish dance music. After rising to No. 1 on the Finnish chart last summer, their single "Freestyler" hit No. 1 in Sweden, where it has sold more than 60,000 copies. The single went to No. 2 in Norway, No. 6 in Denmark, and No. 9 in Estonia. The group's debut album, "In Stereo," is currently No. 5 in Sweden. In Finland the album has sold 94,000 units, staying on the album chart for 36 weeks. The album was No. 1 for seven weeks last summer and two weeks again after Christmas," says Sony Finland product manager Marco Alanko. The set is scheduled for imminent Danish, Norwegian, and German release March 5. "Freestyler" is also due for U.K. release with a new video, according to Alanko.**

**JONATHAN MANDELL**

**FOR THE RECORD:** Lara Fabian's first English-language album has been a priority for Sony Music from the outset, contrary to a previous report (Global Music Pulse, Billboard, Feb. 12). It has been issued in France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Canada; it ships to other European markets in March, followed by the U.S., Latin America, and Australia in May and Asia in June.

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**MAYA - LEFEBVRE**

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**BILBOARD FEBRUARY 26, 2000**

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**www.americanradiohistory.com**
Canada's Tidemark Plans Expansion

BY LARRY LEBLANC
TORONTO—Tidemark Music & Distribution, the largest distributor of domestic music in Canada’s Atlantic provinces, is seeking to take a leading role in developing key local acts from those areas nationally.

On March 1, Tidemark’s founder, lawyer/manager Chip Sutherland, will switch from his current role as president to become CEO at the 3-year-old distributor. At the same time, artist manager Sheri Jones will come aboard as president. Headquartered in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Tidemark also has an office in St. John’s, Newfoundland.

In a further move, Mike Greatorex, head of national sales at Perimeter Records, a Halifax-based label operated by Sutherland, will assume the same position at Tidemark. Tidemark will now nationally distribute Perimeter; previously handled by Universal Music Canada. During its first year of operation, Perimeter Record has issued albums by the Rheostatics, Granelli, Tim Thorney and Cassandra Vasak.

Jones has been a leading figure in reawakening interest in Canada’s East Coast musical scene for more than a decade. Jones & Co., the management firm she operates with partner Wayne O’Connor, founded the Canadian breakthroughs in the ’90s of Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac and Gaelic songstress Mary Jane Lamond.

“Sheri is the most valuable resource in the Maritimes [Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island] for musicians,” says Sutherland. “Anybody who calls her for advice, she gives it to them. I want her now to be that resource for Tidemark. I’m paying her to be Sheri Jones, while she keeps doing everything else she’s doing.”

Jokes Jones, “How often do you get that kind of offer? It’s a great situation. I believe in the company, and—(Continued on next page)

Sony Music Japan Starts ‘Corporate Executive’ System

BY STEVE McCLURE
TOKYO—Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) (SMEJ) has introduced a new “corporate executive” system that has helped to make it compliant with the legislation.

In switching over to the new system, SMEJ has established its board of directors from 19 members to four. Ten of the former directors now have the title of corporate executive, with responsibility for overseeing specific areas of the company’s activities, including individual labels or projects such as Sony’s broadband music online music download site. The five other former board members are either retiring or moving to new positions within the SMEJ group.

As part of the revamp, SMEJ president SMEJ spokesman says that “a more ‘American-style’ system,” one industry observer.

Joining the downsized SMEJ board is Teruhisa Tokunaka, CFO of Sony Corp. His appointment is seen as a sign of the parent company’s desire to keep a close watch on SMEJ, which at the beginning of this year became a wholly owned Sony Corp. subsidiary and was de-listed from the Tokyo Stock Exchange after a string of lacklustre earnings results.

Meanwhile, SMEJ insiders say the label is switching to a performance-based payment system for its staff. In contrast to the former straight commission-based system—all the now in Japan—SMEJ employees’ pay will be subject to an annual review based on results instead of simply a percentage of the song they’ve worked for the company.

“It’s going to be ‘survival of the fittest,’” says an SMEJ source.

The label says that the new system is being introduced gradually and that the company does not plan to make an official announcement of the change.

MTV IS TO LAUNCH three digital special-interest channels—MTV Base, MTV Extra and VH-1 Classics—in Germany’s North Rhine-Westphalia region. MTV Base will be the club-oriented; MTV Extra will play hits from the MTV playlist of remixes, international hip-hop, and dance; and VH-1 Classics will primarily comprise rock and pop milestones from the last three decades. MTV Central Europe also announced that it has agreed to a new two-year deal with management director Mike Shin, who took over the management of MTV and VH-1 for Central Europe (Germany, Switzerland, and Austria) in April 1998, will be responsible for launching the new digital channels and developing an exclusive channel for German pay-TV platform Premiere.

FRENCH INDIE LABEL NAÏVE has appointed Marie Audigier head of national promotion, overseeing its local A&R and marketing. Audigier, a former recording artist, was formerly director of indie label Crêpefrancise France. She replaces Olivier Lebeau, who joined Internet company France MP3.com in January. Naïve managing director Frédéric Bébet says Audigier “has great experience in artist management and indie culture, two precious assets for Naïve.” Audigier will continue to manage Virgin artist Jean-Louis Murat. In other Naïve affairs the label’s chief financial officer is adding a new role as director of international, charged with developing international licenses and distribution. Former Billboard/Music & Media correspondent Réné Bontou joins as director of communications and new media. naïve was founded in 1998; its turnover in 1999 was 75 million francs ($7.1 million).
Culture 2000 Budget Disappoints
European Music Industry Criticizes Financial Allocation For Music

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND
BRUSSELS—Leading voices in the European music industry have expressed their disappointment at the Culture 2000 plan, which allocates to music-related initiatives in the Culture 2000 plan, adopted by the European Commission Feb. 2. Culture 2000 is the first framework program in support of culture set up by the European Union (EU). It "entails rationalizing and strengthening the effectiveness of cultural cooperation actions within a single financial and programming instrument for the period 2000-2004," according to the European Commission, the EU’s governing body.

According to former European Commissioner for Culture Marceline Oreja, who spearheaded the development of Culture 2000, the program aims "to strengthen cooperation between Europeans on a cultural level" while promoting and maintaining cultural diversity.

About $167 million has been allocated under Culture 2000 to 55 different projects, ranging from theater to exhibitions and heritage sites. However, only a small proportion of that will fund musical activities, mostly in the classical and folk music genres.

Jean-François Michel, secretary general of music industry-funded, Brussels-based lobbying organization European Music Office (EMO), says the financial allocation is "ridiculously low." He adds that "contemporary music is absolutely not taken into consideration."

The EMO board members were reportedly particularly taken aback when Viviane Reding, the European commissioner in charge of education, audiovisual, and culture, under whose aegis Culture 2000 now falls, failed to attend an EMO board meeting to which she had been invited during the MIDEM trade show in last month in Cannes.

The EMO board subsequently expressed its concerns about the way the commission treats music in general and especially "musical genres that appeal to youth" in a letter sent to Reding at the end of (Continued on page 84)

Spain’s SGAE Wants CD-R Tax To Counter Web Piracy

BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN
MADRID—Spain’s authors and publishers society, SGAE, has called for the introduction of an "authors’ rights compensation tax" to be levied on blank CDs to counter growing Internet piracy.

SGAE’s anti-piracy department calculates that last year 4.2 million euros ($4.1 million) worth of illegal records were sold in the country, or nearly 1% of the 450.7 million euros ($443.8 million) generated by all sound carrier sales.

Juan Palomino, SGAE director of mechanical reproduction, said that in 1999 CD-R sales in Spain reached the record figure of 40 million discs. A report commissioned by SGAE from Alef-Millward Brown, the Anglo-Spanish company that publishes Spain’s official sales charts, says between 75%-85% of those were used to record downloaded music.

Palomino revealed the figures at a one-day Madrid round-table Feb. 9 organized with the Civil Guard—Spain’s police force—titled "The Civil Guard and The Protection Of Intellectual Property." He said SGAE wanted CD-Rs to have a similar tax to that currently imposed on blank audio- and videotapes—30 pesetas (17 cents US) on a 56 pesetas (32 cents) per recordable hour.

"On that basis," said Palomino, "we demand that a tax of 37 pesetas [21 cents] per recordable hour be charged on a typical 650 me-abyte/74-minute blank CD. The existence of this author’s rights compensation tax for CD-Rs amounts to a legal loophole benefitting the often highly organized criminal gangs that are behind the sale of illegal CDs."

Palomino added that "[CD-R manufacturers] refuse to budge on this matter, arguing that these discs are not necessarily used to record music. But the reality is that a great deal of music is already being downloaded onto these discs." He pointed out that if a CD-R owner uses the MP3 format to download, the recordable capacity increases to 800 minutes.

Palomino had earlier claimed that music piracy in Spain in 1999 had meant "a loss of 60 million pesetas ($355,000) by way of authors’ rights, in spite of the enormous control that we at SGAE exercise against piracy, and the great cooperation of the Civil Guard."

He said that thanks to this armed corps, dozens of anti-piracy raids had been carried out during 1999.

Palomino said SGAE’s efforts would now center on new stores specializing in copying and selling CD-Rs. "Our plan was to go a completely illegal, and they offer the product you ask for for little more than 500 pesetas (29.5 $)."

Canada’s Tidemark Plans Expansion

(Continued from preceding page)

Carlos Goes Greek. In London during his current global promotional tour supporting his much-acclaimed debut album "Supernatural," Arista artist Carlos Santana picked up a gold album recognizing sales of 15,000 units in Exce like the set. Shown, from left, are Richard Griffiths, chairman of BMG U.K. and Ireland and executive VP of central Europe; Santana; and Panos Theofilakis, managing director of BMG Greece.

with all the consolidations of the major labels happening, I believe that such a [regional-minded] distributor is needed now more than ever.

Jones is moving national distribution of her turtleneck-label—a division of Jones & Co.—to Tidemark from Universal. The company that consists of Lamont and noted producer/artist Gordie Sampson

While Tidemark, with a full-time staff of nine, has sold to retailers nationally since its inception, its sales thrust has primarily been Atlantic Canada and will remain so. Sutherland says Tidemark is set to add two full-time staffers in Halifax and will embark on a two- or three-person office in Toronto by fall.

Tidemark’s expansion, says Sutherland, is intended to both build on the company’s local successes and retain those key acts while they seek national audiences. “Of the 100 local bands we have, maybe only 15 need a real national push,” he says. “Even then, 80% of their sales are still going to be regional. We’re just a boutique distributor, and we’re going to stay that way.”

While multinationals and a newly established national distributor, Oasis Entertainment Inc., are not enthused about the bulk of traditional and folk-styled music that Tidemark handles, Sutherland says they have shown interest in acquiring such Tidemark-distributed successes as the Ennis Sisters, the Pades, Kilt and Celtic Connection. Each has sold about 25,000 to 30,000 units of individual albums, primarily in Atlantic Canada.

“These acts make $9 [Canadian dollars, $6.18 U.S.] a record, sell 30,000 records regionally, and they now want to go a step further,” says Tidemark, VP of sales Shelley Nord- strom.

“I don’t want acts like the Ennis Sisters and the Pades going to another distributor,” says Sutherland. “These acts now want to try playing in Toronto and in Calgary [Alberta] and don’t want to get another distributor to support them. They want us to do a better job distributing their records nationally. We are strong enough now that we can take this step forward.”

“We’re going to have a sales force which will be more of a grunt force, and Shelley is going to work nation- ally on priority titles,” he says.

While neither party will confirm details, an agreement is now being brokered between Sutherland and Randy Lennox, president of Universal-distributed acts exceeding sales of 20,000-25,000 will be nation- ally distributed by Universal.
SAFE SEX: drDrewcom is giving away three free condoms to anyone 10 years or older who registers at the Web site. Users who pass the offer on to a friend will receive one additional condom. Also, representatives from drDrewcom will hand out condoms on college campuses, bars, and clubs across the country during the upcoming spring-break season. Co-founded by Dr. Drew Pinsky, co-host and creator of the “Loveline” radio and MTV show, and Curtis Giesen, founder of happypuppy.com, the site is aimed toward 14- to 24-year-olds interested in relationships, sex, entertainment, and health. Contact: Valerie Gordon at 310-931-5885.

LIFELINES

BIRTHS
Boy, Julian Gabriel, to Antone and Holly DeSantis, Jan. 21 in New York. Father is the national sales director for Rhino Records.

Girl, Cameron Kaiulani, to Lisa Lieke and Scottt Robson, Oct. 19 in Santa Monica, Calif. Mother is director of international at Virgin Records. Father is the editor-in-chief of E! Online.

FOR THE RECORD
A story in last issue’s Songwriters & Publishers section switched the number of copyrights in the Famous Music and BMG Music catalogs. Famous Music has about 100,000 copyrights, while BMG Music has about 700,000.

A page 1 article in Billboard’s Feb. 19 issue incorrectly spelled the name of the recently appointed president of Columbiahouse.com. He is Bill Ostroff.

An article on Jimmy and Doug’s Farmelub.com (Billboard, Feb. 5) incorrectly stated the title of the company’s chairman, Jimmy Levine. He is also co-chairman of International Giffen & M. Doug Morris is chairman/CEO of the Universal Music Group.

GOOD WORKS

SAFETY: The Martell Foundation’s Family Day. The T.J. Martell Foundation recently held its first Family Day at New York’s Chelsea Piers. The foundation honored Gary Cas- son, executive VP of Elektra Entertainment, and his family at the event. Participants enjoyed a day of games, food, and prizes. The event raised more than $30,000 for cancer, leukemia, and AIDS research. Shown, from left, are Cason’s wife, Rhonda Casson; Lou Vaccarelli, VP of production and manufacturing and chief procurement officer for BMG Entertainment; Gary and Casson; Ron Robson, senior VP/CEO of Epic Associated Labels and foundation chairman; and Michael Reinert, senior VP of business affairs for Universal Records.

FEBRUARY


Feb. 27, History Of Jazz Informance, presented by Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, 213-681-1500.


Feb. 27-March 2, NARM Convention And Trade Show, presented by the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers, Marriott Rivercenter and Marriott Riverwalk, San Antonio, 800-596-2223.

MARCH


March 6-8, DJ Expo West, presented by DJ Times, Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, 510-757-2206.

APRIL

April 7, Ninth Annual Music Video Production Assn. Awards, Directors Guild of America, Los Angeles, 323-469-9445.

April 8, California Music Awards, Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, San Francisco, 415-964-2333.


April 13, 13th Annual Kahlua Boston Music Awards, Opera House Theater, Boston, 617-357-6997.

April 13-15, NEMO Music Showcase and Conference, Swissôtel, Boston, 617-357-6997.

April 25-27, Billboard Latin Music Conference And Awards, Sheraton Biscayne Bay, Miami, 212-536-5002.

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ALAN RUBENS

MICK LLOYD

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING CONSULTANT

Q RECORDS

Top Love Songs, Decade by Decade (Continued from page 48)

Be Close To You,” No. 5. In the ’80s, Lionel Richie has two songs: “Lady” (No. 2) and “Endless Love” (No. 3). And leading those with more than one song in a decade is Diane Warren. She represents the ’80s with three songs, the most of any writer in the list: “How Do I Live” (No. 2), “Because You Loved Me” (No. 3), and “Un-Break My Heart” (No. 5).

For Richard Rodgers’ career with Oscar Hammerstein, who also wrote many works with Jerome Kern, including “Show Boat,” a new folio, also timed for Valentine’s Day, has been issued by music print

ASCAP’s No. 1 Love Songs

The following are the No. 1 ASCAP love songs of the last nine decades of the 20th century as determined by performances calculated by the performance right society.

1910s: “You Made Me Love You” (James Monroe, Joseph McCarthy)

1920s: “Tea For Two” (Vincent Youmans, Irving Caesar)

1930s: “As Time Goes By” (Herman Hupfeld)

1940s: “That Old Black Magic” (Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer)

1950s: “Unchained Melody” (Alex North, Hy Zaret)

1960s: “The Look Of Love” (Burt Bacharach, Hal David)

1970s: “The Way We Were” (Marvin Hamlisch, Alan and Marilyn Bergman)

1980s: “Up Where We Belong” (Jack Nitzsche, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Will Jennings)

1990s: “I Swear” (Gary Baker, Frank Myers)

JUNE

June 7-9, Billboard/BET On Jazz Conference And Awards, JW Marriott, Washington, D.C. 212-536-5002.

JULY


OCTOBER

CONCEPT TO CONGLOMERATE IN TWO DECADES

Madacy has found success by bringing retailers meat-and-potatoes, must-have classics.

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

As Madacy Entertainment enters its 20th year, company founder and president Amos Alter, president and CEO of Madacy Entertainment Group, spoke with Billboard recently to shed light on the origins of his wildly successful and very independent label.

"We started as a concept back in 1981," Alter begins, "with the express desire to go into business for ourselves, using various contacts and experiences. At that time, I had been working for Almada, an importer and distributor of various labels in Canada. There were over 100 labels that we distributed [at Almada], and that's basically where I got my product knowledge base, in terms of artists and repertoire. Once that company was sold, I stayed with the new company for a couple of years, and, quickly becoming disillusioned, I started thinking about going into business for myself. So I left my position as a fairly prominent, highly paid employee in that company and started Madacy. Basically, the initial brace of our releases constitutes 40 classic titles that we had licensed from a label that was run by a longtime friend, that was the launch of Madacy as an independent entity.

Madacy's unique AKR focus—marketing budget-priced classical albums that became wildly popular retail items—quickly became its calling card. Alter reflects on the genesis of his initial lineup of releases, saying, "The records [that we would release] basically jumped out at us; we didn't have to spend a lot of time conceptualizing for the first releases. You saw the sales and the kind of repertoire moving through the cash registers for the customers that I used to sell to [at Almada]. We decided that we could create a very commercial classical series, and, at that time, there weren't many people doing that. Of the few budgets labels that you might find in Canadian retailers were such imprints as Seraphim Classics, which was distributed by EMI, or Resonance, which was handled then by PolyGram. There weren't many more companies retailing classical titles at budget prices, certainly not as a full product line; such companies that might market a classical title that way were handling them on a per-title basis, rather than on a fully conceptualized basis.

LOW-COST, HIGH-CALIBER ORCHESTRAS

"We had seen some interesting packaging in Europe and formulated our concept: Come out with 40 very strong titles that were the no-holds-barred, meat-and-potatoes, must-have best of either Beethoven or Mozart or piano classics, or classical guitar. Alter recalls that the company's business model became glaringly obvious, saying, "We would provide music that would appeal to the masses at a price that was affordable to the masses, with packaging that was explosive in its impact [by being] immediately attractive. We put these out in display units, which certainly weren't being utilized for this repertoire at that point in any sort of aggressive fashion. We created samplers for the series that contained bounce-back cards, which, again, hadn't been pursued aggressively by other classical labels then. The series took off; as we had intended, it exploded at retail.

"The irony of it is that," he continues, "if you were to look at those titles in the light of the present day, with our formats back then going from LPs and 8-tracks to cassettes and then to CDs, with all of the other titles that we have done in the intervening 19 years, a lot of the repertoire is still the same; it's still the [classical] war-horses, albeit our new recordings of time-honored material. That's where we've been the most successful, in marketing the war-horses. It's what sells, day in and day out."

"Madacy is an innovator and leader in the budget field. Its packaging and creativity sets the standard for the budget arena. Madacy offers quality and value in all its products. This, coupled with an excellent replenishment system, is a tough combination to beat. It has been a pleasure working with the Madacy team over the many years."

—Dieter Wilkinson, National Buyer, Musicland Group

"Madacy Entertainment is a new partner for SFX Alphabet City, but Amos and David make you feel like you've been in the family for years. During our first trip to Montreal, we were taken to the Madacy offices—it reminded me of the Willy Wonka chocolate factory, where ideas seemed to magically become retail products overnight. If record merchandising were an Olympic sport, Amos Alter would take the gold in multiple events. SFX Alphabet City wishes him and the Madacy family continued success."

—Kenny Dichter, Co-CEO, SFX Alphabet City

Expanding on some of his cost-cutting strategies in the early days, Alter recalls that Madacy was considerably ahead of the record-production curve in some regions. "We recorded new masters in Russia, in Latvia and Riga, in Lithuania and other Eastern Bloc countries before the Iron Curtain fell. We were using orchestras at a much cheaper price, obviously because of the non-union scenario and the resultant lower labor cost for the tremendous musicians who were very active. Employing this tactic, we could record new masters, keep the caliber of the performances high and still release the results at budget-and mid-prices."

CONFERENCE CALLS

For the first four years of the company's operation, Madacy concentrated all of its marketing efforts in Canada. Alter recalls, "It was obviously a survival-at-all-costs situation. We worked every day in what I would call a desperation mode. So we built our customer base here. I had obviously gleaned some contacts from my previous 10 years of work with the importing firm, in terms of knowing who the customers were and what they were selling, then developing the market that was available to us in Canada. This allowed us to accrue a profit base that would allow us to expand into other markets.

"The first time that we elicited interest from the American marketplace was when we were attending NARM [the National Assn. Of Recording Merchandisers convention] in Florida. The surprise still registers in Alter's voice as he remembers "We were just showing our catalogs to potential licensees, giving them an idea of what we were doing. Some of our NRM contacts kept the catalogs and started a wave of interest in what we were producing. The first call I got was from Trans World Music and, shortly thereafter, another one from Camelot, both saying that they had been looking for our kind of titles in the U.S. and asking if we were thinking of distributing in the States."

During the past 15 years, Madacy has opened a series of offices in the U.S., with its facility in Minneapolis principal among these. The company's international agenda has spread into full offices and warehouses in Stuttgart, Germany; Miami, Florida; and, currently, a marketing office in London and a Latin marketing office, currently in the process of being relocated from Mexico to the company's recently opened Miami office. Alter is justly proud of the genuinely international complexion of Madacy, adding, "We're very active at MIDEM and NARM, where we're debuting our new front-line label, M2."

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Thank you once again for making us the #1 independent label.*

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I t's amazing what $5,000 and a perceptive enthusiasm can accomplish. For 48-year-old Amos Alter, it means he's the founder and president/CEO of Madacy Entertainment, one of the top independent record companies in North America for the past three years.

Born in Israel and raised in Brazil before moving to Canada 30 years ago, Alter dabbled in journalism before setting up his first business, a construction company that remodeled record stores to accommodate the cassette-tape format. Building record stores infected him with the music bug, so he sold his business and worked as a sales rep for a record importer before opening two franchise music stores. All that helped him develop the smarts to discover an unmet niche for a specialized record company.

In 1981, with a $5,000 investment, Alter debuted Madacy to provide affordable budget-line music for the mass market. Using music acquired under license from American and European companies, he released a 40–title line called "Classical Masterpieces," retailing each title for just $3.99. After breaking even the first year, Madacy has been in the black, boasting 20%–to–30% growth every year since. In this exclusive interview, Amos Alter describes how he took a budget line to the big time.

How were you able to turn $5,000 in cash into a budget-line record company that, almost 20 years later, is poised to become a multi-label conglomerate?

At the time, in 1981, I had already been in the music business for 10 years. I worked as a sales rep for a company that imported a lot of different labels, so I had product knowledge. Being on the road helped me develop contacts and a customer base. A lot of the buyers I dealt with gave me the incentive and encouragement to go out and do this on my own.

At that time, were you thinking of Madacy only as a Canadian label, or did you also have visions of breaking into America?

We started as a Canadian business, but I always thought we would expand into the American marketplace. It took about four years to set up in Canada and develop enough of a business base as a profitable company before we attempted to tackle America's enormous marketplace, which, today, comprises about 90% of our total business.

Back then, did you see a gaping hole for budget-line music?

It wasn't so much of a gaping hole as there just weren't that many people doing it at retail. There was the Time Life series, but they took that to TV and direct-response. Whatever overstock they had was sold at retail, but nobody was aggressively marketing budget lines to retail.

Our first series, which had 40 titles, was called "Classical Masterpieces" and featured high-quality artwork at a low price point, with a low-priced sampler to promote the series. The packaging had a very European look, with a beautiful painting on each album.

When did you realize that your concept was going to be a success?

Before the launch, we were really nervous. We got a shipment of sample LPs and we weren't exactly thrilled with the audio quality. So, we went back to the manufacturer, and we had them re-master it to improve the quality. After we launched, we knew we had something within 30 to 45 days. It hit the stores in early September, and by mid-October, we knew we were starting to sell through.

So, we worked very quickly on a second line, an instrumental line with titles such as "Golden Piano," "Golden Sax" and "Golden Guitar." Basically, they were generic orchestrations with the respective instruments out front. Again, our packaging was superb, with gold-embossed album covers, and it absolutely blew out in the marketplace. In the long term, the classical series sold better, but the Golden series was more successful initially, because we could do tremendous artwork with album covers.

Did the CD revolution cut into your success in terms of impulse or point-of-purchase sales?

Not necessarily, because we still did very well with the longbox configuration. It allowed us to do a tremendous amount of things. Even now, some of our most successful packages are still done in longbox form. We custom-make them for various retailers, such as Trans World Music and Sam's Club. To be sure, the numbers absolutely multiply, in terms of salability, compared to the short box.

Although Madacy was successful from the start, you still had problems getting funding from banks to help you expand faster. What did you do to overcome that?

There was nothing to do, other than mortgage everything we had. Beyond that, we were able to develop a continuous working relationship with customers in order to get paid as quickly as possible. We also had, and still have, great relationships with manufacturers, who were supportive enough to give us favorable terms. Even so, it cost us a premium for those terms. We weren't the most profitable company back then, but it was more important to establish ourselves as a viable company.

Was there a point in time when the banks finally gave you the green light on refinancing?

No, that was a situation to be dealt with on a continuous basis for 15 years. The more we grew, and the larger the line of credit we needed, the more security and control the banks wanted. At the end, it worked out well. When we sold part of our company, those controls became an asset.

How did you continue the momentum of the first two lines?

Our third line featured big-band music, and it did incredibly well. From there, we went into a children's line. One series, in particular, with 20 different titles, did more than a million units. We quickly accelerated from one line to another, finding more niche markets and categories of music. We kept adding series after series, taking on every different category possible.

In the last four or five years, we've started to form different compartments within the company, creating specialty groups. Not that although we have teams looking after the different categories of music, we still commit ourselves to doing things that have worked well for the last 19 years. Certainly, the marketplace has changed; no question about that. Today, only do we have to do what we've done well in the past, but we have to evolve and concentrate on releasing a smaller number of titles and getting more volume out of each one. We're becoming more selective in how and what we put out. We're not...
20 YEARS
AND THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMING!

CONGRATULATIONS

To Amos Alter
and the entire Madacy team.

From your proudest partner
"south of the border"

BMG
SPECIAL PRODUCTS
You've been known for turning a concept into a recording within days. For instance, you were able to capitalize on the swing boom within five days of hearing “Jump Jive And Wail” in a Gap TV ad campaign. How do you pull that off? Obviously, speed is of the essence. We've been able to do them quickly by noticing when a song becomes a hit in other territories. We have offices in Mexico and Europe, the people there act as our eyes and ears. Once we discovered [the international success] of “Mambo No. 5,” we took our musicians into the studio within hours. We recorded our version of it and other Latin hits by such artists as Ricky Martin and Marc Anthony. It was relatively easy to get it played in Canada, and we sold something like 250,000 units. Before the holidays, it was doing something like 45,000 a week. The key is the ability to quickly respond to different opportunities in the marketplace.

How did M2 come about?
A little over two years ago, we started talking about M2. Some of the reasons [to create it] are pretty obvious.

“I have been working with Amos and Madacy for over 15 years, and I have watched them grow into a first-class creative and distribution company. They have always been driven by a tremendous work ethic and a desire to be the very best at what they do. They have flourished because of their high standards, tremendous personal relationships and their personal and business integrity. I am sure that the future will only get brighter for them, and I look forward to maintaining great business and personal relationships with everyone involved.”

—Len Friedman, president, Friedman Entertainment Marketing

“Trans World Entertainment has found Madacy to be incredibly cooperative and aggressive in working to develop and grow a business, year after year. Their attention to detail and their ability to put together packages to satisfy consumers are simply amazing.”

—Jim Litwak, executive VP of merchandising & marketing, Trans World Entertainment

“Madacy is the king of multi-packs, both in Musicland’s and our customers’ eyes. No one does it better.”

—Scott Anderson, national video & DVD buyer, Musicland Group

Label consolidations in the marketplace created a vacuum that allows us opportunities in securing artists and/or labels that have basically been forgotten.

The second reason is having our head office in Montreal and using the strength of the Canadian music business to develop a base for these acts. Look at how Celine Dion, Shania Twain and Bryan Adams first achieved success here. We can break acts in Canada, a much smaller market, at a fraction of the cost to break them in America. Once we establish them here, we can bring them south in a very effective and price-conscious way.

A third reason is the Internet. Our product line can now penetrate a much broader market in a more cost-effective way—not so much as a vehicle for sales, but from a marketing standpoint, to get the message out to the consumers.

M2 is a totally separate entity. President John Coffino opened an office in Los Angeles. He’s hiring publicists, promotion people, sales managers and a marketing team that’s separate from Madacy’s staff.

Are you worried that you’re creating an overhead that could cut into the profitability of your budget lines?
That’s always a concern. Madacy, as a company, has been very profitable. We’ve gotten to that position not by how well we sell, but how well we buy right. The chances of being successful increase dramatically by buying right. We use that same kind of expertise and hard-earned knowledge as a base to develop M2, even though we’re in the process of hiring an entirely new group of people. M2 will still use Madacy’s art department and distribution and accounting systems as support mechanisms, which cuts expenses dramatically.

What direction do you see Madacy going with its kids line and M2?
We’re not looking to become another Koch or Red Ant with low margins—distributing a lot of titles, many of which sell just a few hundred pieces. That’s not in our best interest, nor is it good for our success. Our take on independent distribution is to be more specialized or targeted. We’re into projects like our recent partnership with SFX. We worked the Alphabet City products under the NBA and NFL banners. One that featured music played at Bulls games did about 400,000 pieces. M2 just launched an NHL all-star-game CD in the third week of January. We just finished doing something for the New York Yankees, too. The projects have substantial profit margins.

THE BILLBOARD INTERVIEW
Continued from page 60

releasing records just to fill a pipeline. We have to put full marketing plans behind every release. Pricing is not enough. Today, we look at it as though the consumers ask themselves, “Why should I buy this package?” We put those kind of thoughts into it.

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THERE'S A NEW KID IN TOWN!
An exciting collection of cassettes, CDs, videos and DVDs for children of all ages!
“The people at Madacy are wonderful to deal with. I’ve known them a long time—at least 10 years—and they are an exceptional company. They’re so easy to get along with, and that’s the way it is with Madacy. I recently went to Montreal to visit them, and they couldn’t do enough for me—Amos himself insisted on picking me up from the airport. They took us out to dinner and showed us around; it was an amazing experience. This is not just work, this is family.

“The relationship between our company and Madacy couldn’t be better. They’re well-organized and well-managed, and that’s why they’re successful. Their future looks really bright, and I look forward to a continued relationship.”

—Eli Okun, president, EMI/Capitol Music Special Markets

THE BILLBOARD INTERVIEW
Continued from page 62

Even so, doesn’t growing the size of the company, and competing more often with the majors, necessitate some changes in the way you do business?

In the short term, we won’t stray too far from our original principles. But, as we evolve, and as the major labels get into developing their own midprice and budget catalogs, we’ll have to do what we have to do in terms of all the bells and whistles [that it takes] to become a label with artist development. Even so, we’ll be taking a safer approach to get there, but the end result is definitely moving into a position where we are a full-service label.

At that time, would you consider making a deal for branch distribution?

No. Actually, we currently do independent-distribution partnerships with the major labels. We’ve done exclusive packages with Sony, Warner Bros. and Universal, among others, and we’re expanding in that area. They want to use our independent-distribution expertise. They have to be profitable, and we have to be very efficient with what we do, as well.

Also on a partnering basis, we have gone to them and thrown out the idea of them distributing our front-line product. A couple of companies have shown strong interest in that area, if we are successful in developing their artists in certain markets. We’re both very excited.

Finally, how high is up for Madacy? How big do you see yourself getting?

We don’t actually sit here and think in those terms. Madacy has been able to grow at a rate of approximately 20% to 30% a year. We’d like that to continue, but we realize that it becomes more difficult to do when your numbers get significantly higher every year. We’d very much like to get M2 off the ground and have it profitable within a two-year period.

Beyond that, it’s not really realistic in this industry, where things change so quickly with all the new technology going around, to predict with any certainty where we can take this thing in five years. Suffice it to say, we look at our competitors out there—the major labels—and what drives them. No matter what the technology becomes, it’s the content that drives them. We, too, are committed to developing and securing quality content and moving ourselves into a strong position, no matter which way the technology goes.”
SFX Alphabet City Records salutes our family at Madacy Entertainment on 20 years of success!

We look forward to being the championship team of the future!
MADACY's NEXT GENERATION

With the addition of M2 and Madacy Kids, the company shows strength through diversification.

BY JEFF SILBERMAN

Befitting his ascension to the top echelon of North American independent record companies, Madacy Entertainment is branching out in several directions to take advantage of market conditions and his label's burgeoning strengths. Chief among them is M2 Entertainment, a corporate umbrella for four new record labels, Relentless Records, which will feature pop, urban and rock acts; Relentless Nashville, which will offer country and folk talent; Bongo Boy Records, which will showcase world music; and Suite 102 Music, which will delve into new age and jazz. M2 will complement Madacy Kids, a division dedicated to children's music.

M2 CAN DO

"Due to consolidation, some labels have become so large that they concentrate on the top 20% of their business," Madacy founder and president LO Amos Alter says. "The other 80% doesn't mean as much to them in terms of sales volume, so they don't give [those acts] the time and attention that we can give them.

Although the idea for M2 came to Alter in 1998, the company didn't actually come off the drawing board until a little more than four months ago. To oversee its development, Alter recruited music-industry veteran Jonathan Collins, a senior-management consultant whose most recent label experience was as senior VP of sales and field marketing at MCA. "Madacy is positioned really well in the marketplace to take advantage of quite a few things that are going on," Collins says. "They have great relationships at retail and are ready to exploit the changing ways of delivery. Plus, there's [now] the availability of quality artists looking for a home."

M2's labels will be looking for fresh new talent, as well as acts that were casualties of the recent major-label consolidations. "What we're looking for are opportunities to develop artists," Collins says. "We're interested in both [kinds of] talent. Since our distribution system allows us to ship tens of millions of units a year, we're well-positioned on a global basis to work with established artists who may no longer have a home on a major label. We're also bringing more people on board who have experience in marketing, sales and artist development, so we will offer tremendous opportunities for new artists, as well.

Currently doing the A&R work is Madacy VP of product development David Roy, who has already signed four acts in various stages of development. "I expect our first release to be out in April," says Roy of Relentless' inaugural release, Anne Marie's "Amazing Ordinary Things," "We also have two country acts in the studio, and our fourth act is an AGS/Sarah Brightman-type artist whose record might come out on Suite 102.

"Certainly, we'll concentrate heavily on getting those four acts off the ground, but we are talking to some veteran acts that are casualties of the label consolidation," he continues. "To be sure, if we do sign these [veteran] acts, none of their projects will see the light of day before 2001."

Marketing and promoting original talent means that M2 will be going up against the majors in the quest for radio airplay, video exposure, retail POP displays and everything else. Collins is confident that M2 can do a successful job without being hindered. "There are a number of things you can do," he says. "You obviously watch your expenditures, and you also create strategic alliances where you find alternate revenue streams to bring in money for the artists. Most importantly, you have the hands to develop a career fan base through live performances, so they're not dependent simply on videos and radio airplay."

Realizing the challenges that lay ahead, Collins notes, "M2 is in no hurry to become a major player in the industry. We have no goals in terms of sales figures. We want to grow M2 organically and ensure that we're profitable within a certain framework. I don't think anyone here is looking at signing and breaking a certain number of artists by a certain time. The brilliant aspect behind M2 is what Amos has already created at Madacy: tremendous relationships with our retail customers, as well as strategic alliances with various companies that sell our records in different marketplaces. No getting our records into the right markets isn't going to happen now."

Continued on page 70

EMI-CAPITOL MUSIC SPECIAL MARKETS

Congratulations

MADACY ENTERTAINMENT ON THEIR 20TH ANNIVERSARY

EMI-CAPITOL MUSIC SPECIAL MARKETS
Madacy Entertainment has built its fortunes well away from the designated power bases of the music industry. Rather than situating itself for maximum exposure in London, New York, L.A. or Nashville, the company has always maintained its central presence adjacent to the St. Lawrence River, in the city of Montreal. Moreover, a chat with the label’s principals reveals that they wouldn’t have had it any other way at least not up to the present. With the perspective of four years’ tenure within Madacy Entertainment, Robin Ram, the company’s senior VP, has a sanguine outlook on the company’s ability to function as a stand-alone entity in Montreal.

“Right now,” Ram remarks, “We have third-party distribution, but not only is our AKR in-house, but we have a full graphics department in Montreal, as well. We do all our own creative and graphic design, all of our own sell sheets, all of our market plans, our own displays and POP materials; everything is done internally. It’s been that way since the company’s inception. We’re very much self-contained and don’t require the support services that have grown up around music companies in other cities.”

CONNECTED IN CANADA

When asked if those conveniences and contacts, as might be afforded in Manhattan or another music biz stronghold, haven’t beckoned appealingly in the past, Ram demurs, “No, far from it. Being in Montreal, our customers are thrilled to visit us on a fairly frequent basis, so we bring them up and give them a chance to get out of their environment and come into a strictly creative environment. We look at what programs are going on and plan out the future. In today’s electronic age, with e-mail, faxes and all the other digital amenities, being in Montreal is no different from being anywhere else.”

Owing to its hereditary ties to France, and its position as the metropolis of francophone Canada, Montreal has always been a city whose cosmopolitan nature no doubt adds zest to conducting business. Ram is quick to concur: “Absolutely! There’s always a lot of things going on, what with the jazz festivals, the comedy festivals, the Grand Prix. There’s a lot of exciting things to do. It’s a great place to be during the summer. It’s a great place to entertain at any time, with a lot of fantastic restaurants.”

Ram notes that Montreal does not possess a community of major-label offices, as does its anglophone counterpart, Toronto. “Though,” he adds, “going back many years, Poly- Gram used to be in Montreal. The independent-label community, however, seems to have used Montreal as its hub.”

As for where Madacy Entertainment’s home office is sited, Ram explains that a choice of city was never considered. “Amos Alter, company founder and president/CEO, has been in Montreal since it opened.”

“Alades” was the word on the street and the term that Madacy always referred to itself. The new name, Madacy Entertainment, is an homage to the old but has an added twist, Ram explains: “The old Madacy name was a mouthful. The new company is Madacy Entertainment. It’s a bit of a love letter to the old company.”

Lee Serson, the company’s VP of international, product and marketing, other departments, affirms: “It’s a mouthful, but it gives us a clear boundary. It’s a way of saying that we’re not a random one-off company.”

Serson adds: “It’s an added level of confidence, a sense of being independent.”

Ram, however, has another reason for the change: “There are so many companies in the industry that have become entertainment companies. It was time for us to make ourselves known as a full service entertainment company.”

The Canadian company is a division of Madacy International Inc., an Amsterdam-based company with ownership in entertainment companies around the world. Madacy International also owns the Bluebird label in the U.K., St. Clair in Canada, and the record company in the U.S. and Europe.

“With the new name,” Ram says, “we look forward to continuing to serve our customers, the independent artists.”

Rovt.

BY RICHARD HENDERSON
Congratulations!

to Amos and the Madacy Team

on your 20th Anniversary

from your friends at North Coast Entertainment

Congratulations to Madacy Entertainment

For 20 years, you've "Altered" the face of the music industry. All the best to Amos and the team from your friends at Anchor Bay.
To you Amos and all my friends at Madacy.

Wishing you many more years of success.

Lou Kircos, Kircos Ventures LLC

So what’s in store for the future of Madacy Kids? “Our next step is in looking at some acquisitions and investment opportunities,” Gardner notes. “We’re considering buying into children’s product that has licensed characters. There are some artist opportunities out there, but we’re more strongly interested in product themes and character-based properties. Even if the artist in question is a great live performer, we find that consumers are more driven by the songs themselves than by the artists.”

STAYING BUSY KEEPING WARM

But, when asked as to whether his company’s physical remove from the American media centers had a positive impact on his business, Amos Alter considers the thought and reflects, “Sometimes I think so. I like the fact that the isolation here has really allowed us to concentrate on nothing but work, especially for six months out of the year. Today, for example, it’s 32 below! There isn’t much else to do but work, so I’ll choose to see that as a very positive thing [laughs]. We haven’t been involved in the policies of the industry and have been able to remain focused on growth, expansion and adhering to our business model.”

“On the other hand,” Alter continues, “I’d love to spend more time in New York or Los Angeles, places where so much is going on. Nashville is probably the next place where we’ll be setting up an office as we expand our new front-line label, M2. Under M2, we already have a distribution deal that we’ve set up with [the label] SFX Alphabet City. So, we’re establishing a stronger presence right in downtown Manhattan that allows us access to all the labels with which we have arrangements and special distribution deals, and to artists and groups themselves. It’s becoming more important, our presence in those main markets, and that has dictated our expansion to date. Up to a point, it’s been OK [being in Montreal], but in taking it to the next step, especially when you’re talking about artist development, it’s crucial that we cement our presence in those main music markets.”

THE MADDENING CROWD

Continued from page 68

continued
CBA Looks To Stores Of The Future

**BY PATRICIA BATES**

NASHVILLE—The Christian Booksellers Assn. (CBA) acknowledges that it needs to be human as well as high-tech in taking the 2,000-year-old Gospels to the 90 million Christians in the U.S., many of whom are shopping now for music, video, and books with less personal assistance through the Internet and electronic displays.

Last year, Christian music sales increased 12% to 49.8 million units from 44.7 million the year before, according to SoundScan, and Christian videotape sales rose by 17%. The Christian national and regional chains and independent mail-order sales sold 8.6 million music units, or 57.5% of total sales.

“[For the first time,] music exceeded books for many of our CBA retailers,” says Troy Vest, director of sales and market development for the Sparrow Label Group. “The CBA store of the future will have that into account when planning.”

CBA’s ministry has always come as a result of “getting transactions done quickly—from the parking lot to the receipt,” says David Amster, CEO of Integra Design Group in Nashville, which has designed two new CBA prototype stores, one for the Kindred independent store in Birmingham, Ala., and the other for the Potomac Adven
tist Book Center in Silver Spring, Md.

“As we move toward a cashless society, many of us are using debit cards, so we expect not to have to stand in line,” Amster says.

CBA, which held its CBA Expo 2000 on Jan. 24-26 at the Opryland Hotel here, says it plans to educate store managers and staffers at its new $7.4 million International Training Center and offices, which will be dedicated March 23 in Colorado Springs, Colo. Word Records act Point Of Grace and novelist Jerry Jenkins of the 16 million-selling “Left Behind” series are scheduled to appear at the ceremonies.

The CBA was loaned money for the 40,000-square-foot headquarters through a Christian credit union, which is renting tenant (Continued on page 73).

Koch Soundtrack To New ‘Crow’ Boasts Top Acts

**BY JIM BESSMAN**

NEW YORK—Of course Koch Entertainment hopes that “The Crow: Salvation” will be a movie smash: but it expects that its soundtrack for the third installment in the comic-book/horror thriller series, which comes out March 28, will find retail redemption on its own.

Like the previous non-Koch “Crow” soundtracks, “Salvation” assemblies exclusive tracks from top alternative acts, namely Filter, Rob Zombie, the Infidels (featuring Juliette Lewis), Kid Rock, Hole, Tricky, Stabbing Westward, Sin, the Flys, Monster Magnet, Days Of The New, Pitchshifter, the Crystal Method, Static-X (featuring Burton C. Bell of Fear Factory), New American Shame, and Danzig (see Soundtracks and Film Score News, page 22).


The latter starred the late Brandon Lee, who died in a trag
cic accident during filming.

“Besides, the film is just as strong,” adds Koch Entertainment president Roman. “The music speaks for itself. Whether it’s a $200 million or $50 million box-office gross,” says Bob Frank, Koch Entertainment president. “No one can do that type of movie anytime.”

Koch has been involved in the album’s track listing for six months, says Frank, giving the label ample time to record songs whose album “III” is slated to come out sometime in the first half of the year.

“These labels have created their own brand names, building a buzz at the grass-roots level, which creates sales opportunities,” says Becker. Koch’s new RUMM will turn the label’s marketing efforts into sales opportunities at RED’s more mainstream accounts.

RUMM is a sister company to RED Ink, which was created two years ago and focuses on rock, alternative rock, and roots rock. So far RED Ink has worked with such labels as Eminence, which put out Emmylou Harris’ last album, “Spy Boy”; Steve Val’s new imprint, Favored Nation; New West, which issued Billy Joe Shaver’s latest album, “Electric Shaver”; and Fat Boy, which will be releasing all future recordings for Moe, a band that has developed a following among active-rock concertgoers.

Word Entertainment has Everland Entertainment’s Kid City interactive display at CBA Expo 2000 in Nashville. Shown, from left, are Ron Krueger (kneeling), director of new media services at Word; Les Jones, director of marketing and licensing at Everland; and Hayley Maddox and her father, Winston Maddox, chairman of the Christian Booksellers Assn. and owner of Gospel Supplies, an independent Christian store in Tucson, Ariz. (Photo: Patricia Bates)

**RED** Division Offers Marketing Services

**BY ED CHRISTMAN**

NEW YORK—RED Distribution’s new marketing company, RED Urban Music Marketing (RUMM) is expected to help the distributor expand its A&R scope when considering labels for its portfolio.

For the last few years, RED has limited its distribution umbrella to about 20 labels, all of which were strong and self-sufficient. Now, under new ownership by edel music and armed with a mandate to grow the business, RED has formed RUMM to supplement the marketing efforts of RED’s labels. The formation of RUMM allows RED to sign labels it previously wouldn’t handle.

“What we realized is there is a whole community of emerging music that comes right off the street that could use this kind of aid,” says RUMM president Ken Antonelli. “So we created RUMM to fulfill that need.”

Alan Becker, RED VP of product development, will head the division. He will be joined by Mitch Dudley, who will function as RUMM director of sales and marketing; Luxie Aquino, product manager; Carlton Walton, coordinator of product development—all previously held positions within RED. Two other staffers will also be added to the operation.

“In addition to its own staff, RUMM has the full resources of RED behind it,” says Becker. So far the RED labels that have hired RUMM are Hieroglyphics, whose first album to be worked by the new company will be Del The Funky Homosapien’s ‘Both Sides Of The Brain’; due March 21; Stimulat-

*What we realized is there is a whole community of emerging music that comes right off the street that could use this kind of aid*

—KEN ANTONELLI—

ed, a Loud-affiliated label, which will release the Missin’ Linx’s EP "Exhibit A" March 21; and DJ Horn’s independent recording whose album “HII” is slated to come out sometime in the first half of the year.

“These labels have created their own brand names, building a buzz at the grass-roots level, which creates sales opportunities,” says Becker. “So RUMM will turn the label’s marketing efforts into sales opportunities at RED’s more mainstream accounts.

RUMM is a sister company to RED Ink, which was created two years ago and focuses on rock, alternative rock, and roots rock. So far RED Ink has worked with such labels as Eminence, which put out Emmylou Harris’ last album, “Spy Boy”; Steve Val’s new imprint, Favored Nation; New West, which issued Billy Joe Shaver’s latest album, “Electric Shaver”; and Fat Boy, which will be releasing all future recordings for Moe, a band that has developed a following among active-rock concertgoers.

*What we realized is there is a whole community of emerging music that comes right off the street that could use this kind of aid*

—KEN ANTONELLI—

*With Rob Zombie, Kid Rock, and Static-X, they have solid rock artists who are really popular now*

—LON LINDELAND—
Merchants & Marketing

newsline...

K-TEL INTERNATIONAL reports a net loss of $1.9 million in the second fiscal quarter, which ended Dec. 31, compared with a loss of $2 million in the same quarter a year earlier, while revenue fell 21.9%, to $164.4 million from $211 million. The company attributes the decline to lower revenue from its domestic music division and the scale of operations in Finland. K-tel also says that it plans to relaunch its Web site this spring.

SONY CLASSICAL has launched a new Web site, essentialsofmusic.com, as a resource for consumers on classical music. The site has been created as a venture with W.W. Norton & Co., which publishes books on music, and is linked to Sony’s Essential Classics series of budget-priced recordings. In addition, Sony has launched a Web site, buildyourbabysbrain.com, designed to introduce children to classical music. The new titles in the “Build Your Baby’s Brain” CD series were released as the site was launched.

BARNESANDNOBLE.COM reports a fourth-quarter net loss of $88.4 million, compared with a loss of $81.3 million a year earlier. Sales more than tripled to $28.1 million from $25.9 million. The New York-based company, owned in part by Barnes & Noble and Bertelsmann, says its customer count rose to 4.9 million by the end of the year, compared with 1.3 million in the previous year, and that repeat customer orders increased to 69% in the fourth quarter from 65% in the third quarter. For the year the online retailer of music, books, and video reported a net loss of $182.4 million on sales of $826.6 million, compared with a loss of $88.1 million on $61.8 million a year before.

DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK, a Web programmer, has named as chairman Gary Gersh, the former president of Capitol Records, replacing Jim Ritts, who resigned. Gersh had been co-president of the company’s DE Music Group. Greg Carpenter, who had been chief technology officer, was named CEO/COO. The company also withdrew its proposal for a $75 million initial public stock offering, citing significant changes in business and management. DEN says it has secured private financing totaling $16 million.

THE WALT DISNEY CO. says that revenue from its studio entertainment division, which includes music, film, and home video operations, declined 10% in the first fiscal quarter, to $5.4 billion, from $5.9 billion in the previous quarter. Net earnings rose 11%, to $1.2 billion from $1.1 billion. In other news, Disney announced that it is considering acquiring Miramax Films for $400 million, which will include ticket giveaways in the top 10 markets. Disney is also working with Concrete Marketing, an indie retail marketing firm. Ron Lindeland, senior buyer for alternative and soundtrack product at the Minnesota-based Best Buy chain, had “great success” with the first two “Crow” soundtracks and expects at least the same from “The Crow: Salvation.”

Koch Soundtrack to New ‘Crow’ Boasts Top Acts

(Continued from preceding page)

Koch will also release a “score soundtrack” disc on April 14, which will include the end-title song sung by Jane Jensen and “enhanced features such as screen savers and wallpaper,” says Frank. “We felt they’d bring value-added additions to the score album for a different demographic. Generally, kids who go see ‘The Crow’ aren’t fans of scores.”

A limited-edition vinyl double-album of “The Crow: Salvation” will be released along with the March 28 CD set and will include the same audio with “value-added” elements, including stickers, Frank says. Co-promotions with Miramax will include ticket giveaways in the top 10 markets. Koch is also working with Concrete Marketing, an indie retail marketing firm.

He’s A Killah. Epic recording artist Ghostface Killah stopped by Universal One-Stop to promote his new album, “Supreme Clientele,” on Epic. While there, he got into a discussion on beats with Universal One-Stop president Harold Lipius, center, and fellow Epic artist Capadonna, right.

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(Continued from preceding page)

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space from the organization. The CBA says that none of its 2,500-plus members’ annual dues went into the building.

The trade organization will discuss the future of the industry at a March 24–25 workshop in Colorado Springs featuring Paco Underhill, director of the “Why We Buy” (Simon & Schuster), and other analysts. Molly Conroy of the Friedman Group will analyze the CBA’s mystery-shopping survey of 255 retailers.

**TARGETING CUSTOMERS**

CBA stores have always been “all things to all people,” so the whole family is comfortable in one place, says Amster. The stores will also need to specifically target customers, just as “the Tower Records and Where-Houses focus on their younger demographics.”

Kindred and Potomac Adventist Book Center, for instance, have products for home, work, family, travel, and recreation.

Life goes on after churchlets out” is how Kindred describes its mission. The store opened in 1999 selling kitchen, pets, gardening, and other items. Its founder is Lew Burdette, former executive VP of the Books-A-Million chain. Customers have access to the gokindred.com Web site at three in-store Internet stations.

Potomac Adventist Book Center offers health foods as well as the latest Christian CDs. In February, it expanded to 40,000 square feet from 10,000.

CBA stores’ music buyers have to think about the generation gap. “How do I appeal to listeners of both the Gaithers in Southern Gospel and Metallica?” asks CBA president Bill Anderson. “The CBA retailer has to figure out exactly what its distinctives are in merchandising.”

Kindred posts eight top 10 lists of best-selling Christian CDs throughout its music department, one each for country music, Anderson notes. CBA music promotions could be arranged for the Tuesday date nights. The organization is forming a music retailing development committee, which has yet to make recommendations.

Missionary donors who release titles exclusively to CBA stores at least 30 days ahead of mainstream retail, says CBA chairman Winston Maddox of Gospel Supplies in Tucson, Ariz. He adds that they should also advertise that a CD can be purchased only at a CBA store, which can be located through CBA’s toll-free number, (800) 443-7747, or on its Web site, christianradio.org.

At the CBA convention, such “music-media” devices as sound domes and cracker-glass screens with rear-view projection for Christian artist videos were displayed. But that is only a small-tech indicator of what’s ahead for the CBA.

“Eventually, I don’t think we’ll have racks and racks of product,” says Amster. “What is the next five years—we will be relaxing in a lounge chair in a market and have a TV on the panel on the left or right from which to order our own customized CDs. It may take 15 minutes or so to get it, so we might have a flavored coffee drink while we’re waiting.”

**FCS GOES ON THE WEB**

Family Christian Stores (FCS) launched its Internet site, ibelieve.com, Jan. 26 with 70,000 products, says ibelieve.com president Jeff Fite. The site started with $30 million in private equity from Madison Dearborn Partners and Andersen Consulting, and has $7 million in annual commerce. More than 40 years old, FCS is a national chain of 346 stores in 39 states.

FCS will install ibelieve.com kiosks in its stores for its 6 million “FamilyPerks” frequent shoppers. Ibelieve.com has five main departments—My Faith, My Life, My Community, My World, and My Store—with author/artist/special events, bulletin boards, online prayer groups, and more.

Although 40 million Christians are on the Internet, just 15% of them view the Web as a source of information about faith, according to Barna Research Group. This year, it predicts, another 5 million Christians will log on, indicating a strong force there.

The CBA approved a new membership category for its 51 Internet and 296 direct-mail retailers last October. Prospects must have been in operation for one year and must have at least 1,000 customers.

While Americans made 10% of their Christmas purchases online in December, according to Jim Seybert, president of the Parable Group, a marketing consortium from San Luis Obispo, Calif., the CBA says its customers bought 3%-5% of their gifts through E-commerce during December.

The CBA is developing Retail Operations Manual with assistance from the Parable Group and other independent stores, along with a New Store Star-up Kit for making five-year income and expense projections.

CBA’s brick-and-mortar stores also have to attract roadside attention. “I like Best Buy, which has a signature blue mark on the outside,” says Amster. “I think we’ll see more of that in our industry.”

Interiors should have “contemporary yet classical” fixtures and furnishings. With more hanging by bourgeois customers, lighting must be enhancing and energy-efficient, and sound must not be overpowering, says Amster.

“We design for the 35- to 50-year-old female, whereas [Best Buy designs] for the 15- to 30-year-old market,” says a visitor. “We usually make the walls a neutral off-white and the rest bolder,” says Amster. “I’m a member of the Color Market Five Group, and they’ve made blue the primary and yellows and purples as the secondary colors for the millennium.”

**FUTURE CONVENTIONS**

The half-century-old CBA begins its next 50 years at the CBA International Convention July 8-13 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. Appropriately, one of the programs for boomer marketers is “Our View of the Future.”

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The CBA looks to stores of the future.

(Continued on page 71)

**THE CBA RETAILER HAS TO FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT ITS DISTINCTIVES ARE IN MERCHANDISING**

— BILL ANDERSON —

**Merchants & Marketing**

**Top Music Videos.**
Virginia Forges Ahead With U.S. Retail & Web Plans Despite Riled Branson

W ith Richard Branson, owner of the Virgin Entertainment Group, making loud noises in the U.K., voicing his dissatisfaction with the majors’ plans for the Internet and following it up with even louder actions like witholding payment for 55 million pounds in Christmas product, Retail Track decided to check up and see what the North American division is up to.

Christos Garkinos, executive VP at Los Angeles-based Virgin, says the chain is “current,” i.e., all paid up with all of its suppliers. A survey of U.S. suppliers backs that up.

Branson also questioned why he should continue to invest in music retail if his suppliers plan on going into competition with him via the Internet. Glen Ward, president of Virgin’s North American operation, says that Virgin will continue to open new stores, with one planned this year in Dallas and four or five next year, including one in Boston.

The Boston store will occupy a location swiped from the Tower Records/Video/Books store on Newbury Street. Tower’s lease for that location is said to end in July 2001, and the Virgin store is slated to open that autumn. According to Tower executives, Virgin has agreed to pay a rent that puts the financial feasibility of the location in doubt. For his part, Ward says, “Certainly the business model for those stacks up for us.”

Ward says there are plenty of markets left in the U.S., where he would be happy to put a Virgin store. “The U.S. business is fine,” he says. “We are still in growth mode and are delighted to take out the Virgin message to many markets.”

While Branson may be grousing about the majors’ intentions for the Internet, his company is moving forward with its own Web plans, Ward reports. “We are about to relaunch our U.S. site, and we will roll out sites in the U.K., Europe, and Japan. By late summer we will have a global catalog.”

Just in Case any of you are heading to the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) Convention and are flying through Dallas, don’t be surprised if you run into any Sony Music Distribution personnel. No, they are not going to NARM but instead will have company meetings for the national staff and field management—meetings that originally were planned to be held in San Antonio during the NARM Convention. Instead of eating all of the plane tickets due to the company’s withdrawal from the NARM Convention, the company is going ahead (Continued on page 76)
Declarations of Independents: Chicago’s independent bands—essentially all of the R&B, blues, and gospel idioms on this release. Anyone who is unable to respond to the punchy balladry of ‘A Stone’s Throw Away’ or the capper sexiness of ‘Dancin’ With Your Belly Up’ has probably had his soul excised surgically!

by Chris Morris

his muttering, understated vocals animate the proceedings. An excellent return by a unique practitioner of what can only be termed “desert dream-rock.”

Coco Montoya, “Suspicion” (Alligator, out now). In a world of blues guitar pretenders, Coco Montoya is still real McCoy. Possessed of a glass-cutting guitar tone, exceptional melodic finesse, his mucking, understated vocals animate the proceedings. An excellent return by a unique practitioner of what can only be termed “desert dream-rock.”

Dancin’ With Your Belly Up has probably had his soul excised surgically!

work from the all-twang-no-brain sector of alt.country. Hogan remains one of Declarations of Independents’ favorite singers—affection, unmanipulated, and inimitably sexy in her understated way.

The Mekons, ‘Journey To The End Of The Night’ (Quarterstick, March 7). Now in their third decade of troublemaking, this devilishly unpredictable ensemble, permanently transplanted from their breeding ground of Leeds, England, to Chicago, go about their prolific way. Their music deftly ignores category; some tracks on their new album exhibit vestiges of the ramshackle country music that was their milieu during the ’80s, while others show off traces of a turned-around reggae beat. Musically speaking, the consistent standout here is singer Sallie Timms, who animates “Last Weeks Of The War,” “City Of London,” “The Flood,” and “Cast No Shadows” with her delicately affecting cool. The Mekons’ music rarely rubs their own—elliptical, consistently surprising, and often as broodingly comic as the Louis-Ferdinand Celine’s novel from which the latest record derives its title.

Bad Livers, ‘Blood & Mood’ (Sugar Hill, Tuesday 222). Holy Cow, even devoted followers of banjoist Danny Barnes and bassist Mark Rubin’s deconstructed blues should be flabbergasted by this latest effort, in which they launch themselves into what is for them terra incognita. Produced by steel guitarist Lloyd Maines (pappy of Dixie Chicks and Natalie), the album’s full-on sortie into post-blues blocky mixology, replete with samples, tape loops, distorted vocals, and the likes of a firehose had been limited to the generally non-hyper-real. This will probably make some purists blush, but the Liver’s musical quest, which never had to be cast the genre conventions in the first place, pays little mind to their audiences’ expectations. Surprising and bracing stuff.

Western Electric, “Western Electric” (Gadfly, March 21). Los Angeles expatriate Sid Griffin has always had a fondness for Gram Parsons (he co-wrote a major branch of cosmic American music,) and he makes a strong stab at creating his own on this exceptionally fine release. Based in the U.K. for some years, the former L.A. Ryder and Coal Porters front man formulates a deft synthesis of all-American country, psychedelic, blues, and rock and roll influences to all of the improvising here; the steel and banjo mate blythe with samples and audio cut-ups. The effect of Griffin’s current music is freshening to the point of being ultimately a little dizzying and not unlike listening to several good radio stations broadcasting harmoniously at the same time. This is Griffin’s best, most assured, most experimental, and most ambitious work by a long shot.

Dirty Three, “Whatever You Love, You Are” (Touch and Go, March 7). Is there another band at all like this Australian trio? The instrumental music produced by violinist Wey and singer-guitarist Mick Turner, and drummer Jim White is resolutely a thing unto itself. The group’s first release in two years is perhaps its most restrained: While Eels still indulges in his “Thirdeyed Earl”-inspired sidetrip flights into his hexagonal, old-school elephant cabined flights here, the keystone track is “I Offered It Up To The Stars & The Night Sky,” which runs a mere 15 1/2 minute length. The mighty Three continue to produce dramatic music without precedent that effectively skips all genres.

Terry Evans, “Walk That Walk” (Telarc, Tuesday 222). It would be a truly fine thing if guitarist Ry Cooder and singer-guitarist Evan singer Evans did the same thing for his career that Cooder’s embrace of Buena Vista Social Club did for those grand Cuban musicians, especially, as Cooder, who employed him as a background singer on several wonderful solo albums, knows so well. Evans really is the genuine article; his music of the R&B, blues, and gospel idioms on this release. Anyone who is unable to respond to the punchy balladry of ‘A Stone’s Throw Away’ or the capper sexiness of ‘Dancin’ With Your Belly Up’ has probably had his soul excised surgically!
More of the latest: As is always the case, Child’s Play ended up with way more material for Billboard’s annual Toy Fair-targeted kids’ entertainment spotlight than we were able to squeeze into last issue’s column. Therefore, we thought we’d present additional information here (which we did last year, too).

King Arthur: Rounder Records’ “Arthur & Friends,” the debut audio project spun off from PBS’ hit animated series “Arthur” (itself based on Marc Brown’s much-loved picture books about an Everykid aardvark and his anthropomorphic animal pals), was one of 1998’s very best kids’ recordings.

Now Rounder is readying a new Arthur audio for release this spring. It’s to be called “Arthur’s Record Collection,” according to Carol Greenwald, director of development for children’s programming at Boston’s WGBH-TV and executive producer of “Arthur.” The premise, says Greenwald, is that “Arthur’s gone through all his albums and he’s pulled out songs he likes.”

There’s a parody of [Roy Orbison’s] “Only the Lonely” and a psychedelic song vaguely related to [Iron Butterfly’s] “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida”; it’s sung by Arthur’s kid sis- ter D.W., and it’s about taking her first phone message, continues Greenwald. “There are a lot of different styles on the album—swing, New Orleans [‘Hobo I’ appears here], rock.”

The feisty D.W. does a cover of the Pretenders’ “ кровь из носа” with a Bob Rock pro- duction. Greenwald notes, “My own daughter got attached to that song when she was 7—she kept singing, ‘I’m special, so special.’” It just screamed “D.W.” to me.”

One track Greenwald’s hoping to include is a Yo-Yo Ma/Joshua Redman cover of the dadaish “Crazy Bus,” which appears on the show as a D.W.’s crazy about but that just drives Arthur crazy. “We’re seeing permission at the moment,” she says.

Another Arthur audio release may spin off from an “Arthur” holiday special that will air in prime time on PBS next Christmas season, according to Greenwald.

New Pooh: Walt Disney Records is launching a new book and tape line tied to the upcoming release of the Pooh and friends. According to Mike Bassolo, senior VP of marketing, for the label, it’s called “Pooh Learning Songs” and consists of “traditional read-alongs” aimed at toddlers.

“Each release will contain a song and a story,” says Bassolo, who notes that the first releases are “Colorful Present With Pooh,” “Number Hunt With Pooh,” and “Ship Shapes With Pooh,” all set for release Feb. 29.

Other upcoming Disney releases include “Viva Rock Vegas Flintstones Read Along” (April 18); “Aida’s Original Cast Recording,” with songs by Elton John and Tim Rice and featuring Hadley Headley, who played Nala in “The Lion King” on Broadway (May 28); “Fantasia 2000” Read Along, featuring text for “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” and “The Street fast Tin Soldier” (May 30); and “Bullwinkle Read Along” and “Classical For Kids” (both June 6).

Singin’ the Blues: Kid Rhino has done quite well indeed with its “Blues’s Clues” audio franchise, which is based on Nickelodeon’s popular preschool series. As Kid Rhino VP Carol Lee puts it, “When you have TV, you have brand awareness. ‘Blues’s Clues’ has been tremendous for Kid Rhino.”

Cross-promotions with software manufacturer Humongous Entertain- ment have proved profitable, and BMG and WEA have launched a promo for the latest “Blues’s Clues” audio release, “A Play Date With Blue,” in its “Blues’s Clues” CD-ROM, and “we featured a Humongous demo game on our CD, which we advertised with a burst on the album cover. It’s such a targeted market—we’re talking to people very already interested in ‘Blues’s Clues’ so the cross-promotion was successful.”

School days: The Baby School Co. of Coconut Grove, Fla., creators of the baby video series “So Smart!”—debuted a pair of new prod- ucts at Toy Fair, both “learning kits” with audio components. “Baby School Language” comprises a 30-minute animated language video and 90-page hardcover book. A kids’ soundtrack CD and focuses on familiarizing tots with Spanish. “Ba- by Music School” introduces little ones to classical music and contains a 30-minute animated video, a cas- sette of soundtrack music, and a plush percussion ball. Each learning kit is $29.95.

The ’P’ word: Koch Records (along with Nintendo of America Inc., 4Kids Entertainment Inc., and Cherry Lane Music Publishing Co. Inc.) just released its second Pokemon title, “Pokemon World.” A limited-edition enhanced CD for 12- and 24-minute Sex-inspired theme song as the title track, “Pokemon World” also includes the video “Pokachu’s Winter Vacation,” pre- viously available (as a different edit) only on an exclusive video for Wal-Mart.

Also included in the enhanced ones has come the DVD title, which the Kidz ’n’ Play. Internet site awarded the CD to 250 winners who answered the daily Pokemon question correctly.

Retail Track (Continued from page 74)

With the meetings in Dallas.

By the way, Sony issued a state- ment today, making clear its lawsuit that I have not had a chance to report. The statement says, “We are disappoint- ed by the litigious stance taken by NARM, which, rather than working with us to resolve their concerns about E-commerce issues, has chosen to bring suit against Sony Music and Sony Corporation of America. It is clear that NARM has singled out Sony Music on which to project its fears and misgivings about the Internet’s role in the future of the mu- sic business.”

The statement continues that the company’s aim is to bring consumers closer to the music of its acts and to get them to see the potential of the E-commerce industry, including with retailers to achieve that goal through online promotions. In fact, Sony plans to continue to look at “Interactive commerce” to market music, including with providing consumers with added value by furnishing convenient links directly from acts’ CDs to their respective Web sites.

“NARM’s actions preclude our participation in this year’s event,” the statement says. “We hope to find an equitable resolution to the current situation with NARM.”

Up and coming: Retail Track always tries to serve as an advocate for “my people”—those working in the retail, label-sales, and distribu- tion trenches. That’s why I’d like to acknowledge a couple of EP record- ings that have come across our desk recently:

As You Were” from Boot Camp and “Look Up from the Skirt.”

The Skirts play pop power/punk and are what is to be described by the music business as a girl group, but in these politically correct times, I’ll just note that all of its members are female and leave it at that. The band sounds like the most extreme punk you’ve heard, with “Pokémon” and “The Ramones, with a lot of vocal harmonies thrown in.” “Look Up” is distributed by Bayside Distribution in West Sacramento, Calif.

The band features two members of Tower Records/Vide/Books head- quarters staff: Wendy Powell on drums and Gerri Ranta on bass. Powell is assistant to the COO of Tower, and in case you don’t know what that means, she has the power to choose which phone calls get through to Stan Goman, among other responsibilities. Ranta works in the Tower’s advertising department.

Sunita Bhardwaj, who also works in Tower’s retail operations, as the new-store product coordinator, played guitar on the record but has since left the band. Other band mem- bers on the recording are Karen Simmons on rhythm guitar and Lynn Mayhuga on lead vocals.

As for Boot Camp, it features Ken Gullen, VP of sales at Lookout Records, and lead vocals. The recording, dis- tributed by Parasol in Urbana, Ill., is a fine example of power pop, with crunchy but melodic guitars and memorable tunes. With the addition of some backup vocals from Cheap Trick’s Robin Zander on “Rise And Shine,” the second track on the EP Gullen is based in the Northeast, but his fellow band members—Michael D. Coon on guitar, John Scully on drums, and Owen Kinser on bass—are based in Denver.

Oh, and by the way, all of Boot Camp’s members are male. Check it out.

www.billboard.com
www.americanaudiostory.com
Music Sites Sign Licensing Deals With RIAA

2 Web Entities Demonstrate Commitment To Paying Royalties

This week’s column was prepared by guest columnist Chuck Taylor.

While Internet radio stations have practically become old hat in the rapidly burgeoning Web world, innovation continues to spur the potential of the medium and its partnership opportunities with record labels.

The 2-year-old Musicmusicmusic.com and not-even 1-year-old Ww.com (its enviable address was registered in 1994) are premier examples of companies defying the limitations of standard practice.

Musicmusicmusic.com, via its primary radio site, music.com, offers hundreds of thousands of songs to consumers, who, in turn, can create their own branded radio stations, based on music preferences, in addition to more than a thousand prerecorded shows.

Ww.com, meanwhile, offers more than a dozen different genres, including reggae, big band/swing, dance/techno, world music, and the more general classifications of top 40, country, rock, and R&B—with niches focused enough to break, say, jazz/blues into 16 categories and rock/pop into 24 distinct stations. The site is there to entertain Web site visitors, yes, but its model is primarily focused on business-to-business applications.

To add the ultimate fuel to their fire, both entities have signed agreements with the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) to ensure royalty payments to the artists performing on the 300,000 songs in the sites’ libraries.

They are among a small but growing number of music sites to sign licensing deals with the RIAA. Musicmusicmusic.com was the first, last year, while Ww.com is the latest, having announced its agreement Feb. 9.

These licenses are a big deal for a gazillion industry that still is in its infancy in terms of working out many of the economic aspects of doing business. Much of this is a reflection of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which was passed in October 1998 and mandates that Internet broadcasters and record labels put into place a licensing system for Webcasters who want to play copyright-protected music on the Internet.

The DMCA gave online broadcasters one year to file their “official intent” to obtain a license to air digital audio signals. Not only was that deadline all but ignored by most Webcasters, but subsequent ones were shrugged off. Most in the industry are anticipating the necessity of arbitration hearings between Internet radio companies and the labels/RIAA, possibly as early as mid-April, according to the RIAA.

Scott Purcell, president and founder of Ww.com, is a strong proponent of a group of artists whose music is aired on his site and its just due, i.e., royalties. He has been a part of the Internet industry since its birth and has testified before Congress and the Federal Communications Commission in support of Web entities paying copyright fees.

“Radio should pay artists and labels that we make our money on,” Purcell says. “We had to come to an agreement with the RIAA because of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. It is my fundamental belief that every song that we play or file by individual, music should be paid for and remunerated.

"It’s neither ethical or equitable not to have some structured form of payment for copyright holders," he adds. “In coming to terms with the RIAA, we know that we can build a profitable business model. Costas associated with copyrights are just a cost of doing business.”

Phil Lubman, VP of music for Musicmusicmusic.com, wholeheartedly agrees. “For people to think they can Webcast music over the Internet without paying for the rights to do so is just plain ludicrous. It’s never going to happen,” he says. “The tax man cometh.”

Lubman adds, “We approached the RIAA and said, ‘This is what we’re doing, and we want to pay you. Let’s get something written and get us all working on a level playing field, and we can go from there.’ The fact that other Webcasters are still waiting and trying to get lower rates doesn’t make sense. We’re all trying to make sure the Internet is a marketplace.”

(Continued on next page)
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(Continued from preceding page)

make money, and the artists have to get paid."

While neither Purcell nor Lubman is willing to reveal the specifics of their agreements with the RIAA, Purcell did say that royalty costs are based on a "per-performance, per listener basis. If, after any given time, I'm playing a song and 10,000 people are listening to it, I pay 10,000 royalties. It's fractions of a penny each, and it's expensive, but it's not extreme."

For its part, the RIAA heralds the success of Musicmucismusic.com and www.com. "It's good for us because it demonstrates that [these Webcasters] respect the rights of those who create the music that serves as the basis of their sites," says Steve Marks, senior VP of business affairs for the RIAA. "It's also an example of a marketplace agreement between us on behalf of our companies and artists and an individual Webcaster."

Marks would not comment on how many licensing agreements have been reached with Webcasters, saying that it is confidential information unless companies decide to make it public, as Musicmucismusic.com and www.com have.

"We have been and are in negotiations with many Webcasters, big and small," he says. "Our goal is to reach deals with them that fairly compensate record companies and artists for the use of their music by those sites. We expect to continue to complete deals on an ongoing basis."

In terms of how much revenue artists and labels might reap in royalties, Marks notes that it's "a very hard number to determine. We have been trying to use what is publicly available, along with data from our licensees, to get a grasp on the universe here. But that's not an easy thing to do. It will become easier in time. We're also working hard to set up an infrastructure to set up and distribute royalties."

For his part, Purcell intends to take his www.com venture around the globe. "We're looking at this on a worldwide basis. We've cut joint ventures in Asia and one for Europe. As we continue to go global, we will be opening offices in, for instance, Bombay [India], so that we can go into local communities and tap into the music that is relevant in various regions.

"Music should be everywhere; it makes site visitors stay around longer. So we have created a system where we are the broadcasters, but we brand our own offices for their sites," he says.

The company just began peddling its music warehouses to other Web sites in mid-January. Purcell says.

Since July 1999, it has signed 30 deals with worldwide content providers—which he declined to discuss specifically—that have taken on distinct genres of music that www.com offers in support of their format-specific sites.

The Girl Wants Platinum. The Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) recently presented RCA's Christina Aguilera with a multi-platinum award for sales of 5 million for her self-titled debut album. Aguilera accepted the award in Washington, D.C., where she was performing at the MCI Center. Shown at the presentation, from left, are Jared Paul, director of entertainment for the MCI Center; Joel Fislov, VP of government affairs and artist relations for the RIAA; Aguilera; Nancy Wagner, RIAA executive assistant for government affairs and artist relations; and John Henkel, director of the RIAA's gold and platinum awards program.

They Like It Ruff. RuffNation Records CEO Chris Schwartz was recently on hand at the album release party for the Outsides at New York's Shine. The Outsides' "Night Life" is the first release from RuffNation. Shown at the party, from left, are Simone Smalls of Susan Blond Inc., Schwartz; Samantha Kleer of Susan Blond, KG of Cold Crush Brothers, and Kelly Halsey of Susan Blond.

TRAFFIC TICKER: Top Online Retail Sites

Unique Visitors From Home And Work (in 000s)

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<td>3. cdnow.com</td>
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<td>5. bmgmusicservice.com</td>
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<td>10. musicmatch.com</td>
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HOUSEHOLD INCOME $15,000-$39,999/YEAR

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<td>9. checkout.com</td>
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<td>10. musicmatch.com</td>
<td>135</td>
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Source: MediaMetrix, December 1999. Sites categorized by Billboard. Media Metrix defines unique visitors as the actual number of users who visited each site, without duplication, once in a given month. More than 40,000 individuals throughout the U.S. participate in the Media Metrix sample.
Artisan Takes Stake In Baby Einstein Co.; Warner Launches Online Video Club

BY PATRICIA BATES
NASHVILLE—Lifestyle videos received more attention than usual at the Christian Book and Video Assn. (CBA) Expo Spring 2000, as consumers are becoming more interested in spiritual health and wellness, Holy Land travel, and ??say counseling.

Held at the Opryland Hotel here Jan. 24-28, the expo gave more than 2,000 Christian retailers a look at a wide variety of programs, from established brands such as the popular "Veggie Tales" series to dramas targeted toward adults.

Travel tapes are also beginning to make an impact. "Some of our Jerusalem tapes did better than others last fall," says Charles Harrison, assistant product manager for Spring Arbor Distributors for video and music. "The higher-quality ones do better.

Bishop T.D. Jakes videos, which provide spiritual guidance and motivation, have been successful among African-Americans who identify with him in the pulpit. His newest boxed four- to six-part sets are "Maximize The Moment," "Manpower 99... Soul Survivors," and "The Tabernacle" from T.D. Jakes Ministries.

"Every video he's done has sold no fewer than 50,000 units," said a representative for T.D. Jakes Ministries. Three titles were distributed in late 1999.

"We ran out of stock on (Jakes') 'Rhoda Ain't Wrong' because we sold 3,000 to 4,000 units in less than a week," said Angela Bennett, a sales representative for Central South Christian Distribution.

In addition to spiritual growth, consumers were concerned with their health and that of their families.

The "Educated Caregiver" video series from LifeView Resources was well-received at retail, says its producer, Mike Merryman. The three-part boxed set, "Coping Skills," "Hands-On Skills," and "Essential Knowledge," is priced at $38.95.

"Many Christians look for advice from their pastors, who may not know how to talk with them about long-term care," says Merryman. "We give them practical step-by-step nursing skills and discuss the emotional problems they will go through with their relatives."

Dramatic programs also received a fair amount of attention at the convention. Some titles include "The Omega Code" from Gener8Xion Entertainment/Providence. This film, which had a limited release in 300 theaters last October, stars Michael York and Catherine Oxenberg deciphering the Bible's secret numerical code. It will be released on video later this year.

"Tribulation" is being billed as a "second coming of Christ" film; it centers on a detective played by Gary Busey who wakes up in the hospital after the Great Rapture, and begins a physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional quest that transforms him, his sister (Margot Kidder),

(Continued on page 81)

NetFlix Drops Per-Movie Rentals, Offers Monthly DVD Subscription

BY EILEEN FITZPATRICK
LOS ANGELES—Online DVD rent-
al company NetFlix is eliminating per-movie rental charges in favor of a subscription program with a month-
ly fee.

Under the new plan, called the Unlimited Movie Rental service, customers pay $19.95 per month for as many DVDs as they like. The only restriction is that they can't have more than four movies checked out at one time.

Renters can keep the DVDs as long as they want without incurring late charges. All shipping fees to and from the consumer are also picked up by NetFlix.

NetFlix is offering a free one-month trial of service for consumers to test the program. "The Internet is all about raising the ante," says NetFlix CEO Reed Hastings. "When AOL and other companies raised the ante with unlimited access and free connections, other companies had to go on the offensive, too. So it's working."

Hastings expects to continue to upgrade the site, with additional links to online retailers who want to purchase DVDs. To date, the site is only linked with Sam Goody's online store.

In addition, NetFlix expects to offer a download option when the technology develops.

Consumers can access the site at netflix.com.
Advertising, Merchandising Tips Offered at VSDA Confab

The Video Software Dealers Assn. has announced the seminar lineup for its 10th annual national convention, scheduled for July 8-10 at the Venetian Hotel/Sands Exposition Center in Las Vegas.

Two seminar schedules will be announced, with the first focusing on Arthur Anderson’s “10 Steps To Success” program. A second set of seminars, focusing on management and support, will be announced at a later date.

Some highlights of the seminar series are as follows:

“Strategies For The New Century,” July 9, 12:45-1:45 p.m. Presented by consultant Jeff Hanesler, the seminar will show retailers how to identify and capitalize on new business opportunities.

“Thinking Like Your Customers,” July 9, 9 a.m.-noon. Professional consultant Pam Schuck puts retailers in the shoes of the customer in an effort to improve sales skills and increase repeat visits.

“Taping Into Generation Y,” July 10, 10:15-11:15 a.m. Schuck teaches retailers how to understand the lucrative youth market and its buying habits.

“Location, Location, Location,” July 9, 1:15-2:15 p.m. Led by former real estate executive June Davidson, this seminar will teach retailers when to consider relocation and when to negotiate a lease, as well as how to pick a location and sign a lease.

“Competing In The World Of Games,” July 7, 2:30-3 p.m. Ziff-Davis Media’s VP Dale Strong will teach retailers how to create a game category in their stores.

“The Millennium Chorus” features Broadway’s “Phantom Of The Opera” star Michael Crawford, Kathie Lee Gifford, Jennifer Holliday, Michael W. Smith, Shirley Caesar, and Bob Carlisle in what’s being termed a “Handel’s Messiah” for the 21st century.

“We want to sell 500,000 to 1 million units,” says Visual Entertainment president/CEO David Schwartz. A portion of the proceeds will benefit such nonprofit organizations as the Red Cross, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Salvation Army, and World Relief.

Consumers are also anxious for the July 18 release of the CBS made-for-television movie “Jesus,” due from Sparrow/Chordant Distribution.

“John,” the third installment of Visual Entertainment’s “Visual Bible” series, arrives in December as a four-tape set priced at $99.95.

A Spanish version of the “Visual Bible” title “Acts” will be released next year, and other segments from the series have aired on TV in Germany, Portugal, Hungary, Poland, and Japan.

Overall, Christian home video saw a 17% increase in sales from 1998 to 1999, according to CBA data.

However, children’s video sales still reigned supreme among Christian retailers last year.

DreamWorks Home Entertainment’s “The Prince Of Egypt” was a box office and video blockbuster for the supplier, and among Christian retailers it ranked as the 10th best selling display from ordinary trade organization.

Titles from the “Veggie Tales” series occupied the one-through-nine positions.

“Veggie Tales” took an overwhelming 56% share of revenues in 1999 of all Christian videos, according to CBA.

At the show, however, retailers got a look at two new competitors to “Veggie Tales.”

“The Return Of The King” will debut in the second quarter as part of the “Kingdom Under The Sea” series from Bridgestone Multimedia Group. The series features 3-D tropical fish characters who swim through stories from the Bible.

The company will also import C.S. Lewis’s masterpiece “The Chronicles Of Narnia,” which originally aired on the BBC. A three-title boxed set for $59.95 includes “The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe,” “Prince Caspian & The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader,” and “The Silver Chair.” Each program is also available in two tapes for $19.95.

3-D animation also highlights “Threads” from Everland Entertainment, which is described as a mix of “Calvin And Hobbes” humor and the cuddly values of “Winnie The Pooh.” The first title from the series is due in stores in July, with a second due in the fall.

Everland, which marketed “Veggie Tales” as well as other successful Christian videos, will invest $500,000 to introduce “Threads” to retail, beginning with advertising and publicity to Christian retailers. “Threads” costumed characters will star in their own national live show, a regional mall tour, and local theater premiers.

Other marketing elements include licensed products such as books, toys, and novelties. Interactive kiosks in the retail chain Kid City 2000 will feature flat-touch monitors that will also advertise “Threads.”
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Every magazine or newspaper you pick up seems to have an article on the buzz around Windows Media. "Windows Media" 4.0 has hit the ground running and we are gearing up to target the music industry and the massive consumer demand for digital music. Drive all aspects of marketing cutting-edge technology to the music industry, including labels, artist management, retail, and distribution houses. Execute marketing plans that communicate our messages to the unique music industry using innovative and engaging tactics. Work in a team-focused environment where responsibilities will be marketing communications programs, marketing analysis, product/market planning, and research. Qualifications: 5 - 7 years of experience in marketing. Experience driving cross-functional teams, knowledge of digital media, technical experience with windows as well as strong consumer research knowledge. Strong project management and organizational skills as well as demonstrated ability to solve problems. Verbal and written communication skills and presentation experience are mandatory. BA/BS in Communications, Marketing, or English preferred. Knowledge of the music industry would be an advantage.

Send resumes to: iguardi@microsoft.com and indicate Job Code Ad012c-0219 in the subject header, EOE

A&R Director

NYC Online Entertainment company seeks A&R Director to help lead A&R efforts. Experience should include proven A&R track record with quality artists, familiarity with studio and production work, and artist development work. Divine experience strongly preferred. Ideal candidate will have 8-10 yrs. related experience.

Please fax resume: Attn: Music Services 212-944-6941

Marketing Reps

Putumayo World Music seeks Field Marketing Reps in NY, LA, SF and Chicago. These entry-level positions require basic knowledge of World Music and familiarity with record stores, venues, gift stores and cafes. Must have outgoing personality, be detail-oriented and willing to travel.

Please fax resume to 212-460-0065 Attn: LB or email to linda@putumayo.com

Reach your music community Billboard Magazine

Help Wanted

International Clearance Administrator

RCA Records, a unit of BMG Entertainment, a leader in the recorded music & entertainment industry, seeks a highly motivated self-starter for our Business & Legal Affairs department. Successful candidate will facilitate license requests for our catalog of artists from our affiliates around the world; interact regularly with our affiliates and our marketing department as well as our artists' representatives. Requirements include college degree with 4 years of music industry experience, two of which will have been in an administrative business affairs capacity, ability to research and interpret contracts; excellent computer skills; strong written & verbal communication skills; and excellent organizational skills. We offer competitive compensation & comprehensive benefits.

Qualified candidates; please mail or fax your resume to:

RCA Records

FRANCE TO PUSH LOWER VAT RATE

(Continued from page 59)

In January, while announcing that French music sales had dropped 4.5% in units and 2.5% in value, SNEP Pascal Negre made it clear that CD burners had affected legitimate sales. Negre believes one way to get consumers back into buying CDs is to lower prices—which would be achieved by a drop in the VAT rate.

Rony notes that a lower VAT rate at a European level requires consensus from all EU member states and needs to be integrated into the EU’s vast harmonization scheme for European taxes. He points out that the measure would have a better chance of being adopted if it were backed by other territories and by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. “What we need to succeed is support from all sides of the industry in Europe,” says Rony.

German Rolling Stone AIDS Acts

(Continued from page 59)

ly about the publication’s entry into tour promotion. “Rolling Stone Germany have always been great supporters of Travi’s,” says John Rixon, who booked them for that tour before [the band's second album] ‘The Man Who’ came out last April. In fact, off the first album, ‘Good Feeling,’ they were voted best newcomer in the [Rolling Stone Germany] readers’ poll.

The tour, she continues, “was well-organized, and it makes sense to have WMM involved in this. Because if you have new albums, the retail campaigns can run alongside, and they give them prominent ranking and so on. ‘It was Travi’s’ first major tour in Germany, and it helped them a lot,” she says. “We’re having great airplay results, the album’s selling really well, and they’re doing four or five dates there in March. The Rolling Stone Roadshow paved the way for all that to happen.”

Sales of ‘The Man Who’ in Germany were at 25,000 immediately after release, according to Quigley, who says they now stand at around 25,000.

Achim Feueller, managing director of Boxman Germany, which also sponsored the first tour, is similarly enthusiastic. “We’ve had only positive reaction from everyone involved,” he says, observing that audiences at the inaugural Roadshow were broadly in the 25-35 demographic targeted by Boxman. “The audience was great, and the shows were very well-organized.”

Boxman’s presence on the upcoming tour will again include stage-side burners and a prominent slot at each gig, with some ticket numbers qualifying for prizes from the E-tailer.

‘Travis’ got to be quite big after doing this,” adds Felau, “and I have to say we really achieved substantial sales on the acts who were on the last tour. As long as the same thing happens this time, I see no reason to stop [being involved].” The magazine is already planning a third tour for November.

Culture 2000 Budget

(Continued from page 55)

January.

A letter signed by Michel and EMO president Eduardo Bautista, president of Spanish audiovisual rights society SNEP, says, “The music industry, in all its diversity, should be better taken into consideration by the commission’s policy.”

The EMO is particularly worried that, within the current budget, the future of the European Music Observatory—set up with the blessing of the commission to monitor the flow of repertoire within the EU— is at stake due to a lack of funding. As a result, Michel says, “with regret we have been forced to freeze the activities of the observatory until a solution is found by the commission.”

Adds Michel, “There is a clear need for a plan that will take into consideration the music industry sector. There should be mechanisms to support independent companies, especially in their Internet activities. There is a need for support to be given to European artists undertaking international tours. We need mechanisms that are adapted to the reality and the nature of the music industry.”

Michel says he is now looking forward to France’s presidency of the EU during the second half of the year as an opportunity to present some proposals, although this may risk postponing any decision regarding the observatory until at least the end of the year.

Playing venues of 1,000-1,500 capacity, the second Roadshow will move on from Hamburg to Berlin, Bremen, Nuernberg, Munich, Dusseldorf, and Dresden, culminating April 8 at the Colosseum in Munich. “Being on this tour helps the bands play in bigger clubs than they would be able to otherwise,” says Balzer.

Johnson is currently hot in Europe with the single “Glorious,” which after performing well in Scandinavia recently because a U.K. top hit on WEA and led to a wide European release for his “Liebling” album.

“Glorious” has been a top 5 sales and airplay hit in Germany, notes Rainer Focke, Warner Music Europe marketing director of group and affiliate repertoire. He says it is “pretty early days” for the artist there, but that the tour will help to break Johnson, whom he describes as “one of our most important new acts.”

John Rixon, EMO president, adds, “The timing is good, because we want the [summer] festival dates in Europe.” He confirms that such a bill “absolutely” means that Johnson can play bigger venues than would have been feasible at this stage.

“Rolling Stone are championing new bands here and taking the risk on things,” concludes Quigley “A lot of U.K. publications wouldn’t do that. I can only see it going from strength to strength.”
KIIS-FM L.A. On The Comeback Trail

Top 40 Station, No. 2 In Market, Makes It All Look Easy

This story was prepared by Airplay Monitor's Jeff Soffer.

LOS ANGELES—Their station, top 40 KIIS-FM Los Angeles, hit a 5 share 12-plus in the just-released Arbitron survey, good for second place overall in the ultra-competitive Los Angeles market.

Their morning star, Rick Dees, passed Howard Stern to become the top English-speaking wake-up show in town. The morning and afternoon dayparts each earn a million.

At 4,200 the prize would be a good day for PD Dan Kieley and music director Michael Steele, as they fielded endless congratulatory calls from their peers in radio and records.

Soffit it to say, Feb. 2 was a good day for PD Dan Kieley and music director Michael Steele, as they fielded endless congratulatory calls from their peers in radio and records.

Soffit it to say, Feb. 2 was a good day for PD Dan Kieley and music director Michael Steele, as they fielded endless congratulatory calls from their peers in radio and records. Coming off a 3.6 share a year ago, KIIS has been visibly on the comeback trail over the past few books. And Kieley says the numbers have been rebuilt one minute at a time.

“Always we thought we could get to a 5 share at some point, considering the way everything was going in the marketplace,” he says. “The deal was, once we accelerated the curve with our birthday games (where the station awarded $3 million in two cash prizes, sooner or later we’d get a pop in [time spent listening]). The music was great—it’s so secret that it goes in cycles—and we simply preached to our jocks to give us one more minute [of time spent listening] an hour. That’s 24 minutes a day; multiply that by seven days a week, and eventually, we got that pop. It’s not as if we reinvented the formula,” Kieley continues. “It’s all about entertaining and playing the right hits, and what worked well in the ‘50s and ‘60s still works. It’s so basic. If people ever knew how simple this can be.”

So if KIIS’ success is built on the basic programming tenets that everyone knows, why isn’t everyone enjoying similar success? “Look at how many guys try to overthink it,” Kieley says. “Such as consultants. You know what Clear Channel’s policy is on consultants? Oh, that’s right, we don’t have them.”

‘WE’RE THE ONES WHO SCREW IT UP’

They are worried that the current up cycle in top 40 music will eventually peter out. “You know who says that the cycle stops? We do, because we’re the ones who screw it up,” Kieley says. “There are always good currents out there. We just don’t find them all.”

“It’s radio’s fault when we gravitate to trends, such as playing too many boy bands or whatever,” Steele says. “Then the labels start signing nothing but boy bands, the variety of hits dries up, and programmers start wondering what went wrong. Well, we did it to ourselves.”

Yet Steele isn’t music-burn-phobic. “I’m not more suspicious of boy bands, but at the same time, I’m not less suspicious of the hot trend as [with] any other record. If we believe it’s a hit, we put it on. The key is to not get too caught up with the image of the band. Just because something worked the last five times doesn’t mean the sixth record will automatically work.”


(Continued on next page)
**KIS-FM L.A. ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL**

(Continued from preceding page)

Love"; K-Ci & JoJo, "Tell Me It's Real"; Eiffel 65, "Blue (Da Ba Dee)"; Backstreet Boys, "Show Me The Meaning Of Being Lonely"; and the Cardigans, "Lovefool."

**THE NEXT BIG THING**

Steele refrains from making a blanket prediction on what he expects to be the next big thing in top 40, other than noting, "I'll probably be more of the dancey songs, like Eiffel 65. 'Da Ba Dee' won't say that [music style] will be a big trend, but I do think that records with tempo will hold longer. Top 40 is about tempo, fun, and excitement. This format is in the doldrums in the early '90s because it played too many AC-sounding records. We'll do fine as long as we keep the tempo up."

Yet a lot more has been going on than the mere oversight of a hugely profitable top 40 station. Kiley's p.m. jock, Valentine, has become a virtual morning host for nine stations, most in the Midwest. "It's no secret that any time you start a new job, it takes a while to get used to it," Steele says. "It was a lot of work for Valentine for the first 30 days, but once we got the right systems in place and assistants to help him—he needs three people to do the whole thing, in such the interview he did with the 'Green Mile' actor Michael Clarke Duncan—it started to go smoothly."

The next big shift to play beyond L.A. is Rick Dees' morning show. Beginning on KFMS Las Vegas, Dees will syndicate his show primarily to stations in the Western time zone. With Prophet technology at hand, though, it's certainly not out of the realm of possibility to have Dees' best bits virtually assembled into next-day morning shows in the Midwest and East.

**ON THE INTERNET**

Kiley and Steele double their pleasure on the Web. Not only do they oversee KISS' Web site (where the station has been streamed for almost three years), but they also have a hand in the music programming of kisfm, the Internet-only station with an emphasis on hip-hop and alternative product. "Although we pick the music on the site, we don't use kisfm to test music for KIS," Steele says. "We structured the site so they're completely different. Neither site even mentions the other. The reason for that is KIS is more targeted to 25-34 females, while kisfm attracts a 30/30 ratio of males to females."

"When it comes to actual bodies using [kisfm", our core is males 15-22," Steele adds. "We boil it down to a Brand new monogram with [the idea of] that's certainly the case."

"The next big shift to play beyond L.A. is Rick Dees' morning show. Beginning on KFMS Las Vegas, Dees will syndicate his show primarily to stations in the Western time zone. With Prophet technology at hand, though, it's certainly not out of the realm of possibility to have Dees' best bits virtually assembled into next-day morning shows in the Midwest and East."

**INTERNET ADVERTISING GROWING ON RADIO**

NEW YORK—Radio is seeing the signs of the future with an upward trend in the amount of "dot-com" advertising over the airwaves, according to Interop. During the first half of 1999, total revenue from Internet advertisers reached 5.7% of national radio dollars, estimated at $1.3 billion. Interop's study also found that the number of Web advertisers on radio has grown to include more than 390 brands, up from 47 brands during the same period last year.

These advertising genres span a variety of industries. Retail dominates with more than a quarter of all advertising, at 25% of all dot-com advertisers. Other major industries include travel (18%), computers and software (16%), media (12%), and local services/entertainment (10%).
Everyone has spent sleepless nights tossing and turning. But when 311 lead singer Nick Hexum experienced insomnia in 1998, he decided to explore his creativity.

"I'd get up at 11:00, but I'd wake up at 3, and that would be for the night," he says. "I built a recording studio in Burbank, Calif., and I'd go in the middle of the night and start working. I'd be there until the band showed up at noon.

"It was a time when I was working out these emotions and stuff." He continues. "I was going through a breakup and was depressed. I was also losing touch with what I love to do, and which is touring.

These emotions came together in "Flowing," No. 36 on this issue's Modern Rock Tracks.

"It's a not a total contribution song," says Buxum. "It's about the feeling one gets when they're lying there awake, and the sort of loneliness that goes along with it. This was a cathartic experience. Not every day a zip-a-dee-doo-dah.

But "Flowing," from 311's sixth Capricorn album, "Soundsystem," does "explores positive themes by showing there's always a light at the end of the tunnel," Hexum adds. "If there wasn't, I'd give up or freak out. We give people something that believes in it.

The song's lyric is accompanied by a new 311 sound. It's definitely a different vibe. There's no way, no funk, no reggae—it's a straight rock song.

"Flowing" is a nod to my Clash roots. It's more British-influenced, kind of punk rock. The intro with the weird guitar tones is kind of a new experiment. The chords kind of go off of the scale and then change keys in the middle. It wouldn't work if it was a totally straight harmony. This, to me, is the biggest step forward on the album," says Hexum.
Jessica Simpson Hopes To Restore Faith
In Love With Lachey Duet 'Where You Are'

**FOREVER LOVE:** In case you've been living outside the teen romance loop, Jessica Simpson is in love. The 19-year-old recently celebrated her one-year anniversary with fellow musical heartthrob Nick Lachey, 28, the lead singer of boy band 98°. "Nick and I are going to be the next Sonny & Cher," says Simpson, with an unbridled laugh. "Only, I expect we're going to last a lot longer. It's serious; he's met my family, and I spent Christmas with his. We don't take a second of it for granted."

Indeed, romancing is the name of the game for the songbird, whose first single, the deliciously over-the-top ballad "I Wanna Love YouForever," swept through the hearts of the nation, reaching No. 8 on The Billboard Hot 100 and selling platinum to land atop the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart. Her Columbia album, "Sweet Kisses," went gold in just two months. "I'm such a romantic and want people to believe in everlasting love," says Simpson of her first hit. "My grandparents have been married for 47 years, and you don't see that at all. My goal is to restore people's faith in love."

For followers, "Where You Are," a splendidly simple duet with Lachey, is poised for radio release this week, with airplay guaranteed thanks to a flurry of exposure. The song is featured as the end title to the upcoming Fox 2000 film "Here On Earth," while Simpson and Lachey performed "Where You Are" during an MTV's "Spring In Session" special and were featured in an MTV "Making Of The Video" segment that debuted—when else—on Valentine's Day.

They will also perform together on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno," "Jessica's musical concert/talk show," and "Good Morning America" in March and April and appear on an upcoming cover of Seventeen.

Simpson's career path has been charmed. In addition to her successes on the charts and with romance, she has fostered a Web fan base that borders on fanatical, is touring the world, and has already signed a development deal with the WB television network for her own TV series. Movie scripts, meanwhile, are flowing in.

"It's all been happening so fast, it's hard to process it," she admits. "Every day, every hour, it seems I'm always doing something. But whenever I have a moment off, it really begins to set in. It's breathtaking, and it's amazing."

That's a fair assessment, given the competitive landscape in which Simpson has planted roots, along with fellow chart masters Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. But, says radio, not to worry.

"I'm sure tiring, and the way she carries herself isn't like your average teenage-pop. She comes across as very mature," says Tony Banks, assistant PD of WHYY (W100) Miami. "Britney's still a girl, and Jessica's a woman, with Christina feeling somewhere in the middle. And the girl can sing; she opened here for Ricky Martin and put on a performance that falls somewhere, I believe," he says. "And I think that Jessica is the same pop appeal that Britney and Christina have, but her style is much different," says Jay Torres, assistant PD of WRQK Detroit. "They haven't heard this much emotion in a singer's voice since Mariah Carey. She's very soulful and natural. I tell you, if I had a No. 1 Wow Love YouForever, it would have been this."

Part of Simpson's natural quality comes from the fact that Columbia has allowed the artist to be completely at ease as herself: no false hype, no spin on her past, no denials about those elements of her private life she chooses to share.

That includes her pre-pop life as a major contemporary Christian singer, something that Simpson says the label has never asked her to compromise. "Columbia has been amazing about everything. They've always told me to be open about all my beliefs," she says. "I know not to be embarrassed about it, but I do have a strong faith in God, and in that I like to live my life as an example to others. My faith is the core of who I am, and I try to live it every day." Those beliefs are also shared in her Web site diary, in which she discusses her faith as openly as the adventures of her career. And many of her young fans directly react to it.

"To have an effect on somebody's life and be a positive role model is the most gratifying thing in the world. I've actually had people tell me that their life is so much happier and that I've helped them to do things better," Simpson says.

The girl has also not flinched over her relationship with Lachey—seldom given in an industry that guards privacy with great tenacity. One source attributed to the persistent rumors of another teen queen's romantic ties to a boy-band member, saying that her label has done everything in its power to squelch the connection to preclude teenage fans deserting her out of jealousy.

"Young female fans of teen acts have a tendency to blame the 'other woman' for disturbing the fantasy they have for the boy-band member," says Kim Small, managing editor of Teen Beat magazine. Adds Kristen Foley, associate editor of 16 magazine, "Back in the late '80s, New Kids On The Block performed at a charity event with Tiffany, and she was actually booed by the audience because it was known that she was dating one of the members, Jon Knight."

"I'm glad she doesn't have to hide her relationship for fear that it won't sell records or that female fans will ban her," says Towers. "It's a fairy-tale romance. I think it's sincere, and people like to buy into that."

"Everyone knows that Jessica and Nick are dating; they're all over MTV together. I think it only helps push her new song over the top," says Dave Rosen, PD of a mainstream top 40 WKSE Buffalo, N.Y., which added "Where You Are" out of the box. "It's been huge for us, just as big as BackstreetBoys, though even if this song weren't sitting by itself, we would have strongly considered it anyway."

The powerhouse ballad approaches love in a different way this time around, though, with Simpson singing of her lingering love for a dearly departed.

Lachey sings in the role of an angel, assuring her that he is indeed watching over her. "Baby, there are times when selfishly," he sings, "I wish that you were here with me/So I could wipe the tears from your eyes and make you see/Every night while you are dreaming/I'm here to guard you from a fall."

"This is the most intimate song on my album, because it deals with a situation very close to my heart, after the death of my cousin," says Simpson. "The first time I heard it, it was a solo, and I had the idea of doing it as a duet and told Nick. He said he wanted to do it, and the bridge, and it came out perfect."

"Anybody's who's been through that situation can find some sort of hope in the song," says Simpson, "knowing that one day, they will be together again."

See, even Simpson's down times have been marked with joy. In 1999, when she suffered a serious kidney infection toward the end of 1999 that forced her to cancel all public performances in December, she had what she calls her "finest moment."

"My mom hands me the phone while I'm in the hospital and says, 'It's Celine Dion.' I was like, 'What?'" she recalled. "I called to wish me good health and told me that she loved my voice and music. To hear that from your idol was, 'Whoa.' I adore everything about her life and how she conducts herself," says Simpson.

With her star shining bright and her past paved in gold, the future indeed looks like a love affair for Simpson. "I really feel like I've been given something," she says. "I'd love to perform at the Grammys one day. I wouldn't mind winning one either." Again, she laughs. "It's not like I'm shooting high or anything."
Music Video

Programing

Bet, Image To Jointly Produce Concerts For Video Release

Bet Goes To Home Video: It's finally happened. Bet and sister channel Bet On Jazz have teamed with Image Entertainment in an exclusive multi-year agreement to co-produce a series of concerts and then release them on videotape and DVD.

Considering that MTV has been in the home video business for years with its "MTV Unplugged" franchise, we think it's about time that Bet took this important step in extending its brand name to the videotape/DVD market.

The first series of concerts will feature Chaka Khan, Lou Rawls, Jeffrey Osborne, Bobby Womack, and Mark Whitfield in performances taped at Bet's Washington, D.C., studios.

The concerts are being televised on Bet every Saturday this summer, and will air in June on Bet on Jazz. To coincide with Black Music Month, the video/DVD releases are also planned for June.

Under the terms of the agreement, Image will have worldwide home video rights to the series, and the tapes and DVDs will have exclusive footage not shown on TV.

With the recent launch of Bet's mega-site, BET.com (Feb. 19, 2001), Bet seems poised to increase its profile in the entertainment industry. Next up for the company is the first music convention in conjunction with Billboard; the Billboard & Bet On Jazz Conference & Awards will be held June 7-9 at the National Harbor in Maryland. Bet on Jazz will televise the award show, and the billboard.com and Bet.com will show the award show, and the billboard.com and Bet.com will show the awards. (BET has named veteran Billboard programmer Lloyd Salmons as its new executive producer.)

Music Video

For Week Ending February 13, 2000

The Most-Played Clips As Monitored By Broadcast Data Systems

"New Nows" Are Reported By The Networks (Not By Us) For The Week Ahead

Los Angeles

311 teamed up with director Marcos Siega for the "Flowing" video. Morgan Lawley directed Sherrié Austin's "Little Bird" clip. Limp Bizkit's "Break Stuff" video was directed by the band's Fred Durst.

Dixie Chicks upped with director Nancy Bardwell for the band's upcoming album.

Vertical Horizon's "Everything You Want" was directed by Clark Eddy.

Jazzlyn Panjoky directed Keith Urban's "Your Everything." New York

Jay-Z's "Do It Again (Put Ya Hands Up)") was directed by Dave Meyers.

Rage Against The Machine's "Sleep Now In The Fire" was directed by Michael Moore.

Nzinga Stewart and Noreaga directed Capone-N-Noreaga's "Not Money (Part 3)."

Raekwon filmed "Live From New York" with director Darren Grant. Josh Adams and Troy Perkins directed Handsome Boy Modeling School's "Rock'n'Roll (Could Never Hip-Hop Like This)."

Other Cities

Marty Raybones' "Cranker Jack Diamond" was directed by Marc Said in Houston.

Boss Hogg Featurings Lil' Zane filmed "Worldwide Renegades" in Atlanta with director Steve Carr.

Music Video

Music Video

New Music Notes

by Carla Hay

Time slot: 12:30 a.m.-1 a.m. late Saturday/early Sunday

Key staffer: Paul "Allen" Billings, executive producer

Following are the show's top five videos for the episode that aired Jan. 29:

1. "Ideal, "Creep Inn" (Noon-Time/Video)

2. "Puff Daddy, "My Best Friend" (Boy/Arista)

3. "Shin Feiing LaTocha Scott, "One Night Stand" (S/N-Slice/Atlantic).

4. "Down Fitzarene Left Eye, "I Know What's Up" (LaFace/Arista).

5. Dave Hollister, "Can't Stay" (DreamWorks).

The Clip List

By Carla Hay

Los Angeles

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Silky Smooth Sailin’. Elektra recording act Silk recently received a plaque for the Recording Industry Assn. of America-certified platinum status of its album “Tonight,” along with the gold certification of the album’s first single, “If You.” Shown standing at the presentation, from left, are Steve Kleinberg, senior VP of marketing for Elektra Records; Michelle Murray, senior director of marketing for Elektra Records; Bill Pfroderer, VP of promotion for Elektra Records; John John of Silk, Jimmy of Silk, Big G of Silk, Merlind Bobb, senior VP of A&R for Elektra Records; Greg Thompson, executive VP/GM for Elektra Records; Richard Nash, senior VP of the black music division for Elektra Records; and Steve Heidt, senior VP of sales for Elektra Records. Sitting, from left, are Timzo and Lil’ G of Silk.

Barron At Birdland. Pianist Kenny Barron recently met with Verve Music Group staff at New York’s Birdland to discuss and perform songs from his new album, “Spirit Song.” Barron will be touring select U.S. cities in the coming months. Shown at Birdland, from left, front row, are Ron Goldstein, president of the Verve Music Group; Crissy Zagarn, manager of jazz promotion for the Verve Music Group; Barron; Michael Kaufman, VP of sales for the Verve Music Group; and John Newcott, marketing director for the Verve Music Group. From left, back row, are Jon Vanhala, national sales director for the Verve Music Group; Suzanne Berg, senior VP of promotion for the Verve Music Group; Nate Herr, VP of marketing for the Verve Music Group; and Mike Chanlasach, VP of strategic marketing for the Verve Music Group.

The Secret Is Out. Atlantic recording artist and Broadway star Linda Eder recently made her debut Carnegie Hall solo concert appearance. Eder performed selections from her album “It’s No Secret Anymore” and “It’s Time,” along with a number of pop and Broadway favorites—and songs by her husband, musical theater composer Frank Wildhorn. On March 14 Eder will begin a two-week engagement at Feinstein’s at the Regency Hotel in New York. Shown at the after-show party, from left, are Wildhorn; Craig Kallman, executive VP of the chairman for Atlantic Records; Vicky Germaine, senior VP of marketing for Atlantic Records; Ron Shapiro, executive VP/GM for Atlantic Records; Eder; Andrea Gans, executive VP of Atlantic Records; Peter Galvin, VP of product development and gay markets for Atlantic Records; and Ahmet Ertegun, co-chairman/co-CEO of the Atlantic Group.

Speechless is Golden. Sparrow label recording artist Steven Curtis Chapman recently celebrated the RIAA gold certification of his most recent album, “Speechless.” Chapman’s “The Music Of Christmas” was also certified gold. Shown at the presentation, from left, are Dan Ramee, president/CEO of Creative Trust; Bill Heilm, president/CEO of EMI Christian Music Group; David Huffman, VP of artist development for Creative Trust; Chapman; and Peter York, president of Sparrow Records.


At The Drive In With Rage. At the drive-in recently finished opening the East Coast leg of the Rage Against The Machine tour. The El Paso, Texas, band is currently recording its new album, which is being produced by Ross Robinson. Robinson has also produced albums for Korn, Limp Bizkit, Slipknot, and Sepultura. Shown backstage following their performance at New York’s Nassau Coliseum, standing, from left, are Paul Hinojos, at the drive-in; Cedric Bixler, at the drive-in; Zack de la Rocha, Rage Against The Machine; Tim Commerford, Rage Against The Machine; and Tony Hailar, at the drive-in. Seated, from left, are Brad Wilk, Rage Against The Machine; Omar Rodriguez, at the drive-in; James Ward, at the drive-in; and Tom Morello, Rage Against The Machine.

Tedeschi Takes To The Road. Tone Cool recording artist Susan Tedeschi recently toured with John Mellencamp in promotion of her album “Just Won’t Burn.” Tedeschi has had two top 15 triple-A hits: “It Hurt So Bad” and “Rock Me Right.” Tedeschi has also been nominated for a new best artist Grammy Award. Shown, from left, are Mellencamp and Tedeschi.

www.billboard.com
www.americanradiohistory.com
Emmylou Harris, the Eagles, James Taylor — and I certainly knew. We always wanted to be those people,” she says. “The reason I’ve always loved (Ronstadt) so much, and still do, is because she was so unapologetically themselves. She was either really, really happy or really, really sad. There was no in between. I think those songs represent [that] we are all that way, that we all have castoffs, that we all have days when we are really happy and days when we are really sad, and that’s what the album reflects.”

“From her first album, she was making great music.”
— BRUCE HINTON

Yearwood Builds Strong Body Of Work

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—What becomes a diva most? A truly great catalog.

It’s an asset of which Trisha Yearwood can be proud. Over the course of eight previous albums, the Georgia native has matured as an artist—exploring the full range of her vocal gift and plumbing the depths of her songwriting abilities. That journey has been moving and memorable. Through it all, she has delivered music that refused to conform to preconceived notions.

She debuted as a tense-tressed country ingénue who roped a No. 1 single right out of the gate with “She’s In Love With The Boy,” from her self-titled 1991 debut disc. Then she unexpectedly segued into a sultry siren on her 1992 sophomore album, “It Must Be Love.” That album spawned “Walkaway Joe,” featuring Don Henley, and the bluesy hit “Wrong Side Of Memphis.”

Meanwhile, and when other female country acts are unambiguously charging pop/crossover success, she’s opted to steer back to a more organic country approach on her new disc, “Yearlive.”

What has emerged is a portrait of a strong woman confident in the music that makes her happy. “Trisha’s early albums were not a work in progress,” says MCA Nashville chairman Bruce Hinton. “She was making great music. It’s not like we’ve had to see her evolve to her present status. She was an incredibly singing artist from day one.”

Yearwood says the time spent singing demos for Nashville writers and publishers helped build her confidence in the studio. “I had done so many demos, I had the advantage of knowing how to work in the studio,” says Yearwood. “And because I had worked my way up singing demos, I got great songs pitched to me to record that I knew and believed in me, so I got pitched great songs.”

Hinton recalls first seeing Yearwood when he and MCA Nashville president Tom Hoge pitched her to him. “It was a songwriter’s showcase at Nashville’s Douglas Corner Cafe, where Yearwood was singing backup for Steve Wariner. She took a turn at the mike and sang a couple of songs. Hinton says he was immediately hooked. “Douglas Corner seems like yesterday to me — or so it seems — and expression of that moment, that night is what I mean. It doesn’t seem that long ago.”

For Yearwood, it’s been nearly a decade, during which each of her releases has been certified gold, platinum, or multi-platinum by the Recording Industry Assn. of America. Yearwood has also contributed to such film soundtracks as “Honeymoon In Vegas,” “For The Love Of The Game,” “Hope Floats,” “Con-Air,”— which featured the hit “How Do I Live”— and most recently, “Stuart Little,” with “You Where I Belong.”

Along the way, she has also picked up numerous industry accolades, including the Country Music Ass’n’s female vocalist honor in 1997 and 1998. In 1996 she won the Country Music Foundation’s Freshman Performance Grammy for “How Do I Live” as well as the Academy of Country Music’s top female vocalist award.

“She’s developed into a true country diva,” says Bob Richards, PD at WFSM Indianapolis. “Her voice is tremen- dous. She can hit those notes and then go all the way up to the top of her range. She’s got a great voice, the more they use their voice, which is an instrument, the better they learn their instrument, the more they use it. They are that way. She is the musician and her instrument is her voice, and she’s really learned to play it well.”

AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

Though she had longed for succes- sive ever since she sang along with Linda Ronstadt recordings growing up in a music-loving family, Yearwood was unprepared at how quickly she attained it. “I look back and feel proud,” she says. “At the time, no one expected the first single by a debut (Continued on next page)

A COUNTRY SKEW


“I’m a country music artist, and I love the sound of instruments,” says Yearwood. “I wouldn’t like for things to get all mushed together I want each instrument to stand out.” I think the primary instrument on this album that everything was centered around—I think the only guy at every session was Dan Dougmore (keyboards).”

Yearwood opted to work with Brown on new cuts for her 1997 greatest-hits package and her last album, “Nashville Nightlife.” “We and the result was a slicker pop sound, evidenced by such songs as the mega-hit “How Do I Live.” For the new album, Yearwood returned to Fundis, who had produced her previous six studio albums.

“We’ve made so many albums together, the challenge was not to do the same ourselves,” she says. “I trust him so much, and he’s such a great friend of mine. I said, ‘This is what I have in my head. I’ve thought about every possibility of who to do this with, and I keep coming back to you. My only challenge is for you and me to not fall back into something that’s comfortable. We both have to think about doing something different and creating something together that’s not like anything else we’ve done,’ and he relented.”

Fundis began working with Year- wood years ago, shortly after seeing her perform at Douglas Corner, a popular Nashville nightspot. “We just don’t have a conversation out loud,” says Funds. “We kind of look at each other and know what each other is thinking. It’s kind of an inter- esting thing that happens between us. Our tastes run similar. We gravitate to the sound and style.”

“We’re both involved in all the process- es of making the record, and this one was no different.”

MCA Nashville chairman Bruce Hinton recalls working with the fruit of their labor on the new project. “I think artistically it’s as fully realized as anything Trisha has ever done, and that’s saying something,” says Hinton. “It’s a very rounded album in the sense that it feels complete, and, to me, the kicker is the first single, which is such an incredibly strong piece of music. What those lyrics have to say to the everyday woman is amazing.”

The title cut and first single, “Real Live Woman,” is currently at No. 27 on Billboard’s Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart. “I dig it. I really dig it,” says WINS Nashville PD Don Kelly. “We think it’s a great first single. We want to go into the new millennium to come up with some great, killer music.”

“I love it,” enthuses KRBK Albany, Ore. PD Dr. Mike Williams. “It’s just rock-solid Trisha Yearwood.”

KZLA Los Angeles music director Mandy McCormack agrees. “The single sounds great on the radio, and Trisha is, in my opinion, probably the best female vocalist in the format right now.”

On a separate front, controversy has erupted in the Nashville music community around Yearwood’s new single. “The song is called ‘The Chicken.’” Yearwood, has filed a lawsuit against Carl Jackson over the publishing rights. Apparently, Jackson had men- tored Kryer early in her career and played a part in her signing to Famous Music in 1991. Last fall Cryer- ner opted to exercise the clause in her contract that would return her songs to her ownership.

Famous had transferred 50% of her rights to Jackson, and he wants to retain his ownership. A hearing in the case is slated for March 6.

A RETAIL STAPLE

For their part, retailers are eager to get their hands on Yearwood’s new project.

“She’s a staple for us,” says Tower Nashville GM Jeff Kerlikowske, who adds that Yearwood appeals to the most discriminating music con- sumers, not just those looking for the flavor of the month. “The cuteness factor in the music merchants, those aren’t really Trisha’s fans. Trisha’s fans are much more into mu- sic . . . It’s the same people that buy Dwight Yoakam and Emmylou Har- riss. Those people will also come and buy her record right away. They will make a special trip to the store to come buy her record.”

The marketing campaign behind Yearwood’s new release is designed to touch non-country listeners. Radio will be an important component, and Yearwood will be highly visible, with appearances on “Late Show With David Letterman,” ABC’s “The Late O’Donnell Show, “Good Morning America,” “A&E Live By Request,” “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” and a PBS national me- dia event.

Yearwood also is filming an episode of the CBS TV series “JAG,” on which she has a recurring role, and an “Intimate Partners” episode for the same time network. Both programs will air in May. She will host a radio special focusing on the new album and also host the May/June in-flight country radio show for American Airlines.

dave weigand, MCA Nashville VP of marketing and promotion, says Year- wood will be performing March 1 at the Natass of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) Convention in Las Vegas. “The buzz has been excited about that,” he says. “That’s going to be a chance for her to showcase the entire album in front of the industry. There’s no bigger kick for us. NARM is a real hard slot to get, and NARM is real excited about it.”

Weigand says the Internet will also al- so play a big part in the marketing of the new record. “We’re going to have a two-tiered Internet campaign,” he says. “The MCA Nashville Internet team is going to be working with an Internet artistas heavy-weight called Electric Artists, based in New York, to market this project online. The plan is designed to drive awareness and sales.”

Weigand says the two-pronged campaign will first target Year- wood’s core audience, then look at expanding beyond her core.

Yearwood is booked by Creative Artists Agency and managed by Nancy Russell of Nashville-based Force Media. According to Russell, Yearwood will take a three-week spring tour in April or 50 markets. “She wanted to play theaters,” says Russell. “She had offers to play bigger venues, but she flat-out rejected the theater tour. She liked the intimacy of it.”

Russell says all the tour dates will go on sale the day of the album’s release through Ticketmaster and that all the tickets will be sold with a Web address for updates. “We’ll print the tour dates in the magazine probably next week,” he says.

The U.S. theater tour will feature Jessica Andrews in some opening slots and Kim Richey in others. The tour will end in June and will be followed by fair and festival dates. Year- wood is slated to tour Europe later in the summer.
artist to go No. 1. We thought the second single, 'Like We Never Had A Breaker Heart,' with Garth (Brooks) singing harmony, would be the career record.' In recording her 1992 sophomore album, "Hearts In Armor," she didn't attempt to repeat herself but tried a different direction. "In some ways it was a left turn," Yearwood adds. "It wasn't a question of whether we should do a radio station, or whether we would try to get radio to accept, but it was probably one of the most critically acclaimed albums I've done, and it's been my favorite album, up until this new one. "I don't feel that we've sold ourselves, she continues. "Hearts In Armor was a beautiful song. It never occurred to me to not record it."

In 1996 Yearwood released "The Song Remembers When" (Music to My Ears, Billboard, Oct. 9, 1993). "When people ask me what my favorite song is, or what song I would recommend that they buy, I say that, because that song is a testament to the power of music," she says. "We all have that experience of listening to music and you hear a song come on the radio and you are immediately taken back to a memory in your life."

Critics found the album to be a more mature record full of deep, thought-provoking songs. Yearwood says wasn't calculated. "That was just kind of where the album took itself, she says, and I think after 'Hearts In Armor,' it was so quick to predict what we was going to come next for me. It was a mix of commercial and art stuff."

Yearwood's next project was the as the next single, and it went to No. 1. I love the songs on this album, 'On A Bluesy Mood,' 'I'm Not Going to Be a Single, new cut 'How Do I Live' and 'Perfect Love,' which marked the first time she worked with Brown. It also featured "In Another's Eyes," a duet with Garth Brooks, produced by Allen Reynolds. She opted to record her next album with Brown, 1998's "Where Your Road Leads," which was influenced by the success of "How Do I Live," but you can't duplicate that. One can say, 'This is a big hit, so let's do it again.' You can't force a song, it has to come naturally. Some great songs. I think 'Powerful Thing' was a great song, and Jamie O'Hara's 'That Ain't The Way I Heard It.'"

Instead of slipping further into pop diva territory, Yearwood once again offers up an unexpected twist. We're back on her upcoming "Real Live Woman." "I took 1999 off and went through some personal changes," she says. It was a re-grounding time for me. It sounds corny, but it put me in perspective. Everybody says, 'The direction of country music is pop, and everything is going that way. There's nothing right. Well, this is Trisha's direction. I'm not sure what the marketing plan is going to say, but I know my music is from the heart, and I know that Trisha is right. I've never made an album that I was more sure of. I'm happy."

VIACOM ON TRACK WITH IPO. CBS DEAL

(Continued from page 1)

‘She’s developed into a diva—a true country diva’

— BOB RICHARDS

1994 Christmas album "The Sweetest Gift. "I was reluctant to do a Christmas album because I thought, 'Do we really need Trisha Yearwood's version of 'Jingle Bells?'" she says. "Christmas albums can sometimes have a lot of old songs, and I didn't want to do that. I wanted to do an album that was a mix of known classic Christmas songs and some spiritual as well."

"Sweet Little Jesus Boy" was a song I'd heard in church, and I'd always loved that song, she says. "Another was a favorite pageant song on there is 'Take A Walk Through Bethlehem,' written by Beth Nielsen Chapman."

She went in to record her next album, 1995's "Thinkin' About You," Yearwood says once again the songs took their own path. "We weren't sure what the next step was. Then I got the 11th hour call to sing for a song for the 'XXX And OOO's thing,' she says of cutting the single "XXX And OOO's" (An American Family) which aired on the fledgling TLC network. "We had a great time doing the album, and I had started working on it but we weren't anywhere near finished. The album didn't come out until six months after the single, but it did well. We chose 'Thinkin' About You' as our content offering could be adversely affected, which would adversely affect our market share and, consequently, our business, financial condition, and operating results."

However, analysts say the unit should gather steam going forward, because "MTV has launched new networks for MTV.com, VH1.com, and SonicNet."

In the SEC filing, MTV discloses a licensing dispute with the major record companies. It says it received letters from two majors charging that MTV's use of their music in its Internet radio broadcasts (SonicNet.com) does not fall under the compulsory license granted for regular TV broadcasts under U.S. copyright law. Sources at Sony Music and EMI Recorded Music confirm that they have received letters.

Also, MTV states that another company (which is said to be EMJ) has charged that MTV is streaming the major's full-length music videos without a license and demands that it cease the activity and pay for past use. Sony and EMI decline comment on the matter but some sources at those companies say that the letters do not indicate a serious rift with MTV and that they expect the matter to be resolved quickly.

However, last year the Department of Justice began an investigation of MTV's exclusivity deals with labels for the distribution of its music channel, and the record labels have threatened that they may refuse to license their music for the cable TV (Billboard, Dec. 25, 1999). In a conference call to analysts on the quarterly earnings, Viacom Chairman said, "Our relationship with the record companies is extremely strong. Now and then it's an issue, but it's always resolved."

MTV declines comment because it is in its SEC-mandated quiet period before the IPO.

In its SEC filing, MTV waives potential that "if record labels, music publishers, or artists charge significant fees for their content or otherwise alter or discontinues their relationships with us, then
We are complacent, have been ever since the Beatles - JEREMY PEARCE

worldwide success. The architects of Sharonia Tawin's global game plan, for instance, focused specifically on this market first—and "Come On Over" is certified for 2.7 million sales, the largest single-title debut for her Mercury album outside the U.S. In similar vein, Sony Music's splendidly exploits British music stars' left-field appetites for "Now and Then," with the Macaw-tranformed album "How Life Is." It has been certified for triple-platinum sales of 900,000 copies and is penetrating other European markets.

Mark Colen, managing director of EMI Chrysalis, agrees that the success of those artists underscores British music's enduring appeal in an eclectic landscape. "It's still a critical market, because we have a tremendous thirst for all kinds of music," he says. "But we've never been so successful or un-successful we may be at [producing international acts], people still always look to the U.K."

Britain has won two Brit Awards nominations, and she and her six-piece band are expected to be one of the live highlights of the show on March 18, when the Brits are held at TV Centre's ITV[String] Hall on Friday night. Home-grown talent scheduled to perform includes Travis, Stereophonics, Basement Jaxx, Five, Queen, Tom Jones, Pulp, and (separately) Spice Girls.

The MasterCard-sponsored ceremony are, as usual, tied in with a retail promotion involving members of the British Asen, Record Dealers (BARD), who will hope for a sales lift for performing and winning talents. In best-case option, the Brit trophies are awarded on the basis of votes of a 1,000-member industry academy (Billboard, Feb. 12).

The show will reflect a year in which, according to the BPI, the value of music deliveries rose only 1.1% from 1.68 billion units (sold for $1.84 billion) to 1.73 billion units ($1.91 billion). In a statement, the trade association claims that the annual increase "reflects favorably with other leading international markets."

Year-on-year figures show album unit shipments down 5.9% from 1998, a decline valued at a staggering $1.9 billion. In 1999, the U.K. during the period rose 2% to 468 million units ($751 million), with singles value rising 17.3% to 395 million units ($622 million). The figures emphasize the increasing importance of the fourth quarter to the local music industry; it accounted for 42.3% of the year’s sales value and the highest share of annual sales revenue since 1985. Despite that, Brian McLaughlin, managing director of BPI and BARD, says that the number of singles was "not a great quarter." He adds, however, "It has been looked at in the context of the figures for 1998, which was an exceptionally good year."

The lack of real blockbuster titles affected the modest annual increase, McLaughlin says. "We didn’t have a record breaking on the scale of 1999. In 1998, a quarter of our sales were generated in the first two months. This year— or the added value from that, as it was a double CD." Nonetheless, he says that "it’s quite unusual to see a really high street. We’ve had a great tour, so in terms of what was being spent, the record industry didn’t do too badly."

VIRGIN BATTLE

However, the business has been disappointed by the new year’s battle with Richard Branson’s VEG. The triumphant partnership, spanning the November-December payments—said to exceed $50 million—for the major record companies while it attempted to reach a settlement.

Reports that the merchant was in financial difficulties were vociferously denied by Virgin, which focused its comments on reports of erosion and what it claimed were preferential terms offered to online and direct sellers (Billboard, Feb. 12).

In recent years, Branson and his retail management have met individually with major-label chiefs to try to reach a settlement. Many of us really understand why we’re simply not being paid," says Universal’s Kennedy. "It doesn’t make any sense, and it’s bad for everyone." Brian McLaughlin is a decent, honest, trustworthy man, he’s hardware and software infrastructure within minority communities. So this particular idea has always been part of my vision. Now it’s time to roll out the plan to the world."

"We’re excited about working with DME to reach the 50 million members of the under-served urban community," says Commonsense’s Black. "This is a great opportunity to empower us to take our strategy out to these new and fast-growing audiences."

Set to launch in April, Places of Color will feature content from leading partners like African-American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian portal providers.

"We will certainly have entertainment partners and access to music and television well represented, because obviously that’s compelling and a draw for the market we’re going after," says Dash. "Our name is based around education, training, and job placement. We want people to learn how to use this technology effectively, so they can be successful and change their lives. It’s important to stay true to our mission to empower."

Toward that end, DME Interactive’s partnership with AOL calls for DME to provide a high-end technology training to urban youth. Dash adds that DME Interactive is in the last stages of negotiations with a major music industry manufacturer. An announcement is expected soon.

AOL’s partnership with DME Interactive follows on the heels of its recent announcement with Time Warner. AOL is also a strategic partner with urban-oriented lifestyle Web site Net Noir.

Add Dash, "Net Noir has certainly been very supportive of our initiative, and you’ll continue to see them support what we’re doing."
industry is evolving from being promotion/media-driven, to maximizing attention at retail and intensifying online presence," he says.

Virgin Records Sweden managing director Åsa Torndal says, "The sales statistics are promising, and I think they really reflect the current market situation." She adds, "For Virgin's part, last year was a bright year." Virgin is hoping for a similarly successful 2000 with Swedish acts such as Broder Daniel, Caesar's Palace, and Sweet Charlie. However, it was the stars of Warner and Sony, along with the Cheiron Productions creative team, who shone at the Grammisgalan. Sponsored by Swedish telecommunications giant Ericsson, the annual event honors the Swedish music industry's top domestic artists and is televised by commercial TV station TV4 in a delayed telecast on the day of the awards. The various categories are voted for by a jury of some 25 representatives of the broadcast and print media.

At the awards, an audience of some 2,500 saw Warner Music Sweden artist Christian Falk named best producer for his album "Quel Bordel!" Falk also nabbed the top honors in best modern dance act and album of the year.

Commenting on Falk's winning spree, Warner Music Sweden managing director Sanji Tandan says, "It's great for us that he won in so many categories. It really shows his broad abilities, and this will make sure that we will continue to receive international attention for the record." Falk is currently producing a new album by Warner-signed R&B artist Denetreus.

Cheiron, the Stockholm-based production company formed eight years ago by Tom Taloma and the late Dag Volle (aka Dennis Pop), is now co-owned by Jive/Zomba and producers/songwriters Max Martin, Per Magnuson, and Kristian Lundin. It received both the Grammis jury's award of honor and the Swedish government's music export award.

In his presentation speech, Sweden Minister of Trade Leif Paarström said, "In the spirit of Tin Pan Alley, the Brill Building, and Tamia/Motown, there is a place in Stockholm which provides a voice to current pop music and which attracts artists to their magical surroundings."

Recent Cheiron-affiliated clients have included Celine Dion, Britney Spears, Backstreet Boys, N'Sync, and Westlife. The export award, initiated three years ago, has previously been given to the Cordigans (1998) and Max Martin (1999).

One of Sony Music's top domestic acts, Patrik Ikassson, won song of the year for "Du Får Göra Som Du Vill!" (You Get To Do Whatever You Want), best newcomer, and best composer for the album "När Verkligheterna Tranär Sig På" (When Reality Forces Itself Through). Ikassson was nominated in a total of five categories, the most by any artist at this year's event.

A listing of Grammis winners in key categories follows:

**Artist:** Thåström, "Det Är Ni Som Är Konstgärna, Det Är jag Som Är Konstgärna" (album), Christian Falk, "Quel Bordel!," Warner Music.

**Male rock/pop:** Petter, "Banana-republiken," BMG.

**Female rock/pop:** Robyn, "My Truth," BMG.

**Rock/pop group:** Kent, "Hagrnasta Hill," BMG.

**Song:** Patrik Ikassson, "Du Får Göra Som Du Vill!" (album), Sony Music.

**Songwriter:** Lars Winnerbäck, "Kom" (album), Universal Music.

**Composer:** Patrik Ikassson, "När Verkligheterna Tranär Sig På" (album), Sony Music.


**Producer:** Christian Falk, "Quel Bordel!" (album), BMG.

**Newcomer:** Patrik Ikassson, "När Verkligheterna Tranär Sig På" (album), Sony Music.

**Hard rock:** Lok, "Naken, Blastrad Och Skitsur" (album), Stockholm Records.

**Music video:** Lambert, "Blow My Fuses?" (Absolutely Nothing), Universal Music.

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**HOT 100 SPOTLIGHT**

**COUNTRY TIME:** Two former No. 1 country tracks scoot into the top five of The Billboard Hot 100, with first-week sales of more than 50,000 units. Lonestar’s “Amazed” (BNA) jumps 18-3 and debuts at No. 7 on the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart, with 54,000 units scanned. “Amazed” closes out its top 10 Hot 100 trifecta, as it moves 11-10 on the Hot 100 Singles Airplay chart, with an audience increase of 6.5 million listeners. Lonestar is the first group to place a song in the top 10, never mind the top five, on both the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart and the Hot 100 since the Oak Ridge Boys sang about a girl named “Elvira” (MCA) in the summer of 1981.

Faith Hill climbs 21-5 on the Hot 100 and debuts on the sales chart at No. 8 with “Breathe” (Warner Bros. Nashville/WRN). “Breathe” scans 50,000 units and gains 2 million listeners this issue, pushing its overall audience to 61.5 million, which holds the title at No. 13 on the airplay chart. This is the first time since Aug. 15, 1981, that two country acts have simultaneously appeared in the top 10 of the Hot 100. On that date the Oak Ridge Boys were at No. 5 with “Elvira” and Kenny Rogers was at No. 9 with “I Don’t Need You” (Liberty).

The crossover appeal of country has been striving for close to 10 years now, beginning with the top five success of Billy Ray Cyrus’ “Achy Breaky Heart” (Mercury/DJ/MG) in 1992 and Tim McGraw’s two top 20 Hot 100 singles from 1994, “Indian Outlaw” and “Don’t Take The Girl” (Curb). Those singles, however, were fueled by top five sales rankings and, except for some pop radio play for “Achy” (it made the top 40 of the then-pop only Hot 100 Airplay chart), they were virtually ignored by top 40 radio.

Top 10’s subsequent acceptance of top 10 hits from LeAnn Rimes’ “Crazy” (Curb) in 1997 and Shania Twain (Mercury/DJ/MG) in 1998 has now made it possible for acts like Lonestar and Faith Hill to make inroads with a segment of the radio audience that would not normally be exposed to their music. It would be wonderful if this string of hits from the country format encourages top 40 programmers to look toward Nashville with greater frequency to find the next all-format success story.

**GARDEN STILL GROWING:** Savage Garden returns to the top of the Hot 100, with “I Knew I Loved You” (Columbia) overtaking “Thank God I Found You” by Mariah Carey Featuring Joe & ‘N 6’ (Columbia) by a slight margin. The title, which debuted at No. 14 on the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart (roughly 12,000 pieces), but “Thank God” audience declines by 5.5 million, while “Loved” gains 2.5 million listeners. This brings the Savage single’s weekly total to 100 million, the highest one-week tally in its chart run. Savage also crept into the top of the Top 40 Tracks chart in its 19th week on the chart, the longest run up to the peak of that chart since its inception in December 1998. Meanwhile, Carey’s “Thank God” captures the top spot on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart.

**BOTTOMS UP:** Britney Spears’ “From The Bottom Of My Broken Heart” (Jive) jumps 52-14 on the Hot 100 and is the Greatest Gainer/Sales title, as initial-week sales of 78,000 units push “Bottom” from 33-9 on the sales chart. Spears’ fourth release from her 11-times-platinum album, “... Baby One More Time,” has hit a rough patch at radio, declining in audience the past two weeks.
Albums with the greatest week-to-week rise.

**NEW**

1. DR. DRE *Aftermath* (Interscope 12/98/19.98) \textbf{57}.
2. DJ K 输入 КоK uтhаt (Columbia) 12/98/17.98.
8. 2 Live Crew *Sexual Revolution* (Priority) 11/98/17.98.
11. V A R I O U S  A R T I S T S  * A C T I S S A M E N S  5 4 / 5 4 / 1 0 0 0 2 / 1 5 0 0 5 2 (1 0 . 9 8 / 1 6 . 9 8 )
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**Note:** The table above represents Billboard's list of top albums for the week ending February 26, 2000. The positions listed are based on sales figures and are not necessarily indicative of critical reception or popularity outside of the United States.
EMI, SUPERTRACKS HATCH DIGITAL PLAN
(Continued from page 1)

Provider’s solution for the digital distribution and music will be making available a “steady stream” of singles for sale through online retailers by the second quarter, according to Jay Samit, senior VP of new media at EMI Recorded Music.

“With virtually all of your major brick-and-mortar stores now being click-and-mortars, there’s a commitment implicit in that we make sure that we supply enough content,” Samit says. “And we think this is a great way to do that.

By Q4, you will see us with singles, where digital single will be treated as just another format.

— JAY SAMIT —

SALEM ACQUIRES REACH
(Continued from page 8)

“The name fit us,” he says. “It’s synergistic in every way. We combined our radio stations and add to our Web presence.”

Atsinger, who co-founded Salem in 1986 with Stuart Epper- son, says he has been excited about getting into the Southern gospel marketplace.

“We’ve been looking at it for a long time, and always was the leader,” Atsinger says. “The Southern gospel market. Jim Cumbee has developed it over the last 15 years...and it’s really been a real revival and rebirth of the Southern gospel genre, a lot of it driven by the Gaither Vocal Band. Bill Gaither’s efforts have been the catalyst to reenergize the whole area of Southern gospel music, and we see it as an area that will experience rapid growth in the coming years.

In addition to the purchase of Reach, Salem’s expansion includes the recent acquisition of KSSK-FM Dallas, which it consolidated with Salem-owned KRDW, and WABS-Dallas, Washington, D.C., which it has consolidated with WAVA-FM.

“Much of what is happening in the industry generally, we are positioning for,” says Atsinger. “We are going to build a pretty robust technology channel and that is a way that we can be purchased only with prepaid Internet Music Cards, developed by Supertracks, which were initially bundled only with music, but also adds to the Home Music Studio—from NEC, but eventually will be made available for sale at the site, as well.

Jennings says feedback to the idea of prepaid cards has been strong and that rollout to other vendors is expected.

TOUR ORGANIZERS ARE KEEN ON KISS
(Continued from page 6)

Scheduling allows for multiples in some markets, but Mr. McEwan declined to say how many. “If I told you the real cost, the band would fire me,” he says. “It’s a lot, close to seven weeks a figure. This tour has a big, big nut.”

Even with the cost of being Kiss, ticket prices are relatively affordable compared with other high-profile tours that top $100. Shed dates will feature $25 lawn seats, and reserved seats will range from $45-$90, with the top end being $65 in most markets.

Routeing begins in the Southwest, hits the West Coast, then goes to the Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast.

COLUMBIA HOUSE CO., which recently announced a restructuring into three divisions in preparation for its pending merger with CDNow, has told investors that its total record and video club has diminished 87 jobs, or about 2% of the company’s full-time work force. In addition, 62 positions that had been open will not be filled, the company says. This measure is expected to save about $10 million a year. In addition, it announced that the records division of its subsidiary, KAI Industries, has also been sold.

BRIAN GARRETT

DEALPLITCOM—the online price-comparison search company in which BMG parent Bertelsmann is the majority owner—is expanding its services in Japan. In due time, the company said, it will by the second quarter of 2000.

JOHN KOSMOR

COLUMBIA HOUSE, the non-Internet marketing unit, president Brian Wood has promoted Harry Elias to senior VP of video clubs and named Linda Andersen and Richard Capolessa VPs of advertising in charge of a newly merged music and video new-member acquisition department. The staff cuts include 49 employees in the New York office.

DON JEFFREY

BILLBOARD FEBRUARY 26, 2000

www.billboard.com

101
www.americanradiohistory.com
We are creating the dominant Internet business-to-business entertainment distribution company. [The merger] is consistent with the strategy for unlocking shareholder value.

- ROB CAIN -

By Geoff Mayfield

WINNING SERIES: Before “Totally Hits,” before “Now,” the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences blazing the hits compilation trail with its “Grammy Nominees” series, which bowed in 1995 and has become a bigger deal with each passing year: The “2000” edition starts on The Billboard 200 this week. The debut of the “2000” set will be a key indicator. Furthermore, its opening-week sales of 70,000 units is not only the largest first-week sum in the cycle; it stands as the third largest single-week mark for any of the six albums, topped only by the third and fourth chart weeks, both of which sold more than 300,000 units. The best week is the first week, which peaked at No. 8 to become the first in the series to reach the top 10.

NAME BRANDS: January and February are usually fertile times of year for new releases, as evidenced by Eiffel 65 holding its bullet at No. 6 on The Billboard 200 (a 25% gain over the prior week’s sales) and Grammy nominee Macy Gray leaping up to make her first-ever appearance in the top 20 (27-18, up 39%). But the album chart’s top five, where veteran artists are the only ones who move to higher ranks, seems like a flash-back to the holiday selling season, with big-name acts tending to rule the roost. The march of the familiar finds Santana returning to the throne for its seventh chart-topping week (2-1, a 15% gain), followed by Dr. Dre (3-2) and Celine Dion (4-3).

Santana, befooled by the Grammy telecast, has two horses pulling the band’s wagon. “Smooth,” which topped The Billboard Hot 100 for 12 weeks, is still conspicuous: No. 6 with $8.2 million listeners on Hot 100 Airplay and No. 2 on VH1. New single “Maria Maria” is also clicking for Celine Dion, which shot up to No. 3 on Adult Contemporary, No. 28 at MTV, and jumps 44-39 on Hot 100 Airplay (39.7 million listeners). For rapper Dre, this marks the album’s third straight week of sales increases, although the bump falls below this issue’s accelerated bullet criteria (180,560 units, up 2%). Growth was bigger in the previous two weeks, with the album’s fiscal year-to-date increase attributed to new two-year contracts signed with Amazon and CDNow that provide for greater volume discounts, according to an industry source.

Meanwhile, selling, general, and administrative (SG&A) expenses jumped by 13.5%, to $24.3 million from $21 million in the comparable period of 1998. Amplified said that increase was attributed to new two-year contracts with Amazon and CDNow that provide for greater volume discounts, according to an industry source.

SG&A expenses, as a percent of revenue, increased 1.5% to 36.7% in the quarter, compared with 35.2% in the year-earlier period. Amplified said that increase was attributed to new two-year contracts with Amazon and CDNow that provide for greater volume discounts, according to an industry source.

Celine’s hiatus brings to mind the characterization that “The Way It Is” moves on that channel’s rotation. Known more for big-voiced ballads and midtempo songs, Dion makes “Way” her first attempt at an uptempo number since 1994, when she took “Mised” to radio with lackluster results, peaking at No. 25 on Hot 100 Airplay. This one, however, is making fast friends at radio stations across the country. “Way” is charting at No. 10 on Hot 100 Airplay (95.8 million listeners) and is rising to No. 28 at MTV, the latter a vehicle that typically doesn’t click for Dion. Her album responds with a 14% gain (159,000 units).

SO LONG, FOR NOW: With the success of “That’s The Way It Is,” and her hits collection capped out in the top five for each of its 13 chart weeks, Celine Dion’s hiatus brings to mind the title of an old Dave Mason song, “It’s Like You Never Left.” In fact, when you consider that Dion announced her break way back in December 1998, and repeated her intention to return in January, it’s a testament to the singer’s formidable marketing skills that she has remained in the public eye.

 operates a major record label and entertainment company, he is also a member of theRENE ANGELIL, was battling cancer, it was a little mind-boggling to see how much attention her impending hiatus received at the close of ’99. Even with the advance notice she had given, the media managed to make a huge story out of her time out, with “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” the “Today” show, Fox’s Billboard Music Awards, and her own CBS special among the vehicles that fanned the flames.

As long as it took for Dion to say “goodbye,” it will be a while before it feels as if her break has begun, although she has indeed exited the media and concert circuits. “Way” is but one of seven new tracks on her album; no doubt others will hit radio, keeping her visibility high even as she enjoys her extended break. She was also featured on the first episode of MTV’s “Diary,” which started Feb. 16.

NEW WORLD, NEW RULES: Catalog titles are excluded from most Billboard album charts, but we elected to allow catalog fare to appear on Top Internet Albums. For an online audience of older listeners seeking E-commerce. Similarly, Billboard and SoundScan have elected to allow titles that are exclusive to one site to appear on the Internet list, evidenced by this issue’s bow of two from Rhino’s limited-edition “Handmade” series: Tim Buckley at No. 13 and Sweetwater at No. 17. E-commerce buyers are eligible to appear on the rest of Billboard’s charts, because if a title is exclusive to Target Stores, or to the Wherehouse Music chain, consumers who shop at other stores or live in markets where that retailer has no stores do not have access to such content. By contrast, anyone with a computer and a credit card can purchase titles that are exclusive to one site, thus the unique policy for Top Internet Albums.
GETMUSIC GEARS UP WITH NEW STAFF, CONTENT PACT
(Continued from page 6)

(Reuters Health Information), and VP of public relations Laurie Rubenstein (TSI Communications). More appointments are forthcoming.

A “soft” relaunch of the site was slated to occur by the end of Grammy week with the debut of a new home page. “This will be the beginning of a consolidation process of all of our genre sites and our store under one brand—the GetMusic brand,” Nibley says.

Existing genre sites that will be integrated more fully under the GetMusic umbrella are TwangThis (country), Peeps (R&B/R&B), BCU (alternative), Rock1Universe (classic rock), and Connect2Music (AC/New age).

A new content area debuting by May will focus on unsigned acts. Under terms of the Riffage partnership, visitors to the GetMusic site will find streaming music by Riffage acts posted beside the major-label acts that influenced or inspired them.

“We want to become a sort of an editorial voice for what you should be looking at in terms of unsigned artists,” says Nibley, “and so in that sense, Riffage is a very important partner for us, since they have one of the premier sites for unsigned artists.”

Unsigned artists also are the focus of Jimmy & Doug’s Farmhouse, an Internet-focused label launched recently under the Universal Music Group umbrella (Billboard, Nov. 20, 1999).

“We’re taking the idea of discovering new music, which is key to our site, over to the GetMusic site,” says Page Murray, VP of marketing for Riffage.

GetMusic visitors checking out Dave Matthews, for instance, now will be able to access a playlist of songs from Riffage acts that cite DM as an influence. “Of those 20 or 30 songs that were inspired by Dave Matthews, there’s probably a good chance that you are going to like some of them, and you would not normally have found a way to connect with them in any other way,” Murray says.

On its own site, Riffage will introduce a major-act showcase section in May, which will feature band and artist information, among other elements, as well as downloadable tracks from Riffage acts influenced by the established bands. Links back to GetMusic to purchase prod-

HIGHER GROUND
(Continued from page 11)

izational sessions, including an informative panel on Christian TV mod- erts, peer pressures, etc., at Billboard Entertainment Weekly, a la Billboard. Panelists included Nashville-based producer Steve Gilvray and Fami- lessor and Abby Reinsdale.

Another interesting panel, “Salt & Light: Reaching The World From L.A.,” was moderat- ed by Steve Amer- son and included panelists LucyIndent of International Dr. Larry W. Poland, and Stephen and Linda Tavanti, founders of Winning Our World Ministries.

“One of the major issues that came through all this was trust,” says Amer- son, who adds that panelists discussed building trust was crucial to develop- ing positive business relationships.

Amerson and the panel acknowled- ged that there were both challenges and exciting opportunities working in Los Angeles.

“While New York, Chicago, Dallas, and Nashville put up a lot of recorded and film products, Los Angeles is still probably affecting the entire world a lot more, if no other reason than for the movies,” Amerson says. “Movie pro- duction is pretty much based here. So the ideas and happy and unhappy things that happen to Los Angeles as believers, I think, takes on a bigger and better intensity but maybe a different intensity than other cities.”

An important take-away from the panel is that “salting light” in the Los Angeles film and music community for many years. In addition to recording inspirational albums and touring, Amerson is an in- demand studio singer who has contrib- uted his vocal talents to 60 film

...some of the administrative load. “My focus is writing and singing now and not doing a lot of the administrative stuff I had to do. I’ve really clarified what I’m trying to do with the project and I’m going to keep it as an artist. It’s a great job just not as an artist but as the president of an independent record label that is dealing with issues of inven-

tory, distribution, design, marketing, and radio promotion. I’m trying to dele-
gate a lot of that stuff so I can focus on my passion.”

NEWS NOTES: Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing has published First Verse Music from Dave Clark. Current Brentwood Benson Music Publishing staff writer, Clark was known for such modern day classics as “For Future Generations,” “Real Singing,” and “I Surrender All.”

(Continued from page 6)

with writers. The best songwrit- ers in the world are concentrated in Nashville.

Turner says areas that will be looked at more aggressively are the company’s gospel and Christian copyrights, soundtracks, and pop music. While still emphasis- ing the role of country music, Turner notes that Nashville’s non- country music industry is grow- ing faster.

Riffage and other acts will be the site was moderat-

CAL IV FILLS OUT STAFF WITH PUBLISHING VETS
(Continued from page 6)

ning to create a new initiative that is conducive to turning out quality copyrights, and we want to back that machine with administration and beefed-up technology, but this way we’re competitive with everybody.”

Technology, notes Hill, will be greatly emphasized. He cites Mark Dorminy’s experience with Web design and internal technol- ogy systems.

While keeping the company songwriter roster to a small, workable size, Hill says that the company is looking at adding some select writers.

The biggest advantage of being an indie publisher, Hill says, is “time. We are—we’re not an outpost of a larger corporation, and we live or die by what we do here. We make our own decisions. We want to have our systems to a point where we’re so efficient and productive that we can concentrate on the songwriter and on the recording process. Time is what we have to give our songwriters.”

The Who’s “BBQ Sessions” (MCA).

Billy Mohonie “The Big Dig” (Segrers Bouquet).


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This week’s champ is Ralf Dahm from Ingelwood, Calif.

News contact: Jonathan Cohen jahren@billboard.com
Nashville’s Hill, Lonestar Vie For No. 1

With Mariah Carey’s “Thank God I Found You” (Columbia) slipping from first place after just one week and Savage Garden sliding back into pole position for a fourth week with “I Knew I Loved You” (Columbia), the race is on between two country contenders to see who will get to the top: first. And whoever does will be the first country artist to crown the Hot 100 since Kenny Rogers & Dolly Parton sailed to those “Islands In The Stream” back in 1983.

In an amazing chart move, Lonestar rockets 1-3 with the pop remix of the former No. 1 country hit “Amazed” (Eansa). Even more amazing, this single is in its 30th chart week—that’s just one week less than “Smooth” by Santana Featuring Rob Thomas. Those with long memories will recall “Smooth” debuted in July 1999, so “Amazed” has had a long ride into the top 10. The other country artist who might reap a No. 1 hit is Faith Hill, whose “Breathe” (Warner Bros.) gallops 21-1. “Breathe,” which spent six weeks atop the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart, is already Hill’s highest-ranking song to date on the Hot 100. “This Kiss” and “It’s Your Love,” a duet with her husband, Tim McGraw, both peaked at No. 7.

In the last few years, country artists like LeAnn Rimes and Shania Twain have had No. 2 hits on the Hot 100, but not one went all the way. Either Lonestar or Hill could break the long drought as early as next issue.

When You’re Hot: Elsewhere on the Hot 100, Missy-I’m-Misdeemeanor” by Elliott chalks up another week in the top 10 with “Hot Boyz” (The Gold Minif-East-West), her single with Nas, Eve, and Q-Tip. But where she’s really making news is the Hot Rap Singles chart, where “Hot Dovz” is on top for the 14th consecutive week. That ties the record for the longest-running title in this chart’s history. Craig Mack had a 14-week reign with “Flava Ya Ear” in the fourth quarter of 1994. One difference: Mack’s run wasn’t consecutive, so Elliott holds the record for longest consecutive run at No. 1. The previous holder of this record was “Can’t Nobody Hold Me Down” by Puff Daddy Featuring Mase, from 1995.

Further down, the rap chart is starting to resemble box office rankings. Debuting at No. 24 is “The 6th Sense” (Madam Xenobia) by Common, and new at No. 30 is “Silence Of The Lamba” (Moussa) by Ali Real.

L’P’ Sticks: Veteran rock band AC/DC collects the third-biggest rock track of its career on the Mainstream Rock Tracks chart this issue, as “Still Slip Lip” (FastWest) marches 9-2. If “Still” can dislog the “No Leaf Clover” (Elektra) by Metallica, it will be the third AC/DC track to top this list. In 1993 “Big Gun” from the soundtrack to “The Last Action Hero” had a two-week run, while two years later “Hard As A Rock” steinwalled for three weeks.

After Life: It would be hard to find an artist who has had more posthumous entries on the Hot 100 than 2Pac, who enters at No. 97 this issue with “Baby Don’t Cry (Keep Ya Head Up)” (Amarlo’s Death Row). This is the seventh Hot 100 entry for 2Pac since his passing on Sept. 13, 1996. That equals the number of Hot 100 entries 2Pac had while he was alive.
Billboard spotlights

Billboard joins Arista Records in their

25th Anniversary Celebration

with a special salute to Clive Davis.

Tribute advertisements
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