The Return Of The Singles Deal
Nashville Labels Mull The Merits Of Limited Commitments

BY PHYLLIS STARK
NASHVILLE—In an effort to cut costs, several Nashville labels are again signing new artists to singles deals rather than full album deals, a practice that was fairly common on Music Row until the late ‘80s. MCA Nashville, Warner Bros., and the RCA Label Group (RLG) are currently negotiating or have negotiated singles deals, and several other labels say they are considering it.

Record execs say the change was necessitated by tighter radio playlists and the fact that hit singles can now last up to half a year on the chart, drastically reducing the number of singles that can be released from an album. The change was also brought about, label executives say, by the now exorbitant cost of recording and marketing albums, often with little payoff, as country album sales not only continue to shrink but are largely divided among just a handful of artists.

While some detractors say singles deals show a lack of commitment to artists, it’s almost a moot point at a time when even acts with full album deals get dropped by their labels after one or two singles stiff or their debut album sales are disappointing.

Until Garth Brooks and other acts began propelling country music into the stratosphere of album sales in the late ‘80s, singles deals were as common as full album deals. Among the now successful acts first signed to singles deals in the ‘80s were Randy Travis, Faith Hill, Dwight Yoakam, and Travis Tritt.

By the early and mid-‘90s, when country was booming, most artists—even new acts—were commanding from labels firm two-album commitments with options for additional albums. In more recent years, as the format waned, one-album firm deals with options had become more the norm.

During all that time, labels continued to sign some acts to development deals—also known as demo (Continued on page 79)

EMI’s Merger With Warner Moves Closer To Fruition

BY GORDON MASSON
LONDON—You can please all of the people some of the time. Well, nearly all.

The proposed $20 billion merger of the music divisions of Time Warner and the EMI Group is in the mainstream press that a consortium of international companies was planning an 11th-hour bid to acquire EMI.

At the meeting, an overwhelming 99%-plus of the votes—representing more than 437 million of the company’s 442 million issued shares—were in favor of carrying an ordinary resolution to “approve the combination of the company’s music business with that of Time Warner.” A similar number approved another resolution authorizing the directors to, among other things, declare a special dividend of 1 pound ($1.50), (Continued on page 81)

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Djangos.com Expanding With Stores And Online

BY ED CHRISTMAN
NEW YORK—A company begun a little more than a year ago and funded by venture capitalists has been buying up small used-CD retail store chains, with plans to grow from its current 13 outlets to 35 stores by year’s end.

Djangos.com was started by Steve Wood, the former co-founder of Surplus Direct, a retailer of used computer software that he sold to Egghead.com for $36 million. He hopes to translate his success in computer software to the music business.

But the acquisition of small music chains is just one aspect of the company’s overall thrust, which is to develop a strong clicks-and-bricks presence that includes online stores featuring used and new product.

According to Steve Furst, president of Djangos.com, the company plans to have 75 to 100 stores by next year, with locations in Tokyo, Germany, and London, as well as in the major markets in the U.S. (Continued on page 81)

Wyclef Jean Goes ‘Eclectic’ On Columbia

BY RASHAUN HALL
NEW YORK—As the title of his sophomore album, “Eclectic: Two Sides Of The Book,” suggests, Wyclef Jean is viewing himself in new ways. So as he prepares for the July 25 release of his Columbia album—the follow-up to 1997’s “Wyclef Jean Presents The Carnival Featuring Refugee Allstars”—the Grammy Award-winner looks to take it back to where it all began for him—the streets.

“This album is a step beyond ‘The Carnival,’” says Jean of “Eclectic,” which was recorded in Brooklyn and his native New Jersey. “The body of the album is more hip-hop. At the same time, I’m still surrounded by a lot of crazy fusions. So it was just the next level of Clef.”

Some of the “crazy fusions” featured on the album include collaborations with country legend Kenny Rogers and Whitney Houston.

“When I do collaborations, I try to be less obvious,” says Jean, who has penned hits for the likes of Whitney Houston and San Remo (Continued on page 85)
Saxophonist/vocalist Walter Beasley established himself as a Smooth Jazz superstar with his last Shanachie release, spending months in Billboard's Top 10, and garnering 3 Top 5 hits at Smooth Jazz radio - including the #1 smash, "I Feel You".

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Valley Media Cuts 230 More Employees

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—With its latest round of cutbacks, Valley Media is back on track to return to profitability, says company founder Barney Cohen, and acting CEO Barney Cohen.

On Thursday, June 29, the company announced that it was about to lay off another 230 employees. The news followed a 30% reduction in its workforce since the beginning of the year, from a peak of 2,400 employees during the 1999 holiday season. The cuts were made through attrition, layoffs, and elimination of temporary and seasonal help.

In the latest round of cutbacks, 100 administrative staffers, primarily located in the company’s Woodland, Calif., headquarters, will be let go. Also, the company’s warehouse force will be reduced by 70; those employees will be spread between the Woodland warehouse and the facility in Louisville, Ky. In addition, 60 unfilled positions have been eliminated at the company.

On May 24, Valley reported a loss of $4.6 million, or 54 cents per share, for the year ending April 1. Sales were $890 million.

“As of this Friday, we aren’t making money,” says Cohen. However, the bulk of the current layoffs are effective that day, so, “on Monday we will make money.”

“In addition to the cutbacks, Valley recently underwent a management restructuring that saw the exit of CEO Bob Cain, senior VP/CEO Randy Cerf, and senior VP of purchasing Ron Phillips. Cohen has stepped up to act as CEO while the search is conducted for a replacement for Cain.

Jim Miller has been hired as interim CFO; he will not become official until the new CEO approves of his hiring. Also, Lew Garrett, a 20-year employee of the sales force veteran formerly with Camelot Music, was brought in to replace Phillips as head of purchasing and to take on some marketing functions as well, holding the title of senior VP of purchasing and marketing. And four months prior to the management restructuring, the company’s top executive, Pete Anderson, was brought in as a senior VP to head sales and marketing.

The Business of Hatred

I am glad to read a commentary like Jim Fournier’s (“When Hate’s The Message, Independence Is The Message.” Billboard, June 10) that challenges the industry to be more moral- ly responsible. I do not sell Eminem, Limp Bizkit, or any violent music in my store. I remember the taping I received as a youth, being called “faggot” because I was gymny and poor at sports. I only wish that Fournier’s commentary could have been a little more universal.

Still, the media latched on to negative aspects when the tour was announced. “We didn’t think the Mary Wilson thing was a significant factor, but there is no way to be totally scientific about such things,” says Fogel. “Certainly, the press jumped on it initially.”

Meanwhile, Fogel describes the tour as doing “reasonably well,” averaging between 7,000 and 8,000 per night, mostly at arenas that can accommodate double that capacity. Less than halfway into the tour, some markets are drawing fewer than 5,000. “There are a few dates that are struggling, but overall it’s doing pretty well,” says Fogel. “In fact, a bunch of dates are doing pretty decent business.”

One of those was the tour opener, June 14 in Philadelphia’s First Union Center, which drew about 10,000 and grossed $692,850. Likewise, a June 19 date at the Palace of Auburn Hills (Mich.) drew about 8,000 and grossed $584,448. “It was just tremendous,” says the Palace’s Marilyn Hauser, senior VP of booking and marketing.

Fogel was doing less well, including a June 24 stop at Tampa’s Ice Palace, where sales were below the tour average. “We

(Continued on page 88)


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**Artists & Music**

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12 Morcheeba moves ever further from electronics scene with new London Set.

12 The Boot: Rod Stewart switches labels, but Carlos Santana does not.

14 Boxscore: Ema Turner, Lionel Richie, and Janice Robinson gross $1.7 million in East Rutherford, N.J.

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**Bayside Picks Up Staffers After PED Closure**

BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—Platinum Entertainment, the financially troubled Downers Grove, Ill.-based firm, closed its Alphare- ta, Ga., distribution unit, Platinum Entertainment Distribution (PED), June 26, resulting in the loss of about 20 jobs. Several of the distributor's remaining staffers and labels will now shift to West Sacramento, Calif.-based Bayside Entertainment Distribution.

The closure of PED came as no surprise to industry observers, in light of Platinum's temenos status. In its most recent report, for the quarter that ended March 31, Platinum reported a net loss of $8.9 million and an operating loss of $2.7 million, with its $3.0 million in cash on hand. Platinum's credit facility came due in full on March 31; as of mid-May, the firm had borrowed $26.1 million from lender First Source.

In its report, the company acknowledged that it may have to file for bankruptcy protection if its huge bank debt proves unpayable (Declarations of Independents, Billboard, June 19). Shareholders in Platinum, which is traded on Nasdaq, closed at just 47 cents on June 26. Platinum president/CEO Steven DeVick did not return a call from Billboard seeking comment.

With the folding of PED, two of the distributor's senior executives will take posts at Bayside, effective Monday (3). Former PED president Brent Gordon, who will remain based in the Atlanta area, will serve as Bayside executive VP while his son, Jeff, previously PED VP of marketing, will take the same title at Bayside.

Glen Dewey, formerly Bayside VP of sales and marketing, has been promoted to senior VP of sales. Like the ex-PED execs, Dewey reports to Bayside COO Mark Videau.

Seven of PED's former regional sales personnel will also join Bayside. The distributor has also picked up PED's distributed-labels—Badman, Born Again, Half Note, New World Music, Symbiotic World, 91.7 Frequencies, and C&O. Discussions are ongoing concerning the status of PED's proprietary labels, according to one source.

Bayside's Videau says of his company's new alliances with PED's one-time staffers: "We're always looking to bring new expertise to the table, which benefits both our labels and retail."
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Labels File Copyright Suit Against MP3Board.com

By EILEEN FITZPATRICK

LOS ANGELES—In another attempt to make Web sites accountable for posting songs to MP3 players, a major record label has filed a copyright-infringement lawsuit against MP3Board.com.

In the suit, filed June 23 in the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of New York, the labels claim that MP3Board.com "knowingly indexes, organizes, and posts links to thousands of pirated copies of plaintiffs' sound recordings." The 13 labels listed as plaintiffs are Arista Records, Atlantic Recording Corp., BMG Music; Capitol Records, Elektra Entertainment Group, Hollywood Records, Interscope Records, LaFace Records, Motown Records, Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group, Virgin Records America, and Warner Bros. Records Inc.

The action is the latest move in the ongoing dispute between the labels and MP3Board.com. On June 2, the Santa Cruz, Calif.-based MP3Board.com, which has an agreement in principle with Sony Music Entertainment/Rock/Record Mart, filed a lawsuit against the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) to prevent the trade organization from shutting down the site (Billboard.com, June 6).

Prior to the filing, the RIAA had sent several letters to the company demanding that it be disabled. Unlike Napster, MP3Board.com does not market software, but both companies do provide access to thousands of unauthorized MP3 music files. The RIAA, on behalf of the major labels, sued Napster for copyright infringement last December. The first step in the case is expected to begin July 26.

According to the June 23 lawsuit, the labels allege that MP3Board.com actively solicits users to post illegal songs and advertises that it has "the biggest archive of illegal MP3 [files]" and provides "100% illegal fast downloads." They are not sitting passively, says Atlantic, Elektra, and Warner attorney Katherine B. Forrest.

Ira P. Rothken, attorney for MP3Board.com, accuses the labels of "procedural gamesmanship" and says, "They're attempting to file the exact lawsuit 3,000 miles away. They're doing this to wear my clients down." The labels have consolidated in California. The labels seek injunctive relief and fines as high as $150,000 per infringement.

RED-Distributed VFR Bows On Music Row

By DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Former Mercury Nashville executive Harold Shedd and Paul Lucas are at the helm of VFR Records, a new Music Row record label that has inked a deal with RED Distributed, the Nashville-based company founded by Steve Antonelli.

VFR is under the umbrella of Spark Entertainment; businessman Arnold, who founded Integrated Circuit Systems in 1976 and served as its president/CEO until 1995, serves as chairman of Spark Entertainment/RED-VFR, which will include publishing and licensing interests. Shedd serves as managing director, creative, for the company.

A legendary Nashville producer (Alabama, Reba McEntire, K.T. Oslin, Roger Miller), Shedd was previously senior VP of Mercury Nashville and president of Polydor/Nashville before launching his independent label, Tyelle. Lucas, former GM of Mercury Nashville, is managing director, operations, for the new venture. Jim Hester has been tapped as director of marketing and new business development, and Nancy Tunic has been named director of national promotion. She previously was national promotion manager at Asylum Records.

"We've been working on it since right around the first of the year," Lucas says of the label's launch. "But we wanted everything to be in place beforehand before we said anything to anybody."

Lucks and Hester both stress that the new venture won't be strictly a country label. "We're not targeting the idea of country only," Lucas says. "If it's something we like, we'll work with it. We'll let the music determine how it's marketed."

Summar, formerly of Giant Records act Hank Flamingo, says VFR "just had so much more to offer as an indie label. They have a fresh approach in what they are trying to do ... Harold and Paul complement each other so well. It's a great team. Music is a team sport. You've got to take a bunch of people with you to be successful."

Summar says the label encouraged him "not to worry about making a record for a specific market, to just make art and let us figure out what to do with it."

The result is something Summar is loosely defining as "hick hop." The label's first release is by R.S. Field, the debut album showcases Summar and his bandmates in the New Row Mob: Jerry Dale Martin on drums, Steve Oxley on guitar, Dave Kennedy on drums, Jared Reynolds on bass, and guitarist Philip Wallace, also a Hank Williams, Jr., Hank Williams III, Hank Williams Jr., Hank Williams, III, Hank Williams, III, Hank Williams, III, Hank Williams, III.

Atlantic Pacts to Provide Resources For NonTime

By GAIL MITCHELL

LOS ANGELES—Atlantic Records and NonTime Records, an Atlanta-based label run by a production collective, have entered a strategic partnership.

Under the terms of the pact, Atlantic will provide distribution resources for NonTime, whose first two releases will be R&B/hip-ho duo Absolute and R&B/vocal group Juicy P.

"Atlantic's unique value proposition is our creative and business relationships, both creatively and from a business standpoint, to spearhead and launch a very powerful urban music label," says Craig Kallman, Atlantic Records executive VP (a former NTime Records executive). "Atlantic will help us achieve our vision and become a star."
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Sony Settles Royalty Issue

Improbable Distribution In Latin America Sparked Audit

BY IVY LICHTMAN
NEW YORK—Sony Music has apparently sent mechanical royalty payments totaling millions of dollars to publisher clients of mechanical collection group the Harry Fox Agency, in a settlement of an issue alleging violations on recordings manufactured in the U.S. and product distributed in Latin America (Billboard Bulletin, June 28).

“We settled an audit with Sony a while back that affects hundreds of publishers,” says Ed Murphy, president/CEO of the National Music Publishers Association (NMPA) and the Harry Fox Agency. While Murphy, commenting at the annual NMPA meeting in Los Angeles two weeks ago, continues to elaborate on the settlement, a publisher who wished not to be identified tells Billboard he received a check from Sony Music as a result of the special audit.

“We’ve been sent checks covering the audit of Sony. The payoff to us, a small company, is very satisfying,” he says.

The Harry Fox Agency, in a memo sent Jan. 10 by outside counsel on behalf of its publisher clients, said it was prepared to take legal action over the alleged violations. These centered on free distribution and promotional use of discontinued merchandise, and additional claims outside Latin America, where the agency claimed recordings had been sent without proper billing.

One publisher tells Billboard that the settlement is similar to a mechanical royalty agreement in which BMG Music about two years ago.

Sony Music declined comment on the matter.

Assistant in the preparation of this story was provided by Melinda Newman.

AOL InterTrust Pact For Downloads

BY BRIAN GARRITY
NEW YORK—America Online (AOL) is thinking big licensing, promotional, and marketing pact with InterTrust Technologies in a deal that marks the Internet service provider’s first foray into offering secure music downloads and creates a powerful distribution platform for the digital rights management (DRM) company’s consumer software.

Under terms of the nonexclusive arrangement, AOL will make its Winamp digital music player compatible with InterTrust-protected files, and InterTrust will be a preferred technology provider for AOL. AOL will also distribute InterTrust’s client software, the InterRights Point, on promotional CDs containing AOL 6.0 software later this year.

“This is huge one of us looking at commercializing digital downloads,” says AOL spokesperson Wendy Goldberg.

The agreement is exactly what AOL requires to provide commerce services, meaning that it can now double as a financial and usage clearinghouse and also promote paid audio services, says AOL, a company’s most significant relationships to date,” and says he expects that it will speed the distribution, adoption, and use of its DRM.

“One of the big challenges for InterTrust is getting the stuff out there,” explains Talal Shamon, senior VP of media at InterTrust. “Between [previously announced deals with] Universal Music Group, BMG, and now AOL, we’ve licked that problem pretty good.”

What more, the company is actively partnering with more than 30 companies to ensure that distribution can occur online with urban media and offline with the installation software embedded on CDs, and now on a pre-licensed basis with the company working with everyone from playback-device manufacturers to computer makers—names includ- ing Diamond Multimedia, Compaq, Samsung, and Texas Instruments.

RECORD COMPANIES. David McPherson is promoted to executive VP of A&R and urban music for Epic Records in New York. He was senior VP of A&R and urban music for Epic Records and 550 Music.

Michael Steele is named senior director of pop promotion for Capitol Records in Hollywood. He was executive GM of Hitmakers magazine.

Universal/Motown Records Group promotes Doug Koch to co-head of the finance team and George Mardella to co-head of the finance team in New York. They, respectively, VP of marketing administration and senior director of finance.

Harry “Rockberry” Benson is promoted to national director of urban promotion/A&R for Rhino Records in Los Angeles. He was associate director of urban promotion.

Arista promotes Donna Claw- ler to director of special markets in New York. She was associate director of special markets.

Sony Settles Royalty Issue

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Greg Brown Releases
15th Red House Album

BY CARLA HAY

Veteran roots/rock artist Greg Brown says he's comfortable with his niche audience: people who are “searching for something outside the mainstream.” Brown brings his signature musical style, influenced by folk and country, to his latest album, “Covenant,” due Aug. 8 on Red House Records.

“Covenant” is Brown’s 15th album for Red House, the St. Paul, Minn.-based label he founded in 1980. Brown got into the label business modestly by selling his own records out of the trunk of his car. Since then, Red House has grown into a multi-label act, with a roster that includes Suzzy Roche, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott, Lucy Kaplansky, the New Dylans, and Dave Moore.

Brown, who is self-managed, long ago handed over the day-to-day responsibilities of Red House to president Bob Feldman, who says he anticipates “Covenant” to be Brown’s “breakthrough” album at retail. We’re doing our biggest print advertising campaign ever for this album. We’re advertising in publications like Oxford American, Dirty Linen, and No Depression.

“We’ll also be doing retail promotions with chains like Trans World, Tower, Circuit City, Borders, Barnes & Noble, and Best Buy,” Feldman says. “People will get a discount on Greg Brown’s catalog if they buy the new album. We’ll also be working with indie stores, especially in having the album in listening posts.”
U.K.'s Morcheeba Further Evolves
London-Sire Set Contains 'Fragments' Of Blues, Soul, Funk

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA
NEW YORK—Morcheeba unleashed its 1996 critically lauded debut, "Who Can You Trust?," to the raving delight of the British music establishment. For its new album, "Fragments Of Freedom," the band is releasing an album that is a departure from the band's earlier sound. The album features a range of music styles, including folk, blues, and soulful ballads.

“With 'Fragments Of Freedom,' we were trying to create a new direction for the band,” says guitarist and vocalist Dusty Edwards. “We wanted to incorporate a range of styles and sounds into our music, and I think we’ve achieved that with this album.”

Morcheeba’s sound is characterized by its use of electronic and acoustic elements, creating a unique sound that has earned them a following worldwide. The band’s music has been praised for its ability to capture the listener’s attention and create a sense of emotional depth.

The album features a range of tracks, including "Rome Wasn't Built In A Day," "Love Sweet Love," and "World Looking In." The latter track was inspired by the band’s time in London, where they were part of the city’s vibrant music scene.

The album has been well-received by critics, who have praised the band’s ability to blend different styles of music and create a cohesive sound. The album has also been praised for its quality production and the band’s strong songwriting.

Morcheeba’s "Fragments Of Freedom" is available now, and fans are encouraged to support the band by purchasing the album. The band is also set to embark on a tour in support of the new album, with dates to be announced soon.

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Stewart Switches Labels, Santana Stays Put;
Slow Train Track Record Bodes Well For Aware

STEWART TO ATLANTIC: After 25 years on Warner Bros. Records, Rod Stewart has switched to Atlantic Records. The move provides a textbook case of how Aware and Columbia work together. With slow sales, the band kept the ball rolling, says Aware president Gregg Latterman. "We let the record develop on its own, and Columbia knew when to push. That’s an album that never sold more than 25,000 a week, and it’s now sold close to a million records.

Aware is such a great outfit for us," says Columbia Records Group executive VP/GM Will Botwin. "We can take the spotlight off of a brand new artist who needs time to live and breathe in the marketplace. We don’t have to go to radio and bang a hit record for a month. Gregg’s developing the acts. Gregg’s developing rock-oriented and tour-oriented. He’s developing these artists from the road via local and regional marketing and then radio.

For the next phase of the venture, Latterman says, he hopes to have albums grow faster than Train’s did ("I don’t think you break a record much slower than we did that one," he says) but sees Train as a benchmark in terms of building success upon success.

Between now and the end of the year, Aware/Columbia will release more albums than in their initial three years together. Coming up are albums from Five For Fighting in July (just as the band is playing second-stage dates on tour with Dave Matthews Band), Mile, who is managed by Creed’s manager and is planning to tour with 3 Doors Down in August; and Porcelain, a female-fronted group signed to Columbia and who have been developing for a year.

Train is working on a new album for the fall, while Aware/Dovetail Joint, whose debut release sold around 30,000, according to Latterman, is touring and working on a new release for the group.

Stevie Wonder, whose new album, "Songs in the Key of Life," was released during the first three years of the deal, is no longer on the label. The original pact gave Aware national distribution through Sony’s RED Distribution (which was formerly well-known as Rediffusion), as well as access to Sony Distribution’s pipeline. New releases will now primarily go through Sony Distribution. "Basically, now everything goes through Sony," says Latterman, "but we have the option to go through local means if we feel we want to or even still go through RED (which we have done in the past)."

Latterman says he talked to other labels about moving Aware but ultimately decided to stay with Columbia. "I felt like a lot of the last three years [were] spent building relationships and building trust up, and I really didn’t want to jeopardize that. And the bottom line is that on a daily basis, no one can get things done like Columbia can.

Botwin declined to comment on whether the venture is profitable. "We’re not losing money on the deal, but it’s not like we’ve made a lot of money or lost a lot," he says. "We’re extremely happy with how well it’s going, and we’re building a strong foundation for when we sell the doors, and when we end Gregg’s first period with us and start the next chapter.

GIVE A HOOT: In October, Hootie & The Blowfish will release an album of previously recorded covers and soundtrack cuts. "It’s all songs that we’ve covered but haven’t released before (on our albums), like ‘I Go Blind,’" says guitarist Mark Bryan of the Atlantic Records project. "It’s something for us to say, ‘We’re not broken up. Here’s something for our fans.’" No word on when the band will start working on an album of new material.

RE-UP: As expected, Billboard Century Award winner Carlos Santana is staying with Arista Records. Although the guitarist, who experienced the comeback of the year in 1999 with the Clive Davis executive-produced "Supernatural," had made noises that he wanted to follow Davis to the former Arista head’s new label, Arista and its EMI parent had always made it clear that Santana was going nowhere if they could help it. Terms of the renegotiation, which started in mid-Mag, were not disclosed.

STUFF: Producer Steve Lillywhite, best known for his work with U2 and Dave Matthews Band, has formed a new label, Cogeworks Records, that will be a partnership with Chris Blackwell’s Palm Pictures. Lillywhite’s partner in the venture is former MTV senior VP Patti Galuzzi. "Farrah.com," which airs on Monday nights on the USA Network, has been added to Canada’s MuchMusic, where it airs on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. and midnight, as well as Musiqueplus in French-speaking Canada, where it can be seen at 5 p.m. on Thursdays. Mose-Bluenose, formerly an Atlantic Records artist, has been added to Canada’s MuchMusic, where it airs on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. and midnight. "WadeMusic & Entertainment," which has been named Adane Music & Entertainment, has signed Lalah Hathaway, as well as folk singer Danny Paradise and multi-instrumentalists Wole Adu.
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MC Bahamadia Bequeaths ‘BB Queen’ EP On Goodvibe/Atomic Pop

BY RAIQIYAH MAYS

“In my mind, I say that listeners and critics are like family and friends,” says the Philadelphia native. “I went away, now I’m back. I just came to pay everybody a visit.”

Working with a short-list of producers, including seasoned beat-master Jay Dee, “BB Queen” (which is short for “Beautiful Black Queen”) offers enticing hip-hop with pleasing, jazz-enhanced arrangements. In assembling the team with whom she would work on this project, Bahamadia intentionally opted for old friends and familiar faces.

“I wanted to use all in-house producers because, spiritually, they knew where I was,” she says. “A lot of times when you’re out of the loop for a little bit and try to call a couple of favors, [people will] often ignore you until you prove yourself all over again.”

Bahamadia’s production agreement with the EMI-tied Guru Production is followed up by Guru of Gangstarr fame) came to an end several years ago, when EMI Records folded. She then traveled to Europe, touring countries like Holland, Germany, France, and England, quickly making a name for herself in the European drum’n’bass scene by collaborating on tracks for outside projects with artists like Roni Size. To maintain her stateside rap presence, Bahamadia hosted the weekly underground hip-hop radio show, “Bahamadia’s B-Sides” on WPNI Philadelphia for two years. These experiences, as well as her tight family connections, contributed to the direction of her career.

“I have about 85% power over my career right now,” she says. “I’m much more involved in the marketing process. I have a say over the whole layout of the project—in terms of my web site or different venues I play … everything.”

The marketing plan for “BB Queen” includes an extensive Internet campaign through the artist’s site (bahamadia.com). The weekly updated site will consist of her personal movie picks, the month, book reviews, a show called “BB Queen Radio,” and forums where new artists are given the opportunity to be heard and where society issues will be addressed.

“The project is a walk into Bahamadia’s world and everything that she’s into,” says James Lopez, senior director of marketing at Atomic Pop. “She’s such an eclectic artist. She’s into so many things that she wants to express to her fans.

Not only will visitors to the site get an opportunity to surf through Bahamadia’s world, but they will be able to hear clips of the upcoming full-length album. Visitors will have the chance to become part of the artist’s E-team, an online street team that helps promote Goodvibe artists. E-team members are given T-shirts, autographed posters, and exclusive show tickets as rewards.

“The most important thing with Bahamadia is you pick up where she left off [with "Kollage"] and you take it to another level,” says Bahamadia’s manager, Timothy Maynor of Timotheus Entertainment. “She carries a presence that you couldn’t help but want to handle and manage.”

Bahamadia is currently co-headlining the Goodvibe 2000 tour with labelmates Slam Village. The extensive itinerary includes dates in Seattle, Vancouver, Toronto, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Portland, Ore. Upon conclusion of the tour, Bahamadia will resume work on her next full-length album.

“I decided to go with the EP to reintroduce myself,” she says. “I really wanted a summer release, and I knew I wasn’t going to have enough time to record a full 12 songs. It took me six months to put this EP together.”

“Special Forces,” the first single from “BB Queen,” was serviced to mix-show programmers at rhythm radio June 26. The more airwave-friendly jam “Commonwealth (Cheap Chicks)” will go to R&B radio in mid-July.

A video for the latter cut is pending.

“We’re not the type of company that front-lads projects. It’s going to be a building process for her,” says Lopez. “With the kind of record she has, you definitely have to first set a foundation for her on the street before you even try to approach commercial radio.”

The label is targeting several markets to break “BB Queen”: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. While Goodvibe works hip-hop listeners with “Commonwealth,” it will attack drum’n’bass enthusiasts with yet another cut from the EP, “Pop Talk.”

“She’s doing a great job promoting herself,” notes Lopez. “She has a sharp awareness of the business, and she has skills that a lot of female MCs could take note from. She’s on top of her game.”
Johnnie Taylor
May 5, 1938 - May 31, 2000

You will be missed.
“It took us a while to get to this point, for our music to develop to the point where all the elements perfectly fit together,” says Ross Godfrey. “In the past, we didn’t want to push things too far. We didn’t want to push our necks out too far and possibly make the music sound forced or silly. This album was a very natural process.”

Edwards says, “I would’ve been thrilled to record a song like ‘Shake It ’Til You Drop’ for the album. But after touring pretty much nonstop after the release of ‘Who Can You Trust?’, my voice has become stronger. I have much more confidence.”

The Godfrets acknowledge that nobody is struggling on the new set. “We’re all confident now,” says Ross Godfrey. “It’s honest and full of emotion. And unlike previous albums, this one was recorded while running the Sunday night shows and not at 4 a.m. It all adds up to a very up, very positive album—even if there are some elements in some of the lyrics.”

Joining Morcheeba on “Fragments Of Freedom” are many from the band’s core members of the hip-hop community, including Biz Markie, Bahamadia, Mr. Majesty, DJ Spinna, and U.K. DJ First Rate, who contributed to “Big Calm.”

In lieu of a first commercial single, London-Sire sent a “focus” track—“World Looking In”—to radio stations and Internet companies the first week of July. This will be followed by a white label 12-inch of “In The Hands Of The Gods,” which will be delivered to hip-hop mix-show DJs and college radio the week of July 17. In the U.K., the set’s first commercial single, “Romance Wasn’t Built In A Day,” streets July 24.

“We just want to get a buzz going in the U.S.,” explains London-Sire president Pember. “With these two tracks, we’ll be hitting several different markets, which will accommodate our goal of re-establishing the band’s fan base.”

In addition to aligning Morcheeba with “hip” Web sites—including its own official site (morcheeba.com)—Pember says the label will be supplying select clothing companies with Morcheeba samplers. “Whenever a customer buys a pair of clothing, they’ll receive a sampler CD for free,” says Pember.

According to Pember, brick-and-mortar retailers were supplied with streamers, window clings, and posters earlier this month. Club promotions, too. Michael Kurtz, executive director of Atlanta-based Music Monitor Network, which operates eight chains with 97 stores, says that Morcheeba “has a very strong following. I expect the new album to be well received. And the timing couldn’t be better, especially with acts like Supreme Beings Of Leisure doing so well for us.”

London-Sire will also supply stores with a custom sampler, which contains two sets of classic Morcheeba tracks mixed

“We knew going into this album that we’d had enough of the downbeat thing”—PAUL GODFREY—by DJ Spinna, and rapper J-Live introducing new tracks from “Fragments Of Freedom.”

During this time, Morcheeba will be touring throughout Europe, performing at numerous summer festivals. In the fall, Pember says, the band is confirmed to play in Australia and through Latin America. A North American tour is expected to follow in January 2001.

Says Pember, “We’ve told the band that if we don’t break the album here, they won’t have to tour in January. That said, U.S. fans will see them in the new year! And by that time, we’ll have built a strong and solid Morcheeba story.”

At the beginning of October, Pember says, London-Sire will begin the second tier of its Morcheeba campaign. This will include a mass mailing of the CD to “boutiques, beauty salons, and day spas that cater to upper demos,” notes Pember. “We truly believe this will be a strong word-of-mouth release.”

Morcheeba is managed by Chris Morrison and Kate Hanson of London-based CMO Management. North American bookings are handled by Sam Kirby of New York-based Evolution Talent Agency, while Peter Elliot of London-based Primary handles all other territories.
After Japanese Acclaim, BMG’s Animalhouse Ready For Debut In U.K.

BY LARRY FLICK

NEW YORK—By the time Animalhouse issues its debut, “Ready To Receive,” July 31 in its native U.K., the act will have already built a solid fan base in Japan.

The project was released June 2 via BMG International in Japan, where it has met with widespread critical acclaim. To supplement interest, the band has done an extensive promotional tour of the market. Also, it is scheduled to play the Fuji Rock Festival there July 29.

At this point, “Ready To Receive” does not have a U.S. label home, although the rock-oriented band’s deal with Boilermaker/Arista covers the U.K. and continental Europe. However, the word-of-mouth generated by activity in Japan and early, positive press response in the U.K. have tweaked the interest of state-side import buyers and consumers.

“Hearing a rock band—particularly a rock band—to spark this kind of pre-release interest,” says Marion Cretton, manager of Record Kitchen, an indie retailer in San Francisco. “That’s frequently reserved for dance or teen acts. The last we saw that kind of interest in a rock band was with [Epic’s] Travis.”

Oxford, England-based Animalhouse’s history goes back to 1997. Mark Gardener was free from his obligations to the now-defunct band Ride, while Sam Williams had previously played on both bands’ first two Supergrass albums. He’d also just left a band, the Mysterians, and of them then released low-key singles for local Oxford label Shifty Disco, which provided the first opportunity for them to work together in the studio.

Gardener and Williams began playing acoustic shows, and one of William’s songs, “Animal House,” became the name for their fledgling group. In what they describe as some kind of “strange destiny,” the other members all came on board.

Loz Colbert (Gardener’s former bandmate in Ride) joined on drums and percussion, Hari Teah joined on bass, and Jason King came from fronting his own band, Disco 45, to play keyboards and bass guitar: “It was a perfect, comfortable fit,” says Williams.

From there, they set out to create an infectious sound that Williams describes as “a new mix of classic pop songwriting, contemporary grooves, and cinematic soundtracks with a DJ mentality.”

The band is aiming to take its unique new sound on the road for a stint of club and midsize venue gigs throughout Europe this summer.

New Talent Spotlight

The Most Outstanding And Available Acts On Broadband Talent Net

VENUS HUM

The very first time Annette Stenman let her lush, skyloft voice fly over the meticulously designed electronic soundscapes fashioned by Miracile and Kip Kuhn, the three traded exotic, telepathic glances that said, “Wow, this feels like a band.” In performance, Venus Hum are mesmerizing. Miracile and Kuhn interplay their arsenal of keyboards, patch bays and PowerBows, while at the front of the stage, Stenman pours her very flexible voice into and down dizzying stacks of melody. Behind the group, on a large screen, a fast-changing video collage of geometric shapes, colors and computer-generated images pulsate in tune with the music. Overall, it’s a sumptuous musical feast for the senses.

For further artist details log on to www.broadbandtalentnet.com/venushum

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www.americanradiohistory.com
The Heatseekers Chart tells the best-selling titles by new and developing artists, as defined by 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/subgroup albums are immediately eligible to appear on the Heatseekers chart. All albums are available on cassette and CD. * Material indicates vinyl LP is available. Albums with the greatest sales gains © 2000, Billboard/BPI Communications.

### BILLBOARD’S HEATSEEKERS, ALBUM CHART

**No. 1**

1. **F.A.T.E.**
   - "Ghetto Works 4795/Folkwed** (11.98/16.98)
   - **FOR ALL THAT’S ENDURED**

2. **KEITH URBAN**
   - "Capitol/Nashville** 109979** (10.98/16.98)
   - **KEITH URBAN**

3. **METHRO**
   - "Clowntown** 2000** (13.98/16.98)
   - **MY LIFE**

4. **3.14**
   - "btw/Neinwer** 30054** (12.98/16.98)
   - **MOTION IN STILL LIFE**

5. **HOKU**
   - "Geffen** 49064**/Interscope** (13.98/16.98)
   - **HOKU**

6. **THE TRAGICALY**
   - "Sire** 31135** (10.98/16.98)
   - **MUSIC @ WORK**

7. **U.P.O.**
   - "EPIC/RCA** 69069**/7 (10.98/16.98)
   - **NO PLEASANTEARS**

8. **ORANG=
   - "Bravado/Pinnacle** 31001 (10.98/16.98)
   - **BIUEMA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB/NEW ORLEANS**

9. **MONTGOMERY GENTRY**
   - "Columbia Nashville** 97575/Sony Nashville** (11.98/16.98)
   - **TATTOOS & SCARS**

10. **SONICFLOOD**
    - "Gotee** 92302** (15.98/16.98)
    - **SONICFLOOD**

11. **KEILS**
    - "Virgin** 47971** (11.98/16.98)
    - **KALEIDOSCOPE**

12. **ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ**
    - "Sony** CDS** 90382** (10.98/16.98)
    - **ENTRE TUS BRAZOS**

13. **ACOUSTIC ALCHEMY**
    - "Higher Octave** 49464**/Virgin** (17.98/16.98)
    - **THE BEAUTIFUL GAME**

14. **JOAN SEBASTIAN**
    - "MCA Nashville** 223010**/EMI** (11.98/16.98)
    - **SECRETO DE AMOR**

15. **DOPE**
    - "Fush** 60302**/EPIC** (10.98/16.98)
    - **FELON & REVOLUTIONAIRES**

16. **A BERN**
    - "Kodiak** 94549** (10.98/16.98)
    - **THE DANCE**

17. **TRINIC**
    - "S.E.A.*/RCA** 40359**/Interscope** (11.98/16.98)
    - **SPIRITUAL LOVE**

18. **LIMITED**
    - "Universal** 78797**/Virgin** (11.98/16.98)
    - **POR ENCONTRAR**

19. **A BERN**
    - "Kodiak** 94549** (10.98/16.98)
    - **AIR, FAMILY, RESPECT**

20. **WATERMARK**
    - "Evolutionary** 05090**/Interscope** (11.98/16.98)
    - **ALL THINGS NEW**

21. **OLIVE**
    - "Warner Bros** 47709**/Interscope** (10.98/16.98)
    - **TRICKLE**

22. **THALIA**
    - "EMI Latin** 26232**/Interscope** (17.98/16.98)
    - **ARRASANDO**

23. **SANDRA COLLINS**
    - "Mute** 5465** (19.98/16.98)
    - **LOST AND GONE FOREVER**

24. **TRANCEPOT**
    - "EMI Latin** 26232** (11.98/16.98)
    - **NEW ENGLAND**

### DOWN THAT RIVER

New Orleans-based country band *River Road* has already racked up several high-profile gigs, including being the opening act for Garth Brooks, Clint Black, and Diamond Rio. The band returns to the marketplace with its second album, “Somethin’ In The Water,” due July 18 on Virgin Records Nashville.

The album’s first single, “Breathless,” is No. 51 this issue on the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart. The video for the song is getting considerable rotation on CMT and Great American Country.

River Road will perform Aug. 5 in Sweet Home, Ore., and Aug. 12 in Mancos, Colo.

**Mound Life:**

Chad Brock Warner Bros. (11.98/16.98)

"The album, ‘River Road,’ is a complete change of direction for Chad Brock. He has moved from a purist country ethic to a more modern, pop-oriented sound. "The album is a blend of traditional country with a contemporary edge. It features some of Chad’s best writing, and he really brings out the best in his band’s performance."

**A BERN:**

Izzy Bizu A&M/Universal (11.98/16.98)

"Izzy Bizu is a young singer/songwriter who has been making waves on the UK charts with her debut album, ‘I Know It’s Over.’ She brings a fresh, new sound to the pop genre with her soulful vocals and relatable lyrics. "It’s been a pleasure to work with Izzy and see her grow as an artist. Her music has a lot of potential and I think she’s well on her way to becoming a big name in the industry."

**L A M B A S L I F E:**

Brendt Bourgeois EMI Latin (11.98/16.98)

"Brendt Bourgeois is the lead singer of the band, and his powerful vocal performance is the backbone of the album. "His unique voice and the band’s tight sound are what make this album stand out. "I’m excited to see what comes next from him and the band.”

**VIRGIN BAND:**

Rock band Virginwool is currently on tour for its major-label debut album, “Open Heart Surgery,” which is set for release Aug. 18 on Breaking/Atlantic Records. The album, produced by Brad Wood (Liz Phair, Veruca Salt), features first single “I Think Her Mother Loves Me.” The song has been released to modern rock, triple-A, and college radio.

The Orlando, Fla.-based band has opened shows for such acts as Creed, No Doubt, and Sister Hazel. Upcoming Virginwool tour dates include July 29 in Chicago.

**SPICE GUY:**

Dancehall reggae artist Richie Spice has established a following in his native Jamaica. He makes his U.S. debut with the album “Universal,” due July 18 on Heart Beat/Reunion Records. Guest artists on the album include Shaggy, Jah Mason, Snatcher Dogg, and Spanner Banner.

**LOUD CAGE:**

Cage’s debut album, “Loud On Earth,” is due July 25 on MCA Records. He says of the album, “It just wanted to create a landscape, a place where all these songs lived.”

**SLIP OF THE JAM:**

The Slip has been cultivating a following among fans of jam-oriented rock music through constant touring. The band’s second album, “Does,” has been released on Flying Frog Records, the label founded by Allman Brothers Band member Butch Trucks. Slip vocalist/drummer Andrew Barr says, “The folks who come to see us heard seemed to be linked by a desire to really listen and let the music have its impact.” The Slip is currently on a U.S. tour in support of “Does.”

**CAGE:**

Cage, who has been playing a select tour of the U.S., performs Friday (7) in Minneapolis.
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<td>3. Bassic</td>
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SPOTLIGHT

PHIL JOEL

PRODUCER: Tony Braunagel
Harvest HPW 1452

With a musician as discerning and adventurous as Taj Mahal, one never knows exactly where he is in the moment. This time out, however, he’s back where he started, playing blues in the context of popular music.

Taj Mahal, the bluesman who has carved a niche in the folk-rock tradition, is clearly a man with an eye for the future. His latest recording, “The Blues,” is both a testament to his musical legacy and a celebration of his past.

The album features luminaries such as Mavis Staples, Rosanne Cash, and Elton John, all contributing their talents to this dynamic collaboration.

The CD succeeds in capturing Taj Mahal’s unique musical style, blending traditional elements with a modern sensibility.

This is a must-listen for fans of Taj Mahal and those who appreciate the rich tradition of American blues and roots music.
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Amusement Business: 654-4704/4705fx
Kirkus: 654-4602/4706fx

www.americanradiohistory.com
when Rodgers was 18 years old, the lowest, the lovely "Away From You," is from his 1960 collaboration with Harry Warren on the musical "Bee," Musically brilliant, inspired by scholarship.

**SCIENCE OF LIFE**

Coming Forth By Day: The Book Of The Dead

PRODUCERS: Sonya Music, Inc.

Purveyors of New York's hip-hop underground, Science Of Life (SOL) look to sur-
face above ground with their full-length
debut, "Coming Forth By Day." Lil Sci, Insane Will and L.I.D. have been known for knowledge-filled 12-inch single
tracks such as "Metaphysics" and their lyrical consciousness. "U.S.A. Underground Starvin Artists" is different.

**PRODUCER:** Marco Mazzola

**Chico Cesar**

**Blade**

**PRODUCERS:** Brian Blade, John Nocita

**Perceptual**

**PRODUCERS:** various

**SONIQUE's "Feel So Good"**

sight right through the competition and
drowned the airwaves with a dance sound
that was fresh and exciting to American
top 40 listeners. Now the big question:
Can she do it again with a song just different enough to
not make that association? Good
to enough to deliver immediate familiarity?
Already garnering top five points at
Canadian radio (No. 5/10), Miami, Sonique's
"Sky" certainly has sassy production at
her fingertips, a la Rick Neeles and Mario Biondi,
utility & a little girl glass fingerprint of
this particular season: raucous, punchy, rhythmic
chorus is not as immediate as on
"I Feel So Good," this song carries a
electric, high-voltage soul with
joy and an optimistic lyric of certainty and
the strength within to deliver
dreams. With her debut album,
"My Cry," already gold, Sonique has
obviously struck a chord with
listeners looking for something
that stays from top 40's current recipe for
success. Here's hoping stations will recognize the
differently for the group to
grow and truly show that she's not
another one-trick pony.

**N & N NOTEWORTHY**

Heskerling, whose credits include
"Fast Times At Ridgemont High" and
"Clueless," a woman who
reads the track features the principal actors from
"Clueless" and "Ridgemont High,
"Bigg," and if "Loser" clicks with
the agoraphobe, this band will likely
grab the all-important "Dance With
Me." But even without that extra push,
"Teenage Dirtbag" stands strongly
on its own as an anthem of
grow and a song many teens will be
proved to push hard from their car speakers.

**Wheatley's "You're So Round"
**

**BARRY PHILLIPS**

**CHELSEA PERRY**

**PUBLISHERS:** BMG Blackwood/Mortakanda

**ARTISTS:** 3 CDs

**Singles:**

**NEW & NOTEWORTHY**

Heskerling, whose credits include
"Fast Times At Ridgemont High" and
"Clueless," a woman who
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**ARTISTS:** 3 CDs

**Singles:**
the bloopy melody is plentifully memorable. It's featured a cappella as the closing number of "Whistle Stop" from Roger Miller. A high-energy club mix—which drops to a minimum when the vocals are traded with the Hamster and bus Fiji, Zuzo, and Dixie—only adds to the potency here. All in all, this is a striking and potentially eye-opening release with younger-leaning stations willing to take a chance on what could only be called a guilty pleasure. To their credit, Notorius Edie has gone all-in with a full-on near-apocalyptic and politically laden set. As of this writing, I can't help but feel that claims that Hampton and crew have been visited only 80 million times from 1930 through 2015 is a misrepresentation of the band's market potential.

---

**SPOTLIGHT**

---

**BOYZ II MEN Pass Yo By (3:59)**

PRODUCERS: Boyz II Men
WRITER: Stedman
PUBLISHERS: Shaw Patrick Publishing/Emig Music Corp.
BMI

Use of the word "boyz" has already been extended to the Boyz II Men, in that it's been used more than once within the same song. The following is a three-year sequence since the Boys released their latest platinum multi-album, "How High the Moon," which included the song "Pass Yo By." In these first three years since the Boys' last album, you'd think the word "boyz" would have become less frequent. However, they're still in the game. This song has become a staple of many radio stations and appears to be a crowd favorite. The Boys' "Pass Yo By" is a big hit and is currently climbing up the charts. It's a fun, lively song with a catchy melody that's sure to get the audience moving. The Boys' "Pass Yo By" is a must-listen for fans of R&B and hip-hop music.

---

**DANNIE LEIGH I Don't Feel That Way Anymore (3:31)**

PRODUCERS: Dan Huff
WRITERS: B. James, J. Betts
PUBLISHERS: Universal/DRAM/EMI, Big Hit Red Tuxedo Music/Chappell, Music Rapids
Monument

Monument

---

**BILLY RAY CYRUS You Won't Be Lonely Now (3:43)**

PRODUCERS: Dann Huff
WRITERS: B. James, J. Betts
PUBLISHERS: Universal/DRAM/EMI, Big Hit Red Tuxedo Music/Chappell, Music Rapids
Monument

Monument

---

**COLT LANCE In The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin (3:04)**

PRODUCERS: Colt Lance
WRITERS: T. Bedingfield, B. Wanya
SOUNDWAVES Music Corp.
BMI

Use of the word "bubbly" has already been extended to the Colt Lance, in that it's been used more than once within the same song. The following is a three-year sequence since the Boys released their latest platinum multi-album, "How High the Moon," which included the song "Pass Yo By." In these first three years since the Boys' last album, you'd think the word "bubbly" would have become less frequent. However, they're still in the game. This song has become a staple of many radio stations and appears to be a crowd favorite. The Boys' "Pass Yo By" is a big hit and is currently climbing up the charts. It's a fun, lively song with a catchy melody that's sure to get the audience moving. The Boys' "Pass Yo By" is a must-listen for fans of R&B and hip-hop music.
Will Downing Returns To R&B Sound
Jazz Artist Aims To Be ‘All The Man You Need’ On Motown

BY JEFF LOREZ
NEW YORK—Motown’s July 18 release, “All The Man You Need,” represents Will Downing’s latest R&B-ori-
ented set in over a decade. The singer/songwriter debuted on Island Records in the late 80s with an
out-and-out R&B album. But he gradu-
ally moved away from the genre, car-
voring an adult contemporary jazz
niche. His last album on Verve Fore-
cast with saxophonist Gerald Albright
(1998’s “Pleasures Of The Night”) remained No. 1 on the jazz charts for
nine weeks. However, as a result of the
Universal/Polys Gram merger, Downing
found himself on Motown.
This new album is a good project
because it was a reunion of sorts,” says
Downing. “I’ve known Kedar [Motown
president/CEO Massenburg] since
high school. It was really my influence that took me in this direc-
tion. He said, ‘The contemporary
jazz thing is a very safe thing to do.
But you’ve got some fire in you. Let’s have some edge.’”
Downing collabora-
ted with an array of
writers and produ-
cers, including Rox Rideout, James
Poyser, Gordon Chambers, and Stan-
ley Brown and Kelly Price (the latter
pair collaborating on the May 23-
released first single “When You
Need Me,” a duet with MCES Chante). The
result is an album whose sound com-
petes with that of labelmate Brian
Knight, as well as of contemporary
donors Carl “Phat” Thomas and Joe
(through such songs as the syncopated
groove “Summer Day,” breezy “Share
My World,” and funky “Tired Melody”) without sacrificing Downing’s
core adult audience.
“This was different for me because
I’ve been in another space for the last
few years,” Downing admits. “When I
first started doing this project, I
didn’t know if I could pull it off because I
thought I was stepping away from who
I am. As I look back now, I’m real
proud of it.”
Cover songs have been a staple of
Downing’s career (his own music is
published through WillDown/
ASCAP), and the latter is joined by a
meeting of Denise Williams “Free” in
88. The new album continues that tradi-
tion with an interesting take on Bill
Withers’ “Grandma’s Hands.”
“One day I was just listening to
the radio in New York. It came on, and
I started singing along,” recalls Downing.
“It just felt good to me. I thought,”
“Damn, maybe I should try and add
a little twist to it.”
Downing is more than aware that in
the ephemeral music industry, his 12-
tyear tenure—during which he’s been
managed by Bruce Garfield for Avenue
Management and his six Motown
albums—is in itself something of a
landmark, bearing testa-
ment to his staying power and loyal fan
base. He attributes his success to one
simple concept: staying
true to his musi-
cal vision.
“I always did the
one thing that people told me not to
do,” he says. “They’d say, ‘Hey,
your stuff is catered too much to
adults.’ That’s the one thing I’ve
always maintained. A ballad lasts forever. If I
stay on this course, I’m going to last forever. I’m going to have a career.”
Indeed, phase one of Motown’s mar-
keting campaign aims to target Down-
ning’s core adult market. “We’re plac-
ing print ads in Black Enterprise,
Essence, Jet, Black Hair, and Today’s
Black Woman, as well as numerous
local newspapers,” says Motown mar-
keting director Lynn Scott. “We’ll also
be running radio ads during drive time
and quiet storm shows in some of
Will’s strongest markets—New York,
Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Kansas City
[Mo.], St. Louis, Orlando [Fla.],
Nashville, and Birmingham [Ala.].”
In addition, Downing will be hit-
ing the road “Thursday [6] for an
extensive U.S. tour with fellow artists
Chanté Moore, Gerald Albright, and
Phil Perry. Motown 12 also released a
number of low-priced dis-
counted CDs with the presenta-
tion of concert-ticket coupons.
“Will is a solid vocalist who has his
own signature sound,” says Larry
Jeter, owner/broker of Baltimore’s
Dimensions In Music. “He has a very
strong following in this area, and this
new single seems like it’ll be the one
cross over in the way he deserves.”

System Reboots After More Than A Decade; Catching Up With Broussard And Britt

SYSTEM ANALYSIS: For intrepid techno/funk
masters Mic Murphy and David Frank—a duo who
System—time has flown since the release of their first
Atlantic album (1989’s “Rhythm And Associates.”)
And it’s safe to say that if you were to ask “Do the
Paula’s sport? No. 1 hit of 1983 “My
work and pay for membership with
Rashaun Patterson
Trina Broussard, an
R&B singer, has been
through some
sounding “Soul Food.” The beat-laden: “You Are In
My System Version,” featuring Mobb Deep’s Prodi-
yg, was actually reworked by the pair in 1995-96.
When we did this version, we thought it was a little
too progressive,” recalls Murphy. “But when you
listen to music now, even R&B is incorporating tri-
umph and rock—it’s an amalgamation of different styles.
So now the song really fits with what’s going on.
”Tell me what time is, they say, you’re always ahead of your time,” says Frank. “But there were
times when we’d both say we wish we could just be on
Duty.”
During the time between albums, the pair has kept
busier with individual songwriting/producing projects.
The Los Angeles-based Frank has worked with
Dionne Farris, Christina Aguilera (“Genie In A
Bottle”), and upcoming Bad Boy act Dream (“He
Loves You Not”). New York-based Murphy has worked
with Teddy Riley, MeShell Ndegéocello, and Tom
Jones.
The pair is hoping to do a small tour in support of
the new album because, as Murphy notes, “We
never
had the opportunity to present the System in
the most favorable light: smaller venues. It would be
great to have a hit single. And a small tour would be
great punctuation on two decades.”

AFTER THE CONCERT: Spotted at Leon Ware’s
recent Marvin Gaye-themed soiree (The Rhythm and
the Blues, June 17): singer Trina Broussard and
Improv2’s Johnny Britt. Broussard, whose stellar So
So Def/Columbia 1999 debut was inexplicably cut by
the label, is now based in Los
Angeles and busy doing ses-
sion work and paying for
ление with Rashaun Patterson.
“Though I’m no longer with Columbia or So So Def,” she\ says, “I’m grateful
to Jermaine Dupri for the opportunity to let the
world hear and see me. There’s still a buzz. And every-
thing happens for a reason.” Indeed, the singer, who
first caught the ears of many on the “Love Jones”
soundtrack, is looking at other options, including a
new independent release.

Britt, meanwhile, has been involved with several
projects, from producing the music for the Temptations
and Little Richard telefilm to writing/singing
on the recent syndicated TV offering “Something To
Sing About.” Formerly with MoJazz, he and
Improv2 cohort Sean Mac are still together
and hope to do another album. Till then, both are busy
writing songs; recent examples: Boney James (“I’ll
Always Love You”) and Rick Braun (the trac-
“Groove’s Groove”) will appear on the trumpeter’s
upcoming August release).

INDUSTRY NOTES: Freeworld/Capitol teen
singer Sammie will be one of those discussing
today’s concept of fame when CBS presents a spe-
cial look at the subject via “48 Hours,” 10 p.m.
EDT on Wednesday (5).

CLARIFICATION: The contact numbers for the
Rhythm & Blues Foundation are 202-588-5566 and
800-258-3799.

DOUGY

Gospel Special. Tommy Boy/MSS Records recently taped the television special “Fountain Of Youth” at the Whitley Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles. The program features such label acts as 4th Element, Tonex, and Kim Burrell. Pictured from left, are 4th Element member Mike Sanchez; the group’s manager, Gerald Bell; artist/producer Tonex; Tommy Boy Gospel president Max Sief; and 4th Element’s Eddie Cole and Dawnie Davis. Kneeling in front is 4th Element’s Jesse Davis.

Video Shoot. Epic artist Ghostface Killah recently filmed the video for his new
single, “Cherchez LaGhost,” at the presidential suite in New York’s Parker Merid-
ian. Pictured, from left, are Ghostface Killah, an unidentified female video partic-
DIONNE

FRANK

FARRIS

MURPHY

TINOX

NDEGEOCELLO

JONES

WILL

DOWNING

THE RHYTHM AND THE BLUES

by Gaul Mitchell

www.americanradiohistory.com
# Billboard®

**JULY 8, 2000**

## Hot Rap Singles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>FLAMBOYANT</td>
<td>Big L (Big Train)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FLOWERS FOR THE DEAD (M)</td>
<td>Cuban Link</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TIPPIES (I'm Gonna Try For Respect)</td>
<td>Too Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50 O Flav</td>
<td>Midwest Mafia Featuring Party Bankz</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4*1 (Let's Get It Started)</td>
<td>(Nelly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>HOT GIL</td>
<td>Today (Get On Da Tyme)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>WHISTLE WHILE YOUR TWURK CRACKS</td>
<td>Ying Yang Twigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I LIKE DEM GIRLS</td>
<td>Lil Jon &amp; the East Side Boyz</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>BOUNCE</td>
<td>Miracle</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THE NEXT EPISODE</td>
<td>Jeru the Damaja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Y'ALL CAN'T NEVER HURT US</td>
<td>DMD</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>GET BUCK</td>
<td>Jovashes</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>BOY B &amp; ROYAL MIX 'MEMBER OR ELLIOTT FEATURING WAP, E.G.T.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>THE REAL SLIM SHADY</td>
<td>Eminem</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>SOFTLY</td>
<td>J.Abemon</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>HOW WE ROLL</td>
<td>I2</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>ANYTHING BIG PIMPIN'</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>IT TAKES TWO</td>
<td>DJ Kool Featuring Fatman Scoop</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>G'D UP</td>
<td>Snoog Dogg Presents Tha Eastsidaz</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>GET YOUR MONEY</td>
<td>Yo-Dot Dirty Featuring Jadakiss</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>BREAK FOOL</td>
<td>Dahmone</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>IT'S SO HARD</td>
<td>Big Punisher Featuring Donell Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>IMAGINE THAT</td>
<td>LL Cool J</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>SOLE FEATURING J'MONE &amp; KANDY (BREAK DANCE)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>FRANKIE LIGHTS +20TH CENTURY</td>
<td>Warlock</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>THE ULTIMATE HIGH</td>
<td>Nature Featuring Natsy</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>BE NOT MAD</td>
<td>WHOA (I'M BLAME)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>NEWEY'S COMEBACK</td>
<td>B.B. Jay</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>STRINGS</td>
<td>Spooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>THAT'S ME</td>
<td>Cam Ron</td>
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</tbody>
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### NEW GAINER

BLESSED Assurance: Christian-centered rap is nothing new—acts like the Gifted have been delivering gospel through rhymes to British streets, clubs, and prisons for more than a decade. However, destined to make a bigger impact is the hitherto little-known Blessed Man, a rapper who began his career with the Gifted in 1994 before going solo in 1998.

He and his crew are捐款 doors to their new album, The Gifted, a mixtape featuring a hard-hitting vocal delivery usually associated with ghetto-centric rap. And it’s all laid over the kind of rough beats favored by British underground rap heads.

The just-released five-track “Represents What’s Nice” EP on Blessed Records is a prelude to his still-unuddled album debut due this fall. Def Jam and R&B fans like “Not Ashamed Of The Gospel,” “Ha Ha, Ha,” and “Ain’t Going Out Like That” are capable of rocking any rap joint, subject matter notwithstanding. It builds upon the buzz created by Blessed Man’s debut single, last year’s “Bless The Nation.” And as evidenced on the track “Microphone Ministry,” he mixes street-conscious themes with on-point production, making his music very accessible to secular rap and R&B fans.

“The response from the Christian community has been encouraging,” says Blessed Man. “The secular response has also been good, with airplay on Choice FM, FLR, and Radio 1.”

However, Karen Joy Langley, editor of London-based Soul Trade magazine and an observer of the gospel rap scene for many years, believes that despite the success of Blessed Man’s strong production and attractive vocal delivery, it’s unlikely he’ll be the one to break through to the mainstream. “People are used to hearing rap being delivered with an American, or even an English, accent,” she says. “But with no disrespect for where he’s coming from, I think his Nigerian accent is just not going to be easy on most ears, though I like what he’s saying.”

Despite the fact that British rap fans tend not to appreciatively support hometown rap talent and much prefer rap about dark, urban tales, Blessed Man—holder of a biochemistry degree and a diploma in practical ministry—is driven by higher goals to call up to the gospel. “Musically, the secular rap scene is well-advanced,” says Blessed Man. “There’s so much creativity in the beats, the drum loops, and hooks, and drums. But lyrically, I feel that most of today’s MCs have nothing to say. They can rhyme, but the messages are usually about dope, drugs, sex, or violence. But there’s more to talk about, like black history. Groups like Public Enemy made an impact because they were speaking to a generation. My all-time classics are Stop The Violence Movement’s ‘Self-Destruction’ and ‘O’Clock’ by Nonpoint.”

“The vibe of this album is definitely about positivity. It addresses real life biblically and practically by touching on issues like racism, injustice, and God’s plan for us. The beats are modern, so it can easily cross over and compete with the secular rappers,” adds the artist, who prefers to be known as a “Christian rapper” because it means good-news rapper.

WORLD UP: So what else is happening in Britain? Producer Mark B and veteran underground rapper Blade released June 26 a double-A-sided single, “From The Word Lab?” Split personalities, via World Up’s bridge lyrics, the next single to hit radio will be “Fire” on July 10, a track that was produced and mixed by Rhymes. “Fire” will be released just in time to catch the summer rush of new music. The Hype Williams-directed video for “Fire” will premiere July 19 on MTV, during the week before it will be the topic of an episode of the cable channel’s “Making The Video.”

The fanfare accompanying the release of “Anarchy” was partly due to the in-store performances planned around the release date. Cities on the retail tour included Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, and Los Angeles. Not to be outdone by all the other big-ticket R&B concerts out there this summer, Rhymes and crew are in process of planning a late-summer tour to support “Anarchy” and other Flipmode projects.
Radio Quotations: Bandit, a member of rap crews Supreme & Asylum and a director of its Gran-Kru record label, recently wrote to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, making a case on behalf of radio quotas for British urban music such as rap and R&B. He says the music is being stifled due to "limited airplay coupled with the continuing barrier against foreign imports with bigger bank accounts."

In order to nurture budding home-grown artists and develop a thriving domestic music economy, Bandit proposes a law that stipulates 40%-50% of all music airplay on all radio must be of British origin, with at least 20% by new artists. This will "certainly prompt major record labels to increase their signing of British urban artists," says Bandit.

His campaign is inspired by legislation in France that requires 40% of music aired on French radio to be French-speaking. However, one of the reasons France has a strong domestic music scene is because it's partly immune to the dominant English-speaking American rap acts.

Wild for Dance Music: Kroto is the latest dance music that's driving urban black South Africa wild. It mixes singing, chanting, and rap (reggae rapping) with DJs, hip-hop, and house music. Its irresistible dance groove underpins both partying and socio-liturgical lyrics. It's also revived the careers of singers like Brenda Fassie and made gold-selling stars out of such rapped artists as Arthur and MI—both of whom have contributed tracks on "Kwazulu South African Funk," released July 9 in Europe by Stern's. "It's all about ghetto music," says Arthur, who provides three cuts, including the reproachable "Kaffir Derby" (for derogatory term for blacks). All but Boom Shank'a take on the national anthem, "Kosikilela" (Goal Bless Africa), is issued from major labels.

Kroto can be reached at kroto0000@hotmail.com.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 1</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST/FIRMATION/PROMOTION LABEL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I DON'T WANNA</td>
<td>ALJAHN (REPRESENTATION/NOR)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>WHERE I MARCH</td>
<td>TRAVIS (REPRESENTATION/DEE)</td>
</tr>
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Records are listed for the top 25 songs on the Billboard Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay chart as of July 8, 2000, based on data from Broadcast Data Systems' Radio Track service.
Billboard’s Dance Summit Boasts Tight Lineups

BY JULIE TARASKA

NEW YORK—In the Thievery Corporation, the grooves are serpentine, the percussion is to the front of the mix, and the vocals—which can range from reggae chatbox to French Gospel to wordless murmurs—waft in like a breeze.

On the Washington, D.C.-based duo’s third album, "The Mirror Conspiracy," dub and bass nova influences are increasingly predominate, rendering the beats blunted and unrelenting. It’s a mix that draws to the band’s own Eighteenth Street Lounge (ESL) Music; it will be issued worldwide the day before via 4AD/Bad Bones.

Band members Eric Hinton and Rob Garza met in 1996, when both were already making music. Hinton was a DJ whose tastes were classic British mod ‘60s jazz, ska, northern soul, a little rock. A self-described "idiot savant who can’t play an instrument but knows which sounds [I want]," he began recording as early as 1990, hiring musicians to create a blend of funk, acid-jazz, and bass nova that he released under the name Exotic規terns.

Garza, meanwhile, was more of an engineer and producer. As a child, he listened to big-band orchestras and the saxophone. Transferring jazz by age 16, he had built his own basement studio. Punk was an early muse, then experimental industrial. At the time he met Hinton, Garza was recording techno breakbeat tracks under the names Dopamine and Jimi Mind Trick.

Thievery’s 1996 debut set, “Sounds From The Thievery Hi-Fi,” sold more than 100,000 copies worldwide, according to ESL, Music label manager Kalani Tifford, who also manages Thievery Corporation. Last year, the duo issued "Junglist: An Antimatter of Style," K7’s mix-CD series, “DJ Kicks,” and "Abduction And Reconstructions," a collection of remixes that the pair has done for DJ Cam, Warren G, and Vas, among others. Tifford estimates that worldwide the albums have sold 75,000 and 35,000 copies, respectively.

Aside from Thievery Corporation and Garza feel their appetite for vinyl—rather than DJ’s—musical variety—fuels their international sound.

"Go-go, bossa nova, dub, punk rock... You can hear any of that in D.C. any day of the week," says Hinton. "But we’re more inspired by our own record collections. We go on a search and try to go into our own territories. Like if we hear a French dad mix record that sounds really interesting, we’ll check it out."

But both agree that D.C.’s do-it-yourself legacy and Garza’s feel for vinyl make Thievery Corporation a true cut of the year. In addition to the record label, Hinton co-owns the Eighteenth Street Lounge, a local club that used to count Dubfire—of fellow D.C. house act, Deep Dish—among its resident DJs. As a resident DJ at the Lounge, Hinton will DJ at Eclipse, across from Hinton’s other venture, the Dragonfly sushi bar.

To promote "The Mirror Conspiracy," Thievery will release the first cut from the album, “Focus On Sight.” The single, which will be issued in a 10-inch vinyl format, will be available Aug. 22 in the U.S., U.K., Italy, Portugal, and Morocco. David Reza of ESL Music handles all bookings.
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  TINA ANN
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  FRANKIE KNUCKLES
  DAVID MORALES & PETER RAUHOFER
- Todd Terry
- DJ Skribble
- Dave Ralph
- Bobby D'Ambrosio
- Richie Santana
- Joe T. Vannell
- Todd Patterson
- Satoshi Tomiie
- Joey Negro
- Richard Leslie
- Jamie Lewis
- Paulette Constant
- Susan Morabito
- Jeannie Hopper
- June Joseph
- Swedish Egil
- Paola Paletto
- Swayzak (aka James Taylor and David "Broom" Brown)
- Harry "Choo Choo" Romero
- Jose Nunez
- Ray Velasquez
- Alex Gold
- Lord G.

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To register - www.billboard.com or cut out form and mail to: Michele Jacangelo, Billboard Dance Music Summit, 770 Broadway, 6th Fl., NY, NY 10003, or fax to: 646.654.4674. Make checks payable to Billboard Magazine. This form may be duplicated. Please type or print clearly.

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### DANCE TRAX

**From 1:30 a.m. to 2 a.m.**

Shelli Andranigan moderates this segment on the "DANCE TRAX" program. DANCE TRAX is a popular dance music radio program that features the latest in dance music and is syndicated by The Radio Network.

**From 2 a.m. to 3 a.m.**

Weekly selections from Billboard's Dance Club Play Charts, featuring both established and up-and-coming dance artists, are presented by Bill Kendall, host of the dance music radio program "DANCE TRAX." The chart is compiled from a national sample of dance clubs, and the songs are ranked based on airplay, sales, and streaming data.

**From 3 a.m. to 4 a.m.**

Weekly selections from Billboard's Top Singles Chart, which ranks the most popular singles in America, are featured by Bill Kendall, host of the dance music radio program "DANCE TRAX." The chart is compiled from a national sample of retail stores, and the songs are ranked based on sales and streaming data.

**From 4 a.m. to 5 a.m.**

Weekly selections from Billboard's Top Dance Songs Chart, which ranks the most popular dance songs in America, are featured by Bill Kendall, host of the dance music radio program "DANCE TRAX." The chart is compiled from a national sample of dance clubs, and the songs are ranked based on airplay, sales, and streaming data. The songs are also ranked based on the number of dance club plays and the number of online streams.
Some DJ Hall Of Fame Inductees Critical Of Country Radio; Pam Tills Joins Opyr

Six veteran radio broadcasters were inducted into the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame at a June 22 ceremony in Nashville. The awards are presented annually by the Country Radio Broadcasters (CRB). With the latest inductions, the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame now has 62 members, including broadcasting legends T. Tommy Cutrer, Bill Mack, Ralph Emery, and Charlie Douglas.

The latest inductees are Dave Donahue, Bob Grayson, Lee Moore, Smokes Stover, Roves Sullivan, and Johnny Western (Billboard, May 8). Loretta Lynn was given this year’s Career Achievement Award, and former KVOO Killeen, Texas, owner Gaylon Christie received the CRB President’s Award.

Several new inductees used the occasion to agitate the state of today’s country radio. In his acceptance speech, Donahue said it will become increasingly difficult for the Hall of Fame selection committee to find personalities to induct in the future “because of the scripted funnies and plastic personality bits of our young personalities are being asked to do, sometimes recorded days in advance for several stations with God knows what formats. We have to let the DJ be himself.”

Stover joked that he was writing a sequel to “Murder On Music Row” called “The Inferno Are Running The Asylum.” “I’m really disappointed in the way country radio is going,” he said. “And I hope down the road someone can find a way to fix it. There are too many clones. Too many artists that sound alike. We need some better material.”

Chriscut, a former recording artist who is also a member of the Rockabilly Hall of Fame, took a more positive view of the industry during his acceptance speech. He recently relinquished management control of his station to marketing guru Camae Harris after 40 years in the radio business. Chriscut said, “I have to say, from the bottom of my heart, consolidation’s been mighty good to me. I’ve been allowed for the last few months to live a life that has six Saturdays (a week).”

Pam Tills and Chely Wright were on hand to salute Lynn by taking turns singing a few of her songs, including a duet on “Coal Miner’s Daughter,” and by sharing their memories about the singer. Recalling Lynn’s heyday, Tills told the industry crowd, “What a special time it was in music when everybody here could put their own individual stamp on it. I’d like to see that spirit continue, that we’re all in it for the music.”

Lynn recounted a story about traveling in a rundown Mercury to visit radio stations to promote her first single, “You Ain’t Henery Too Kind,” with her late husband, Lynn. The couple heard her on the radio, it sounded fuzzy due to a faulty car radio. Lynn recalled, “Doobitle said, ‘Roll down the window and see if you can hear it better,’ and I did. That’s how stupid I was.”

On the Row: Jim Beavers is promoted from manager of sales to director of marketing and label operations for Virgin Records Nashville. Van Fletcher remains executive VP/GM.

Jennifer Meyer joins the Country Music Assn. (CMA) as creative and managing editor of the CMA’s magazine, Close Up. She previously was creative director of KID Music and program manager for Jim Owens & Associates. Also, CMA manager of membership services Rainey Brown is named manager of membership relations.

Jeff Stouten exits his position as director of national promotion at Young & Brown & Associates to join Dreamcatcher Entertainment as a regional promoter.

Artistic News: Pam Tills has accepted the Grand Ole Opry’s invitation to become its newest member. She will be formally inducted Aug. 26.

Ricohet steel guitarist Teddy Carr exits the group because he no longer wants to tour. He has been replaced by new member Shannon “Shawn” Farmer, who has performed for the past six years with Ty England, Doug Stone, and Neal McCoy.

Look for former Razor & Tie comedian Cedric T. Judd to join the Monument Records roster as record producer.

Divie Chicks’ Natalie Maines snuck off to a secret wedding with actor Adrian Pasdar in the early-morning hours June 24 during a tour stop in Las Vegas. The tour continued later that day in Salt Lake City. The wedding was attended only by a photographer and a bodyguard.

Headhunters Rock Out On ‘Ranch’

Veteran Act Makes Audium Label Debut With Latest Set

By Ray Waddell

Nashville—The ongoing saga of the Kentucky Headhunters takes as many twists and turns as the Kentucky back roads from whence they sprung, and their new Audium Records release, “Songs From The Grass String Ranch,” due Aug. 8, sends the band ever further on its journey.

Originally formed in the late 1980s as Itchy Brother, the band first rooked the country music world in 1989 with “Pickin’ On Nashville,” an eye-opening romp that was equal parts Don Gibson and Lynyrd Skynyrd. “Pickin’ On Nashville” ended up selling 2.4 million copies for Mercury, and the Headhunters were on their way, or so it seemed.

But a run-up- cpd 1992 breakup saw brothers Ricky Lee Phelps (the band’s front man) and Doug Phelps (bass) leave to start the short-lived duo Brother Phelps. The Headhunters sold out Nashville’s Ryman Auditorium in 1996, recording two critically sound but commercially weak albums.

Now the band’s story takes another twist. When Brother Phelps never took off on its deal with Asylum Records, Ricky Lee left the music business, and Doug returned to the Kentucky Headhunters in 1996, taking over lead vocal duties. Orr left the band, and Kenney stayed on bass, along with original Headhunters Greg Martin (lead guitar) and brothers Richard Young (rhythm guitar) and Fred Young (drums). This is the lineup that exists today.

Through it all, the Headhunters have demonstrated remarkable tenacity. “People ask if it was rough on us when the Phelps brothers left,” Wills said. “Believe me, it was.”

“I’ve never had a band that I lie down and quit. There never was really a bad period of time, but we’ve been doing this for 12 years, and every day can’t be a diamond.”

“I will say this: Wherever the Headhunters have been, they’ve always made the album they should’ve made at that time.” Young adds.

For his part, Young, 45, added his own chapter to the Headhunters saga (Continued on page 35)

Steapill, Hampton, Edwards, Riders Get Multiple Masters Awards Nods

By Deborah Evans Price

Nashville—Red Steagall, R.W. Hampton, Don Edwards, and Riders In The Sky are among the acts receiving multiple nominations for the Will Rogers Cowboy Masters Awards, presented by the Academy of Western Artists (AWA). Hosted by Tracy Foster, the 10th annual awards show is slated for July 11 at the Scott Theater in Fort Worth, Texas.

The AWA’s reigning entertainers of the year, Dave Alexander, along with Jeanne Martin, among those scheduled to perform on the awards show, which will be broadcast on Fort Worth cable network Marcus.

The Botanical Resource Institute of Texas will hold an art show in conjunction with the awards that will showcase Western fine arts. According to AWA executive director Bobby Newton, the show will feature bronze and original oils as well as the work of spurs makers, saddle makers, and engravers.

During the awards show, the AWA will present awards to western music artists and craftsmen in such categories as saddle making, clock wagons, hitches, bronzer, engraving, and spurs making.

The following is a list of nominees in the music and poetry categories:

Western music male vocalist: Don Edwards, R.W. Hampton, Jeanne Martin, Fred Young, and Riders In The Sky.

Western music female vocalist: Jeanette Wilkerson, Jody Steppe, and Linda Adair.

Western music group or band: Steve Stn, Penney, The Rodeo Kings, The Storytellers, and The Texas Rangerband.

Western music soloist: Eldridge Cleary, Randy Elmore, Charles D. Wills, Randy Wills, and Golden Spike.

Western country/western vocalist: Jeannie Seely, Tytia Wells, and Jon Walker.

Western country/western instrumentalist: Tracey Bent, Tracey Bent & Tim Montgomery, and The Texas Playboys.


Western dance duo/group: Sons Of The San Juan, Texas Trailblazers, Desert Sons, Belinda Gail & Windy, Riders In The Sky.


Yodeling: Kent Overstreet, Sounders Sound, Bev DeShano, Kent Overstreet.

Western swing male vocalist: Dave Alexander, Buck Irvine, Craig Chambers, Junior Leaguer.

Western swing female vocalist: Donnie Wills, Tracy Fair, Joni Harris, Louise Savage, Faye Rain.

Instrumentalist: Rich O’Brian, Johnny Gimble.

Tommy Allsup, Randy Eldore, Mark Alden.

Western swing duo/group: Cowjav, Rascal Jukebox Texas Playboys, Asleep At The Wheel, Ray Price & The Cherokee Cowboys, Bucky Bears & The Ranger Riders.


Western country poetry categories:

Male: Chris Isaacs, Larry McWhorter, Dennis Flynn, Larry Maurice, Mike Pulaski.

Female: Elizabeth Ethert, Dwyce Davis, Ann Sochat, Terry Mason, Sue Wallis.

Humor: Clay Lindley, Dennis Gaines, Curt Brunett, Kent Rollins, Sky Rivers.


S MALL PACK AGE, BIG DELIVERY: Twelve-year-old Billy Gilman proves that size doesn’t necessarily matter as “One Voice” (Epic) arrives at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Country Albums at No. 4 and The Bill- board 200 at No. 52. Video, radio, and live television appearances pushed the poignant title track to No. 1 on Top Country Singles Sales last issue, where its scanner shows more than 12,000 to bullet atop that chart again.

We had some early partners that contributed,” says Mike Kras- ki, Sony Nashville senior sales and marketing VP “CMT stepped up very early on and was aggressive, which gave us more support at retail.” The June 19 appearance on Rosie O’Donnell’s show was an “unwilling com- pany, as the generous airplay we got right off the bat in markets like Phoenix, Nashville, and Omaha,” he adds. Kraski says the top three sales markets are Nashville, Phoenix, and Los Angeles.

Appearing at several of George Strait’s shows certainly didn’t hurt Gilman either and his performance on the May 3 Academy of Country Music Awards, where he produced “Access Hollywood,” or hosting duties for the legends segment on the June 15 TNN Music Awards. A June 24 appearance on TNN’s “Grand Ole Opry Live” and upcoming visits to the “Today” show and “CNN Showbiz” should also boost sales. “We had about 18-20 songs done in a very short time,” says Head- hunter strangeness. Songs like “deshi- co” and “Back To The Sun” are a pure joy, but a mid-album trumphy of “Dance,” Milsap released the album seven weeks ago, Gilman replaced Country Music Hall of Fame member Brenda Lee as the youngest solo act in history to appear on the list.

T H E LONGEST YARD: In a radio format that yields far too few en- during classes these days, Lee Ann Womack’s “I Hope You Dance” (MCA Nashville) is being hailed as a welcome exception. If it isn’t remembered for its message alone, it makes the chart history books this issue as the 100th No. 1 country chart-topper. “I Hope You Dance” by the Headhunter is the most times we’d probably publish an essay about it, so we won’t. For his 30 One Voice (Starstruck Angels, ASCAP/BMI) was released, according to Hunter. “But when you look at it, it’s as if it’s going to be in the classic” era, says Yarbrough. “We’re going to tour the very closely, and in every tour mark we’ll be shooting materials.”

Hunter’s best hopes for the new record don’t necessarily have to include heavy-duty chart action. “If we can get the artists a big royal check and something they can be happy with a low profile,” he says, adding that he feels the record can reach 100,000-plus in sales. “We plan to work it and we hope we do—we hope we do—for two years.”

For his part, Young is glad to be in the long haul. “Not that I quit small,” the album might be an arm haint [ghost],” he says, “Lord knows what the next record’ll be like.”

The hard-touring Kentucky Headhunters are booked by Monterey Artists.

when he suffered a heart attack onstage while performing “Grass String Ranch” with the band May 6 in Oklahoma City (Billboard, May 20). He blade to rise to 39-39 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks, “One Voice” spins at 141 monitored stations, with heavy airplay (more than 38 plays) detected at KMLE and KNIX Phoenix; KULP Portland, Ore.; WCTO Allenstown, Pa.; and WMQZ Washington, D.C.

HEADHUNTER STYLE

Throughout the changes, the Head- hunters always worked. “We’re unique in that we run a profitable, strong opera- tion that allows us to continue to spread the word,” says Mitchell Fox, the band’s manager since 1978. “The boys are fighting to keep that thing going, and they’re doing it, and they’re doing it for the best day of their lives.”

When the single entered the radio chart seven weeks ago, Gilman replaced Country Music Hall of Fame member Brenda Lee as the youngest solo act in history to appear on the list.

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HEADCOUNT

(Continued from page 38)

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INDIE-MINDED: Pianist Andreas Schiff has always been very much his own man, forging a singular path among a host of super-talented Hungarian peers to come of age in the CD era. As the rug has since come out from under the classical record business, the highly cultured artist has found every reason to be more outspoken, more independent. The 47-year-old's fruitful tenure with Teldec came to a rather abrupt end here recently with the change leading to what looks to be an inspired part- nership with an indie label: ECM New Series.

“One hears so many negative things about the classical recording industry, and it’s true—there are many negative things about it,” Schiff says. “So, at a time when the major companies show a lack of imagination, ECM is refreshing. There is no corporate mentality, because it is Manfred Eicher’s company. I also appreciate his philosophy of sound, and the presentation has a creativity and integrity that appeal to me very much.

I think this is a label where I can do projects that interest me, which is not to re-sort things I’ve already done but to make some individual solo recitals and chamber music.”

Schiff’s recording is an ECM set pairing Schubert’s solo “Wanderer Fantasy” with the composer’s C Major Fantasy for Violin and Piano, Schiff’s wife, Yuuko Shikokawa, is the violinist. Schiff has two more ECM albums ready for release: one of Schumann’s F Minor Sonata and Novel- ettes, the other a collection of transcriptions, a “powerfully poetic displays of pianism I’ve ever witnessed” was Schiff holding a BBC Proms crowd rapt with Janácek’s Sonata “I.1.1906” in London’s huge Royal Albert Hall.) The future recording had it was a “poli- tically themed” event at the Salzburg Mozarteum, where his wife teaches. And, refreshingly, he tackled it like he walked it, as with the liner notes to his Teldec duo, he outdid his own engagements if his hard work on his Teldec duets over decades. He executed those pianists whose celestial background adhered to the Viennese Classical style—including sacred cows Glenn Gould and Sviatoslav Richter. His tenacity overcame the apple cart in piano circles.

“I didn’t mean to upset anyone,” Schiff says. “I have the highest admiration for Gould as an artist, but one should try to be objective. His treatment of Mozart just not to the same level of accomplishment or sincerity as his Bach ‘Goldberg Variations’ or his interpretations of British vocal music. Richter, he has always been a hero of mine. It’s just that he did everything, and he was obviously more attuned to Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, and even Schumann than he was Mozart or Haydn. These sorts of limitations apply to every artist. I am not temperamentally suited to, say, Lheif or Lis- colin, so I should leave these composers to all these pianists who are.”

Schiff’s opinions on classical musicians delving into the crossover world also came as a surprise, even to the rock and jazz-friendly violinist Nigel Kennedy traded bars in the British media. “I do not want any fads,” Schiff says. “It’s just that I feel that this pop- ulation is not helping classical music. It’s only bringing in people when they are not educated—and who won’t be in this manner. This is not a substitute for real education, for real classical music. I am only an elitist when it comes to quality. Just like a great wine, classical music should not be diluted just to sell more of it.”

also issued a live solo recital of Handel, Brahms, and Reger from London’s Concertgebouw Orches- tra, and there are a pair of excellent Schuman- na albums, including a nocturna program with several rarely heard late pieces. Schiff’s most exciting Teldec release, however, was the 1995 album with the Teldec world premiere of Schumann’s “Variations” and “Dreams,” one of those rare instances when Schiff says, “He was a mar- velous composer and a marvelous human being—one of those forgotten heroes, important in the evolution from Bartók and Kodály to Ligeti and Kurtag. It was great that we could do this with Teldec, because although one recording may not be a lot, it is much more than nothing. It helped to get Ver- ness more recognition in Buch.”

Prior to Schiff’s year with Teldec, he was one of Decca’s prime piano stars. He recorded for the label the complete sonatas and concertos of Mozart, the complete sonatas of Schubert, and much Schubert liked with tenor Peter Schreier, as well as a unique release of the Schubert Wheelworks with Celli- nia Bartoli. But that’s not to mention one of Schiff’s prime specialties: the keyboard works of Bach. His preternaturally pianistic interpretations of Bach are captured in a series of Deccas’ simile box sets; live, his Bach can be heard in nearly every major city this year as he helps the world celebrate the composer’s 250th anniversary.

A sampling of Schiff’s Decca output can be had via his volume in Philips’ “Great Pianists Of...” edition: Schiff is not an artist who is afraid to take a stand or matters of principle, whether it is against recorded compilations (his refusal to allow his recordings to be fea- tured in any was a stick- ing point in his Teldec deal- ings) or right-wing developments in Austria (where he has canceled all of his engagements when he felt he was being pressured to promote). And, refreshingly, he tackles it like he walked it, as with the liner notes to his Teldec duos. He outdid his own engagements if his hard work on his Teldec duets over decades. He executed those pianists whose celestial background adhered to the Viennese Classical style—including sacred cows Glenn Gould and Sviatoslav Richter. His tenacity overcame the apple cart in piano circles.

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The label
Artists & Music

Jazz

by Steve Graybow

A TRAVELER'S TALE: Over the past 15 years, saxophonist Marty Ehrlich has repeatedly returned to a dual-saxophone, two-piece drum line that he refers to as Traveler's Tales, the latest edition featuring terror player Tony Malaby, based in Philadelphia, and Ehrlich's frequent collaborator, drummer Bobby Previte. "Malanie's Dance" (Omnitone, June 27), credited to Marty Ehrlich's Traveler's Tales and recorded live at New York's Knitting Factory, chronicles the band's strikingly sympathetic interaction.

"Most people think of a live record as being somewhat stretched-out thing with lots of jamming, but that is definitely not what we did here," says Ehrlich, who is heard on alto and soprano saxophone as well as flute. "The idea was to obtain the most spontaneous, dynamic feel possible. We recorded four nights, and it gave us the opportunity to try different ideas and see how we felt about them later on.

Growing up in St. Louis, Ehrlich studied with the acclaimed flautist Malinke Elliott, when the actor/playwright Malinke's Dance" also finds "Tantric," a Richard Manuel/Bob Dylan composition that first appeared on the Band's 1968 debut, "Music From Big Pink," Ehrlich, who has covered several Dylan compositions, feels that the song is a standard for his generation. "As an instrumentalist, the song's lyric has power to me," he says. "I wanted to capture different moods on this record, to make each composition different.

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THE WORLD: Billiard card has moved to 770 Broadway, New York, NY 10003. Blue Notes can be reached at 646-654-4599, fax 646-654-4731, and E-mail sgraybow@billion.com.

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SALUTING THE NEW YORK CITY MAYOR’S CUP

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Hello, AES Convention; Goodbye, Billboard

BY PAUL VERN

Friends... After 11 years at Billboard— the last six of which I spent editing the pro audio section—I am departing to pursue a career in music production and consulting.

As excited as I am to seek new horizons, I am more than a bit sadened to leave behind the Billboard family. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Billboard Magazine Group publisher Howard Landier, who supported my every move he e over the years; Billboard editor-in-chief Timo thy White, who was selfless enough to sate and satisfy my creative interests; Billboard Music Group VP of business development Ken Schlager, who had the nerve to hire me when I knew even less than I do now; former Billboard managing editor (and former pro audio editor) Susan Nunziata, who was as good a boss, mentor, and friend as one could ever hope to have; and Billboard veteran Don Jeffrey, who, in his new role as managing editor, was instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition in the pro audio department. Billboard will announce the new pro audio editor in the next issue.

I would also like to thank the following Billboard staffers for helping me fit into the many hats I wore here through the years: my good friend and neighbor Melinda Newman, Chris Morris, Irving Lichtman, Ed Christman, Larry Flick, Jeff Nielsen, Sean Ross, Bradley Bambarger, Marilyn Gillen, and Chuck Taylor.

I have been privileged to work with such a wonderful group of people, all of them brilliant at their jobs and unconditionally supportive as friends and colleagues.

Outside of Billboard, I am forever indebted to the following people for helping shape my understanding of the art and business of pro audio: Alex Abrash, Dave Amols, John Andrews, Jack Arky, Betty Bennett, Martin and Eva Böhm, Greg Calbi, Peter Chaikin, Ed Cherney and Rose Mann Cherney, Bob Clearmountain, Steve Cox, Dan Day, Dennis Diken, Randy Ezratty, Frank Filippetti, Michael Frondelli, Peter Giles, Dave Goggins, Bob Griffo, Keith Hatches, and Scott Hull.


So now, in parting, I'd like to borrow a phrase from my spiritual brother Mr. Bonzai (aka Adbul): "Assista amigo!"

The Complex Stays Current With Audio Post Work

BY DAN DALEY

The Complex is one of Los Angeles’ oldest facilities, dating back to 1929, before the term “project studio” had been coined. However, it faces some very modern issues as music recording facilities deal with a fast-changing landscape in professional audio.

Music recording rates continue to face downward pressure throughout the country, and a new generation of hard drive-based, mid-level studios are giving many larger facilities even more competition than the vast number of personal studios that have cropped up over the past decade, particularly in Southern California. The Complex had, however, the new ownership is willing and able to provide a higher level of financing to push the Complex further down the post path, a direc tion many music facilities look at longingly because of the high hourly rates that post-production can command, which presents potent al entrants with high technology and technical talent requirements.

The Complex has made significant investments in both areas; it has installed a Fairlight MXF-3plus digital audio workstation, and a digital audio workstation for many animated series, including “Futurama” and “King Of The Hill.”

In fact, during a walk-through of the studio’s “Blimp” cab could be heard working on a next-season episode featuring actor Michael Keaton.

Thanks, Billboards...
THE COMPLEX STAYS CURRENT WITH AUDIO POST WORK
(Continued from preceding page)
pose that underscores the philosophical approach we're taking to the business now. We're accelerating our pursuit of audio-video post-production.)

Other strategic indicators are closely aligned with the recent completed agreements with Los Angeles facility Pacific Soundwaves to provide access to design servers, and the more extensive pending alliance between the Complex and audio and video post facility Dome Audio Video & Effects, which has a huge 17-studio complex in Toronto. That joint venture is a natural progression for both facilities, says Dome supervisor of audio operations James Porteous.

"It's a real synergy," he explains. "There is a tremendous amount of shooting being done in Canada right now, but a lot of the principal and voice talent is still in the U.S., and a facility that sees the Complex has a lot of experience working with them and doing looping. For instance, we recently did a production in which Dan Castellaneta [the voice of Homer Simpson] worked from the Complex and sent his parts up here via EDNet, which is a system of both facilities use. That's the kind of thing I can envision happening on a daily basis.

Porteous and Conor have been professional friends for nearly a decade in the audio business. That's another small but significant advantage as the post industry in general heats up, not only in terms of work but also in terms of the complexity of the business as consolidation sweeps through the industry.

Two companies in particular, Liberty Media and Pacifica Media, have been on a tear through the industry in recent years, acquiring numerous independent facilities such as Wade-Douglas, Pacific Ocean Post, Riot, Encore, and other post houses, creating vertically integrated post-production conglomerates.

That strategy also creates the kinds of economies of scale that help post facilities ride out glitches in the business, due either to natural ups and downs in the flow of work or to more traumatic events, such as the ongoing Screen Actors Guild/American Federation of Television and Radio Artists commercial actors strike. Conner says these events are beginning to filter down to the post stages of commercial production.

"That's a very real phenomenon that has to be dealt with by post houses," says Porteous. "It's the current reality of the business. In addition, all of post is seeing a tremendous and rapid integration with the Internet right now, as well. So these kinds of strategic alliances broaden the reach of both facilities."

Conner says that a lot of thought has gone into not only the direction of the Complex's deepening move into post-production and the technology and personnel decisions and costs that come with it, but also the marketing and positioning of the facility as it makes that accelerated transition.

"First, we definitely saw a need for the kind of services we provide and are planning to provide, and definitely saw a need for them in this area, on the west side of Los Angeles, near the 405 and Santa Monica," she explains. "And so many facilities are being bought up by larger companies that many clients are facing a landscape of either huge facilities or boutique houses. What we're trying to do is offer a wider range of services but not to get so big that we can't offer a very high degree of personalized service.

Conner says, "Our marketing strategy is certainly part of a reaction to the consolidation of the business, to all the mergers and acquisitions going on. The post-production industry is redefining itself. The music industry did that a while ago. But the lines between post and music are continuing to blur and cross.

"Some people say that the music industry is getting smaller, whatever I think is that it's getting larger by association—more and more record companies are getting into video and interactive media attached to them," she adds. "There's the crossover with post. To work with music clients these days, you need a post-production attitude. It's all converging."

PRODUCTION CREDITS
BILLBOARD'S NO. 1 SINGLES (JULY 1, 2000)

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THEY'RE PLAYING MY SONG!
W R I T T E N B Y R A S H A N U N N Y

"MY LOVE IS REAL!"
Written By Greg Garing, Published By BUM G (BMG) (Greg Garing Music) (BMD)

As the lines between country and pop music become more and more blurred, it is interesting to see how today's artists create and often reshape, the music of that genre. Nashville-based singer/songwriter Teri Radigan puts her own spin on all-country hipster Greg Garing's "My Love Is Real," from his album titled debut on Vanguard Records, which came out May 16.

"I got a copy of the Greg Garing record, and I loved that song," says Teri Radigan. "I filed it away in my mind, and when it came time to record the album, I thought it would be a great song to do against my original demo and rework into something else's words." Radigan, a prolific songwriter in her own right who has written for Trisha Yearwood and Patty Loveless, also appreciated the freedom that came with taking one of the original's words and placing her own spin on it.

"As a songwriter, I really enjoy singing other people's songs because I can be more of a singer that way," she says. "When I write, I write for myself, so when I sing other people's music, it challenges me to do things that I otherwise would not." Radigan's version has a slower beat; it's more sultry.
DMX MUSIC, recognized as a leader in digital music with more than 100 satellite-delivered programs of nonstop music, is expanding its Latino music programming.

In 1997, DMX had only seven Latino formats: Tejano, rock en español, salsa, zouk, mariachi, Latin contemporary, and Latin rock. Today, it offers 12 channels, having added Mexican regional, fiesta tropical, Music Popular Brasileña, Latin jazz, and Music of La America, which says current Latino hits and 40% current American hits.

“We established the Musica de Las Americas channel because there is very little programming that offers a bilingual or mixed format,” says Robbie Ramirez, DMX’s Latin music director in Los Angeles. “We have a lot of English and no Spanish hits, and we feel this is an area with potential growth.”

Ramirez says DMX plans to add and tweak the Latino channels by September.

“We’re adding a Latino children’s music, a hola, and a Cuban music channel again, because there is no such niche programming anywhere, and our research shows the audience is out there for this,” he explains.

DMX is distributed around the world, including digital and video delivery systems that combine the power of the Internet and the latest IBM software, so will allow business to program their own own DMX channels with the music and the artists they feel best fit their needs.

BATAANG.COM: Another music service expanding its Latino programming is the online site Bataang.com, the Web site currently offers channels for rock, hip-hop, pop/ballads, salsa, tropical, and Regional Mexican.

But spokesman John Reilly says that by August the site will have an indy channel for young upcoming Latino alternative bands. “who are unfamiliar to the wide range of their MIPs to the music fans. Later in the fall, the site will also have all-tejano, all-salsa, and others that put the region to music. It is getting a lot of feedback from music fans who want more. Essentially, it is music that fans say they can’t get on the radio.”

ALABINA: If Alabina’s recent Miami debut was any barometer of the outdoor-clown-crowd potential, the band may be the most exciting thing to cross the Atlantic since the Gypsy Kings over a decade ago.

When Israeli lead singer Ihsat took the stage June 1 at the Jackie Gleason Theater in Miami Beach, the audience was mesmerized with the statuesque looks, serpentine wiggle, and sheer artistry. Backed by crack percussionists and the flair of four-part harmony of Las Damas de Sara, Ihsat cast a spell on the audience with a dazzling repertoire that ranged from Middle Eastern fare to flamenco to pop.

Alabina combines the musical traditions of the Middle East with the virtuosic rhythms of flamenco. Ihsat, the daughter of an Egyptian mother and a Moroccan father of Spanish extraction, began her musical career when she was a teenager in Israeli nightclubs, acted in theatrical productions, and performed in Austrian nightclubs before settling in Paris.

With its three previous releases dating back to 1996, Alabina’s sales exceeded 1 million, according to its label, Sony Music France. The group’s 1998 song “Allah”—the adaptation of the Middle Eastern classic “Yallhina” (Arabic for “between us is God”)—has become a sleeper hit in Colombia, Venezuela, and Central America.

The masterpiece of French-Israeli producer Charles Iqbi, the song “Alabina” is sung simultaneously in Spanish and Arabic against a flamenco backdrop. Ihsat was present for the Miami show, as were executive producers from Sony Music in Miami and Mexico.

The band will be working audiences north of the border once again in July; making stops in San Francisco, California, New Mexico, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C. It is now promoting its fourth disc, “Sahara.”

TIDBITS: The Latin rock band Puya is currently in Vancouver recording its next studio album. Slated for an early fall release, the band is being co-produced with Garth Richardson (Rage Against The Machine, Red Hot Chili Peppers). Puya will also be part of the Latino Earth tour July through August. On July 20 at New Jersey’s Giants Stadium, Metallica will be the tour. Other tour performances include Slipknot, Sevendust, Green Day, the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, Slayer, Sepultura, Downset, and Haterhead.

Salsa singer Domingo Quinones says he was inspired to become a singer after watching the Fania All Stars in concert at New York’s Madison Square Garden when he was 16 years old.

The lead singer, Ismael Miran-
BY LARRY LeBLANC
TORONTO—A simmering dispute between Canadian music retailers and publishers regarding payment for the in-store play of music is about to boil over. At stake, say industry sources, is payment of $2 million Canadian ($1.3 million) annually.

The confrontation has been building up since earlier this year, when SOCAN—Canada’s sole performing right organization—informed the Retail Music Assn. of Canada (RMAC) that it would seek collection of license fees from all Canadian music retailers for the public performance of music in their stores. It’s a move that divides publishers and labels—and that has enraged retailers.

In a newsletter to its members in June, SOCAN insisted that such music use has to be treated the same way as background music is in other commercial establishments and, as such, should be licensed under the applicable tariff. In the newsletter, SOCAN claimed that officials of RMAC—who 10 members account for 60% of music retail sales in Canada—had refused to discuss music licensing on the basis that its members were promoting record sales by in-store music use and thus should not have to pay licensing fees.

“SOCAN intends to seek the licensing of its members’ music,” says Paul Spurgeon, general counsel of SOCAN. He warns that SOCAN is prepared to legally challenge those retailers using music without a license.

“We’re planning to take them to court,” he says. “Every business that uses music should pay. We tried to sit down with RMAC, but they wouldn’t meet with us. We are prepared to discuss the application of the tariff if they want to discuss it. So far we haven’t heard anything from them.”

However, at RMAC, president Ken Koze says, “I thought this issue had been nipped in the bud.” Koze, purchasing manager of Handleman Co. of Canada, was elected June 1. “This issue came up nine months ago and generated a [return] letter from us to SOCAN. However, we hadn’t heard anything from them since.”

Industry sources say the issue between SOCAN and music retailers has intensified as the performing right society clamps down on the in-store use of its music by all Canadian retailers. If SOCAN, they say, does not specifically challenge music merchants, it opens itself up to appeals by those retailers currently paying a tariff to the government-operated Canadian Copyright Board, which has the jurisdiction to fix royalties paid for use of music performed in public.

“SOCAN has been procrastinating on this issue as long as it could,” says a publishing source. “They are looking into the possibility of selecting in enforcing the tariff, there could be substantial attacks on its right to license [music for any retail].”

Reflecting the heat surrounding the issue, two prominent publishers, both on the SOCAN board of directors, refused to be drawn into the controversy. Pat Campbell, GM of Warner/Chappell Music Canada, says, “I’m uncomfortable stating a position on this.”

“I can’t possibly comment,” says BMI Music Publishing Canada president Michael McCarty. “This is going to be a highly charged emotional issue, and I don’t want to play it out in public. SOCAN is capable of handling any discussion.”

While a performing right license fee for the use of background music is standard internationally, a statutory exemption exists for most music retailers in the U.S. “There is a record store—(Continued on page 73)
Start Me Up: Two U.K. Label Veterans On Different Routes To Independence

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—Two of the British record industry’s most celebrated figureshead are making their reputations on start-up labels within weeks of each other.

The careers of Rob Dickins, former Warner Music U.K. chairman, and Alan McGee, co-founder of Britain’s most notable independent label of recent years, Creation, represent sharply contrasting ways of making hit records, and they have opted for very different tactics in their new exploits.

But as Dickins markets his first more commercial immediately. Singles are penciled in for September by K Gee, best known for his writing and production with All Saints; Anglo-Irish-American trio the Alice Band; and Ali Donna Black Widow, an Oakland, Calif., duo raised by Swedish foster parents and previously signed to Mercury. But Dickins is delighted that the flagship album is a more esoteric piece of thinking persons’ pop.

“I don’t want to be throwing down the gauntlet, but I wanted a calling card,” he says. “Someone said, ‘Is everything going to be so intense (as this album)?’ and I said, ‘No, there’s a few easier things coming along the route.’ But I’ve been pretty vocal, in the Warners days about, since, about where the British record industry’s going. It’s going heavily towards manufactured things by 10-somethings for kids. This is making toys for children.”

Helicopter Girl, now living in London, grew up in Perpignan, Peru, west of Dundee in Scotland, born to a Ghanaian father she never met and a Scottish mother. She previously worked with an African-Celtic group and the band Ambionics, which had a limited release via the independent Nation Records.

Helicopter Girl sensibly keeps a kindred spirit at Instant Karma. “I think Rob wants to see music push itself a bit, and I do,” she says. “I want to make a space for other artists like me. Current chart music is utterly boring.” One of the things about the pop world I’ve never liked is that there only seems to be one creation every five years, and everyone follows it. I can’t follow anything,” she says. Poptones, which has a London staff of eight and U.K. distribution by Pinacol, will run alongside its own publishing company, and McGee will maintain Creation Songs to administer the old label catalog. He has also bought the Punk Rock Film Company, which he says he will introduce with a short film at this summer’s Edinburgh (Scotland) Film Festival.

Meanwhile, he has a fully fledged publishing arm, Dharma Music, a joint venture with Sony/ATV Music Publishing, whose initial signings include Alison Clarkson, previously known as late-1980s U.K. hitmaker Betty Boo.

The ever-creative McGee says that Poptones’ first releases are on course for September and will comprise albums by El Vez, Sefofane 74, the Montgolfier Brothers, and a mini-album by Pong Pong Bitches. The label is also in advanced negotiations to sign female electro-guitarist Donna Matthews and reggae veteran Lee “Scratch” Perry.

“I’m a way again; I’m up for it,” McGee says. “(I can’t believe) I’m gonna tell you this, but (Poptones) is like the early days of Creation in attitude. I wish I’d done it in 1990, because Creation probably stopped being fun about 1991. Then we get in with Sony in 1992 (when it parted with the company’s Sony Independent Network Europe for international distribution). I lost it in drugs in ‘93, cleaned up… the last 10 years of Creation, even though it became a multi-market situation and sold 35 million records, it was fucking hard.”

Sony Music Entertainment acquired a 49% stake in Creation at the time of the £182 million ($228 million) U.K. Web site (www.americanradiohistory.com) containing news, reviews, download, and competitions; long-term plans call for the section to be added to the other seven Vitaminic sites. In turn, the British company’s own online arm, Minimusic.com, will include a Vitaminic MP3 download site featuring a chart of top downloads, a list of the main MP3 genres, and music news. It will also include a section where artists can upload their music. Vitaminic, founded in Turin, Italy, in April 1999, has seven Web sites in Europe (Italy, the U.K., Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands, and Sweden) and one in the U.S.

BILBOAD JULY 8, 2000
www.billboard.com
www.americanradiohistory.com
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**NEW** = New Entry
**Re** = Re-Entry
Although His Name will forever be associated with the late-'80s pop classic "Voodoo Ray," Gerald Simpson, aka A Guy Called Gerald, has come a long way since his days with the band Peacock and the drum'n'bass scene. Simpson will see his latest album, "Essence," released globally at the end of August on Studio K7. The combination of lush, state-of-the-art production, an eclectic fusion of future beats, and autterly surreal vocal style that would make RP indicate that "Essence" could be a big career step for Simpson and a further breakthrough for drum'n'bass. Featuring four different vocalists, including ex-Dave-Lite vocalist Ladi Kier, the album's vocal tracks vary from the jazz-influenced "Multiples" to the moody "Beaches & Deserts." "We'll be pushing the street hard in the U.S. due to the fact that it's so song-based," says Studio K7 & A manger Stefan Strubler. "But really goes in introducing it to American ears has already been done by Russell Watson and "Goldie." The first single, "Humanity," will be released internationally in the second week of July.

Japanese metal band X.Y.Z. is taking its music stateside with a Thursdays (6) gig at Los Angeles club Coconut Teazzer as one of the highlights of the town's major Rock Night. X.Y.Z.'s two founding members are Minoru Nihara, former lead vocalist of Japanese metal band Loudness, which had considerable overseas success back in the '80s, and Punky Freddy, leader of the band's earlier incarnation, X.Y.Z. Bakufu Stump and recently active in forming new links between the Japanese and continental Asian music scenes. The other two members are the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, the late Moriwakeo Kikuta, and the late Moriwakeo Kikuta.

Shawn Ryder of the Hippy Mondays has teamed up with young opera singer Russell Watson and a full orchestra and choir on a version of "Barcelona," to be released July 10 by Decca as a single in the U.K. The unlikely rendition of the Freddie Mercury/Mon- serrat Caballe hit came about after Watson entered the re-formed Happy Mondays were ending their live set with a version of the song. The idea was to combine a reggae sound with the power of a full classical orchestra and choir, and Wat-son was thrilled.

Watson Ryder

The long-awaited album by the Hannover, Germany-based six-piece band Fury In The Slaughterhouse, "Horsmotive," entered the German chart at No. 9 with its mid-June release. The eighth album by the band remains true to its guitar-oriented rock style and is in the vein of the band's early "Radio Orchi." The current line-up consists of Kiki Wingerfelder (vocals), Thorsten Wingerfelder (vocals), Christian Stenschen (guitar), Geoff Drans (Key-boards), Roland Schumacher (drums), and Christian Becker (bass). The album was produced by Franz Plass, who has also helmed the Echo Award-winning groups Selig and Ech. The pre-release single, "Are You Ready?", featuring U.S. rapper Scorpio, was in rotation at music TV channels Viva II and MTV. The album includes a version of David Bowie's "All the Young Dudes" as well as the upcoming single "Do You Feel?", a somber song about alcoholism which is scheduled for release in mid- July. A tour of open-air summer venues will take place until September, with a headline tour slat- ed for the fall.

Ellie Weinert
IFPI Cheers Italy Anti-Piracy Vote
Parliament OKs Long-Delayed Bill; It Awaits Senate Approval

BY MARK DEZZANI
SAN REMO, Italy—The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) has welcomed a long-awaited vote by the Italian Parliament to adopt new anti-piracy measures.

Supporters of the new law are hoping that final ratification will be enacted prior to the government’s summer recess, which starts at the end of July. IFPI chairman/CFO Bjarne Hermansen welcomed the vote as “a very important landmark in Italy’s efforts to combat its very serious levels of music piracy.” The initial draft of the anti-piracy law was published four years ago, but ratification has been delayed by a series of proposed amendments.

Enzo Mazza, director general of IFPI-affiliated Italian labels body FIMI and president of local anti-piracy federation FPM, says that the latest version of the bill approved by Parliament keeps strict sanctions—which would have been diluted by the various amendments—intact.

“This is very good because, because the version of the bill passed by Parliament contains the measures that we have been lobbying for over the past few years,” says Mazza. He emphasizes, however, the importance of the Senate approving this version of the bill before the end of July, when both chambers of the Parliament take summer recess. “It should be a formality,” he says. “We are just hoping that no new amendments are proposed in the Senate stage which could further delay ratification.”

The legislative program for the Senate up until the summer break is expected to be published shortly. The Italian Chamber of Deputies passed the bill with 222 votes for and 88 votes against. The main opposition came from the Green party, the Liberal Democrats, and some small centrist parties. “Those who voted against it were seeking dilated sanctions against pirates,” says Hermansen. “However, the most important thing is that the new law received cross-party support from the principal parties of the center left government and the center right and right-wing opposition.”

The draft of the law increases sanctions against copyright abusers. Maximum fines are increased from 5 million lire to 60 million lire ($1,440) to 30 million lire ($14,400). Minimum prison sentences are increased from three months to six months, while maximum prison terms per charge are raised from three to four years. For the first time, the new law also allows the closure of factories and shops selling in pirate merchandise and the sequestration of property.

Consumers can also be issued on-the-spot fines of 300,000 lire ($144).

Mauro Mastroni, president of the Italian music publishers association SIAE, welcomed the new law. SIAE is the latest step in a global refocusing of the Virgin Megastores business that will see it concentrate on building “cathedrals” in international capital cities.

London-based VEG—which recently resolved an acrimonious dispute with the major labels in the U.K. over its nonpayment of bills—confirmed the sale of its operating companies in Belgium and the Netherlands to the Dutch retail chain Free Record Shop on June 8 (Billboard Bulletin, June 9), in a deal worth “around 1.5 million pounds ($2.3 million) to Virgin, according to Wright.

The pact ended an unhappy period for the retailer in continental Europe, where it had previously operated in nine countries. The loss-heavy Virgin Megastore businesses in Germany, Spain, Norway, Belgium, and Holland have now all been disposed of, leaving a network of stores in Austria, Portugal, and Italy operating under the Virgin Retail Europe holding company and the company’s successful 14-store chain in France.

Wright concedes that the Virgin Megastores operation in France is still “the only one that’s really working for us.” He adds, “Our experience across Europe didn’t pay. A lot of it was down to our entry strategy in the different territories.” A very good example is Madrid—if we’d taken, for example, a big old cinema in the middle of Madrid, we could have opened a Championship. Today, in that area, that would have given us a much better foothold from which to develop.

Instead, we had our smallest Spanish store in a smallish Madrid shopping center.

Wright describes VEG’s current philosophy toward its retail business as being essentially “less is more. We don’t have to be everywhere. We can actually do it with one store in each country.”

VEG’s four top stores worldwide—“by a long way,” Wright says—are the Megastores in San Francisco, New York (Times Square), London (Oxford Street), and Paris (Champs-Elysées). He insists, “We’ve got to be disciplined that we hit those standards at each store going forward.” In smaller territories such as the Netherlands, Wright suggests, “we have to re-look at what formula would work. It orientates around single stores in capital cities, which are ‘music cathedrals,’ where people know that it’s the best store in that country.”

Looking back on the Benelux sale, Wright expresses satisfaction at the amount realized and adds, “I’m glad that we sold the businesses to another European retailer—which meant that the vast majority of staff were going to retain their jobs—and [that] we sold the stores as music outlets, rather than real estate.”

Japan’s Yoshihi Teams With Warner In Venture

BY STEVE MCCCLURE
TOKYO—After staying out of the public eye for the past two years, Yoshiki, former guitarist of disbanded rock group X Japan, has teamed up with Warner Music in a groundbreaking deal to handle product released by his two new Japanese and American labels.

Under the new pact, product released by Yoshiki’s new Tokyo-based label, Exstasy Japan, will be distributed by Warner Music Japan; in the U.S., material released by the artist’s Los Angeles-based label, Exstasy Records International, will be licensed to Warner Bros. Records. The trans-Pacific project marks the first time Warner Music Japan and Warner Bros. Records have cooperated in this way, according to a statement from Warner Bros. Records president Phil Quaranta.

It may be a first for those companies, but the liaison marks the second time that Yoshiki has joined the Warner family. Back in 1992, X From Japan signed to Atlantic Records in the U.S. through an ultimately fruitless deal with Warner Music International (WMI) Japanese affiliate MGM Inc. It was hailed at the time as a move that broke “the confines of tradition.”

Exstasy Japan’s first release, out Wednesday (5), is “Pearl,” the debut maxi-single from Japanese female vocalist Shiro. On July 26, Japanese rock band Beast will put out an outstanding four-song maxi-single. Six Japanese acts are signed to Exstasy Japan.

In the U.S., Warner Bros. Records will release product from Yoshiki’s American acts signed to Exstasy Records International. Yoshiki says the first Exstasy product should be released in the U.S. early next year, growing with American female vocalist Aja.

Yoshiki insists he’s serious about promoting his stable of artists in the U.S. and other territories, in contrast to the way Japanese labels are perceived as sometimes launching their acts overseas “just to impress the folks back home.” He says, “I don’t want to do that way,” noting that he has direct experience of such promotion efforts.

Back in 1992, his act was given a major publicity push by WMI, including a press launch at the Rockefeller-Center’s Rainbow Room in New York (Billboard, Sept. 5, 1992), where plans were announced for a label debut album to be recorded in L.A. The Japanese group even changed its name to X From Japan to avoid confusion with Los Angeles-based band X. But Yoshiki says his heart wasn’t in it, and as the band’s leader, he eventually decided to do something anything in the U.S. “I just couldn’t do it,” he says. “I just felt it wasn’t going to be right.”

Unlike most Japanese artists, Yoshiki has always had a keen interest in business. “Sometimes in order to be really creative, you have to have creative control, so you’ve got to know the contract,” he says. That’s why I started reading contracts.”

Even before X From Japan signed its first major-label deal with Sony 12 years ago, Yoshiki was operating his own indie label, Exstasy Records (which still exists, specializing in hard glam rock). In 1994, he established another label, Platinum Records, which launched successful rock band Glasy. He has lived in L.A. for the past eight years, spending most of his time there at his Exstasy Records offices (formerly the Glasy offices, One), which he bought in 1995. Yoshiki also owns the former L.A. offices of Maverick Records.

The band is still active in the last 15 years,” he says. “Establishing a new label in Japan is not such a big deal for me—establishing a label in America is a big deal for me.”

All On Board. Former BMG Entertainment International president/CEO Rudi Gassner meets with edel music board members during the German music group’s recent annual general meeting in Hamburg, where he was voted chairman of its three-man supervisory board, effective Sept. 1. Gassner joins News Corp. Music Group chairman James Murdoch and attorney Walter Lichte on the board. Shown, from left, are Gassner, edel music chairman/CEO Mauro Gassner, head of personnel and business affairs Dr. Hans-Martin Gutsch, CFO Michael Diedrich, and president of edel Records Europe and edel Publishing David Hockman.
North Star Shining in Nontraditional Music Market

BY TRUDI M. ROSENBLUM

NEW YORK—If you’re looking for the CD “New England Christmastide,” or Steve Schueh’s “Celtic Celebration,” or Robin Spielberg’s “Beautiful Dreamer,” you have more of a chance of finding the albums at your local gift shop, museum, or even furniture store than you do in a traditional record outlet.

“Most of our music is sold in the alternative market,” says Richard Waterman, president of North Star Music in East Greenwich, R.I. “We do sell some in traditional record stores, but 95% is sold in the specialty gift and retail market—gift shops, gourmet coffee shops, restaurants, even furniture stores that carry household items and ornaments.”

For traditional record stores, the company relies on Woodland, Calif.-based Valley Media; Lansing, Mich.-based Goldenrod; Durham, N.C.-based Lady Slipper; Waterbury, Vt.-based NewSound; and Cambridge, Mass.-based Rounder Kids. But for the gift market, it uses its own nine-person sales staff, headed by Robert Martinis, and some of the above distributors.

Among the company’s diverse accounts are the Mystic Seaport Museum, a gift store called Reflections of Naples in Naples, Fla., and large specialty chains including the Nature Company and People’s Petery. “We have a ton of accounts, running the gamut of a one-owner gift store to a 180-store chain,” Waterman says.

The label does all of its alternative distribution itself. “Our in-house account reps spend every day making calls and expanding our account base,” Waterman explains. “We also attend a lot of gift shows every year and have a booth where we promote our music. The jazz, Celtic, world, instrumental piano, and contemporary acoustic music produced by North Star is unlikely to ever gain radio play. Instead, North Star relies heavily on in-store play, with nearly 500 listening kiosks that allow customers to hear the CDs before buying them. “The nice thing about our market is that our recordings don’t have just six-month shelf life,” Waterman adds. “It’s more like a five-year shelf life.”

North Star also uses point-of-purchase displays to entice buyers, for Spielberg’s “Mother” album, North Star made up a special display with a backing header card and a Mother’s Day theme. “We targeted it very specifically to Mother’s Day and opened up a ton of accounts—card stores, toy stores, even bridal shops,” recalls Waterman. “Once we got in for Mother’s Day they continued to carry our music year-round.”

For Schueh’s “Celtic Celebration,” the label designed a counter display with a Celtic/Christmas header card and gave supporting materials to store owners, encouraging them to put the title near the counter at Christmas as an impulse buy. “We’re on the phone always,” Waterman adds. “We do a lot of mailings announcing new titles, but then we have a six- or eight-week phone campaign focusing on two or three titles. We do very heavy, strong phone promotion.”

Waterman, a guitarist and songwriter, founded North Star in 1985 after regretfully realizing “I wasn’t going to be the next James Taylor. But I had to be involved in what I loved, so I decided to start a record label.” He began reissuing instrumental acoustic Christmas carols and bringing batches of cassettes and LPs around to local stores in the back of his station wagon.

To his surprise, “They sold like crazy. We were pioneers in selling music to the specialty market.” North Star’s biggest-selling title is “New England Christmastide,” which has sold between 400,000 and 500,000 copies, Waterman claims. Another top title is “Celtic Celebration,” which sold over 100,000. A typical title that sells well for the label will move 50,000 to 70,000 copies. There are about 50 artists on the label, and the company sells between 400,000 and 450,000 units a year altogether. The business is increasing by 25% annually, Waterman says.

North Star’s competition includes Sago Music, North Sound Press, Solitudes, and Green Hill Music. “It’s tougher now than when we started, because there’s more competition,” Waterman observes. “Instead of us being the only music vendor at a gift show, now there are five or six of us. Most of us have very good music and very good merchandising tools. There’s still plenty of business to go around, but it is tougher now. It’s important to have really good customer service and build customer loyalty.”
BORDERS IS AMONG FIRST TO SEE STARS

(Continued from preceding page)

hear,” Scibora continues, “Think about going to Borders and shopping for books, for instance, if all the books were shrink-wrapped.”

ABILITY TO SCAN

A related selling point of the STAR system is its scanning technology, which facilitates “romancing with the product,” says Scibora, including looking at the all the tracks on a CD, to allow the true representation of the artist’s intention. He adds, “The product is in your hand — the only thing you’ve got left to do is put it under your arm, buy it, and walk away with it.”

Scibora cautions against systems that make whole tracks on an entire CD available. He notes that major recording studios are wary of systems that customers who hear a whole CD in the store often ruin their appetites and don’t buy it. “If they spend too much time listening, then they walk away,” he says.

SYSTEMS AROUND THE WORLD

ACD has 10,000 systems (both new and old) worldwide and has licensed technology to Sony for some of its CD’s. In the U.S., its major accounts include Terrance, Calif.-based Wherehouse Entertainment; Alpine, Calif.; and Trans World Entertainment; and Minneapolis-based the Musicland Group, as well as non-music retailers like Fred Meyer.

“We are in a time when retailers who won’t allow the capability of sampling every CD in the store will be in trouble,” says Scibora. He stresses that the system (which he aided in designing) is entirely independent from the Internet but may and traditional retailers in competing with online music retailers that make samples of music available.

So far, the Borders chain has installed the system in one store, in Brentwood, Tenn., and plans to put it into each new store the chain opens for the rest of the year, which will number about 12.

“The first store with the STAR digital sampling opened Saturday, and we are excited about how it’s looking and how well the installation went.” — LEN COSIMANO

HOME VIDEO. MGM Home Entertainment promotes Robert Wittenberg to executive VP of sales, Blake Thomas to executive VP of worldwide marketing, and Cordelia Tappin to senior VP of domestic marketing in Santa Monica, Calif. They were previously senior VP, senior VP of marketing, and VP of marketing, sales and promotions.

Tim Erwin is promoted to VP of consumer products for Sony BMG Music Entertainment in Portland, Ore. He was senior director of consumer relations.

DISTRIBUTION. Word Distribution names Greg Fritz VP of retail development and label relations and Chris Long field representative in Nashville. They were, respectively, VP of sales management and label relations for EMI/Chordant and a Christian bookstore manager.

RETAIL. Cheryl Greene is promoted to music and children’s merchandiser for the Parable Group in San Luis Obispo, Calif. She was previously children’s merchandiser.

NEW MEDIA. David Hyman is named president of Compact Disc DataBase in Berkeley, Calif. He was senior VP of marketing for the MTVI Group.

Darryl Fulmer is named senior VP of music programming and talent for Jimmy and Doug’s FarmClub in Los Angeles. She was VP of music content for Sononet.

WHAT THE SYSTEMS COST

Each listening station costs about $300 for a stripped-down version, with premium services costing as much as $1,000, making the cost for the system between $15,000 and $50,000.

While that may look like a high price to some, Scibora argues that in the new world order, brick-and-mortar merchants will need to make this investment in order to remain competitive with online E-tailers. The STAR system is a leap from traditional listening centers — but Scibora and ACD don’t plan to stop there. The company is looking into the (almost complex) legal, label, and copyright clearance necessary to add CD-R technology to its STAR stations, allowing CDs to be returned for a consumer on the spot.

In the meantime, however, “we provide a technology where a single computer sitting in a back room can support multiple CD devices, allowing customers to preview music titles you’re waiting in line for,” says Scibora. “We have a Virgin Megastore in Paris with 180 stations — 180 customers can sample music at once,” he says. “What a powerful way to promote music — the power of tasting before you buy.”
KOCHE PROME SERVICEABLES: In a move designed to spread the management load and heighten services on the sales side, Koch International is promoting three of its current staff members.

John Toney, the Port Washington, N.Y.-based firm’s national sales director, is being elevated to director of national account sales. The company’s sales map is now being divided into two territories; one-time sales rep Vernon McNe- der is being hired to West Coast sales manager, while former national account manager Gerald Mess gets a boost to East Coast sales director.

Toney will still be based in Port Washington, and McNeader will remain based in San Francisco. Wills will relocate to Long Island, N.Y., from his current base in Columbus, Ohio. Koch senior VP Michael Rosen- berg, to whom all of the sales exec reports, says that new reps will be hired to replace McNeader and Wills, and that he may even add another rep in the South-west. He says the new personnel should be in place by the time Koch’s national sales meeting convenes July 12 in Tarrytown, N.Y.

LOOKING ROSE AT RED: Red Distribution continues to pursue some interesting new titles. The New York-based company—which announced the signing of Trauma Records, Super-Ego Records, and Transparent Music in April (Bi- lboard, April 29)—has picked up exclusives with Berkeley, Calif.- based punk label Lookout! Records and the new, diversified Nashville firm Spark Entertainment/VFR Records.

Lookout! requires little introduction for rockers: the 11- year-old company was the original home of Green Day, released work by Operation Ivy (the precursor of Rancid), and numbers among its acts the Mr. T. Experience, the Groovies, the Quires, Screeching Weasel, and one-time Flag Wavers the Donnas. The label also brings Pandemic Records, an imprint operated by members of Screeching Weasel, to RED. To the move the new distrib- utor indicates a desire to continue part of Lookout!’s--to extend its national reach; the label has to date been handled by the capable but much smaller San Francisco punk specialist Mordam Records.

Spark Entertainment brings together three veterans of the technology and music industries: chairman Ed Arnold, founder and former president of Integrated Circuit Systems; managing direc- tor Dan O’Rourke, a Metallica Music City pro who formerly served as senior VP of Mercury/Nashville and president of Polydor/Nashville and the long-time producer of Beat Happening albums as “Jam- boree,” “Black Candy,” and “Dreamy” from Sub Pop to K, John Peel and many influential band’s collected works.

FLAG WAVING: Mark Selby’s name probably won’t be familiar unless you’re a student of songwriting credits, but the Sept. 26 release of his Vanguard album “More Storms Comin’” should thrust him into the public eye as a noteworthy performer in his own right.

Selby is probably best known to country lovers for a collection of fine print as the writer or co-writer (with Tia Siler's) of many of bluesy Kenny Wayne Shepherd’s most familiar tunes. (He had a hand in eight of the tracks on Shepherd’s current album, “Live On.”) He has also penned material for Dixie Chicks, Trisha Yearwood, and Wynonna Judd, among others.

While Selby has piled up some nice credits for himself in the service of other people during six years in Nashville, the Oklahoma-born performer steps out as a tough singer and powerful electric and steel guitar player on “More Storms Comin’.”

“It is a little bit like it’s been hidden under a basket,” Selby says of his performing rep. “I spent my earlier years doing what I call my grass-roots thing.”

Through stints in Kansas and Woodstock, N.Y., Selby developed his sound, as well as a formidable reputation for artists as diverse as Ry Cooder (whom he refers to as “an inspiration to me”), Tom Waits, and Lucas Williams and such bands and blues/rock icons as Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Eric Clapton, B.B. King, Duane Allman, and the Allman Brothers.

Things began to click for Selby when he hit Music City. “I began to play sessions, playing acoustic and electric guitar,” he says. “I got a publishing deal almost immediately. I also discovered there was a great blues/rock community here.”

That community has clearly brought out the best in Selby. His album, which he co-produced with Brent Mahler, boasts some rockin’ blues, informed guitar riffs like “Don’t Bother Me” [Katywoman On Me” and “She’s Like Mercury” and a solid-send ensemble sound. His young fangs and sometimes fimine vocal- isticator Shepherd had better look alive—there’s a new gunslinger in town.

Selby says he plans to take his working trio out on the road with him after “More Storms Comin’” is released, but don’t be surprised if you see him in a more intimate format. He says, “I don’t mind slipping out and doing an acoustic performance every now and then.”

Koch Promotes 3; RED Makes Deals

Also, Ambitious Boxed Sets From Arhoolie And K Records

by Chris Morris

Alabama, among many other top country acts; and managing director-operations Paul Luckz, ex-GM of Mercury/Nashville.

The first release from VFR under the RED deal will be a debut album by Trent Summar & the New Row Mob, a country band that includes among its members one of our favorite new acts, the truly staggering guitar player Kenny Vaughan (Lucinda Williams, Billy Burnett, Kim Richey, etc.), among its members. The set is due in August.

B LIXED FOR PLEASURE: A couple of indie labels will celebrate themselves with ambitious boxed sets later in the year.

On Sept. 26, Arhoolie Records, the cherished El Cerrito, Calif.

Arhoolie will issue “The 40th Anniversary Collection,” a five-CD, 105-song overview of the company’s crucial recordings.

based roots-music label, will issue “The 40th Anniversary Collection,” a five-CD, 105-song overview of the company’s crucial recordings. Founder and principal producer Chris Strachwitz brought many important American music figures to prominence with his work for the label, and they’ll get their due on the collection: Clifton Chenier, Flaco Jimenez, Fred Deadwood, Lightnin’ Hopkins, John Jackson, Mississippi John Hurt, and such brilliant “sacred steel” artists as the Campbell Brothers and Aubrey Pink will be represented. The "Collection" will be housed in a 12-by-12- box and will include a booklet featur- ing previously unpublished photos and a 41,000-word historical essay.

On Oct. 17, K Records in Olympia, Wash., will issue “Crash- ing Through,” a seven-CD boxed set: pulling together the music of Beat Happening, the seminal punk-pop unit founded by K chief- tain Calvin Johnson. With the reversion of masters for such early

 Billboard

Top Independent Albums

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<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>COMPLIES FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF RETAIL, MAIL ORDER, AND INTERNET SALES REPORTS COLLECTED PURCHASES AND PROMOTIONAL DEPOT ISSUES</th>
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<td>NOFX</td>
<td>THE SORROWFUL SKIES OF JESUS</td>
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* Bold denotes new releases. ** Italics denote reissues, excluding those which are major-label or catalog issues. The albums listed are those that were heard by the Billboard editors this week. For complete charts, visit billboard.com. ** For the Billboard’s weekly chart, go to billboard.com. ** Please note that record labels and distributors have varying reporting deadlines, and some labels and distributors may not report to Billboard on a weekly basis. ** For the Billboard’s weekly chart, go to billboard.com. ** Please note that record labels and distributors have varying reporting deadlines, and some labels and distributors may not report to Billboard on a weekly basis. ** Please note that record labels and distributors have varying reporting deadlines, and some labels and distributors may not report to Billboard on a weekly basis. ** Please note that record labels and distributors have varying reporting deadlines, and some labels and distributors may not report to Billboard on a weekly basis. ** Please note that record labels and distributors have varying reporting deadlines, and some labels and distributors may not report to Billboard on a weekly basis.

www.americanradiohistory.com

www.americanradiohistory.com
This year, HMV stepped out and opened a store in Harlem, on 125th Street, one of the top retailing streets in New York and in an area that was long overdue to have a record chain presence.

Pete Luckhurst, HMV president of North America, tells Retail Track that the 15,000-square-foot store is coming along nicely, in terms of sales. “The Harlem community leaders have been tremendous to us,” he says. “We couldn’t have asked for more support.”

The chain now numbers 14 in the U.S., with the opening of Harlem and the closing of the 72nd Street and Broadway store in November ’99. Luckhurst says that HMV has a few more stores slated to open this year, mainly in malls, and that the long-promised retro-fit of the 86th Street store in New York is due to take place any month now.

In another matter, Stuart Fleming, HMV’s U.S. director of purchasing, confirms for me that the chain is joining Trans World Entertainment and passing on the opportunity to carry the Jimmy Page/Black Crowes album because the album was first offered exclusively through online company Mysicnet.com.

“All we want is a level playing field, and that means it should be offered to anybody and everybody at the same time. That isn’t too much to ask for.”

Fleming says that the decision to forgo carrying the album is global for HMV, which has a presence in many countries around the world.

“While we are on the topic, let me report that TVT, the label handling the album in North America, had nothing to do with the decision to put the album out first through the Internet. TVT executives knew what they were getting into when they agreed to carry the album, and the label’s sales staff have been sympathetic to the decision made by some retailers to not stock the title.

However, I have had conversations with sales executives at other labels that are not involved with the album who criticize retailers for taking that stance. Among the comments I have heard: ‘Fret carrying the album is the equivalent of shooting the messenger.” And, “This is the way the business is headed, so retailers should stop fighting technology and embrace it.” In other words, they should let the Internet steal business from them.

But I would like to point out that by refusing to take the album, retailers are not trying to shoot the TVT sales staff—they are trying to send a message to artists and managers. And as for embracing technology, practically every major player has an online site. It is becoming clear that many of the early misconceptions about the Internet are now being replaced by the vision that the future will be clicks-and-bricks.

So the decision to not carry the album has nothing to do with a fear of technology; it’s all about, as Fleming points out, a level playing field.

In case you are not a regular reader of Market Watch and Chart Beat every week on the last editorial page in Billboard, let me inform you that we have moved our New York offices downtown to 770 Broadway, near 8th Street, in the East Village. It’s a neighborhood rich in retail, with some of the finest independent record stores in the U.S.

When Billboard was in Times Square, I used to walk through the Virgin Megastore every day on my way into work. While I will miss having that amazing store as part of the fabric of my daily routine, I am still near Virgin, as the new offices are right down the block from the chain’s 14th Street store. Also, Billboard is right up the street from Tower Records, Video/Books’ lower Broadway store.

While that store is renowned worldwide, and deservedly so, to my mind, Russ Solomon, Tower chairman and founder, still doesn’t get enough credit from New Yorkers for building this neighborhood almost singlehandedly, well before NYU jumped in and started reinvesting in the neighborhood.

As I once pointed out here in this column, when Tower opened the store here back in 1983, Broadway at night was a dark and deserted street comprising mainly warehouses and flophouses. Then, most of the people you would find on it besides the home-less were in cabs that used it as the main route to lower Manhattan.

Today, Broadway is one of the premier retail streets in the city, stored with many a national chain, as well as cutting-edge boutique merchants. The opening of Tower here served as an anchor, not only drawing huge crowds from 8th Street—another nearby top retailing street—and other parts of the city but also serving as a magnet bringing other savvy merchants to downtown.

So now that you know where Billboard is located, all of this brings me to my main point. My new vital stats are 770 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. All of you out there who are kind enough to send me promos, please update your mailing list. In addition, you should be aware that while my E-mail address is still the same—echristman@billboard.com—I’m moving to a new office in Manhattan.

If there is something on your mind that you think I should be covering, call and let me know. Remember. The sum total of this column is what you tell me.

To Be Truly National, We Must Be LOCAL

Dear Reader,

As we celebrate our 20th year at Billboard, we want to make sure that we remain focused on our mission: to be the premier source of news and information for the music industry. To do that, we need to be truly national, and being local is not enough.

We hope that you will agree with us and support our efforts to make Billboard a truly national publication. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
exemption, where the sole purpose of the retail establishment is to sell music recordings,” explains Vince Candillor, senior VP of licensing, ASCAP, in Nashville. This U.S. exemption, however, is not included use of background music, coin-operated gramophones, jukeboxes), coin publishers, jukeboxes) , angly rejects the point of view. “It would cost our chain $50,000-

800,000 Canadian ($33,748- $440,499 respectively, because our stores are in the 25,000-30,000 feet range,” he says. “We haven’t been approached yet, but I’ve got my check ready,” jokes an apprehensive non-RMAC member Vito Ilerillo, president of R.O.W. Entertainment, which operates 17 Record on Wheels stores.

Montreal-based Archambault

‘By playing music in the stores, we sell records, which makes money for both artists and songwriters. Clothing stores and bars are not selling artists’ product. We are’

-TIM BAKER-

Group, which operates 11 stores in Quebec (where it is the largest music retailer), volunteered in March to pay SOCAN’s tariff. First of such move could partly have been expected, as Archambault president Rosaire Archambault is also a SOCAN director. How could we not play performing music, we also believe in the right of creators to make music?” asks Shelley Stein-Sucks, director of development of Archambault and a SOCAN volunteer.

Other retailers, however, rigorously contend that in-store play is promotional and should be exempted from the SOCAN tariff—and they say they will resist all efforts to collect it. They point out that their sales generate a mechanical royalty rate of 7.4 Canadian cents (5 cents per track, split evenly between SOCAN’s publishers and songwriters.

“SOCAN’s stance seems ridiculous,” says Peter Luckhurst, president of HMV Canada, which has 94 stores nationally. “With the exception of all of our problems with the Internet, it’s absurd to bring this up now.”

“We should have an exemption, because by playing music in the store we sell records, which makes money for both artists and songwriters,” says Tim Baker, buyer with Sunrise Records, which has 32 stores in Ontario. “It is not background music. Clothing stores and bars are not selling artists’ product. We are.”

“If forced to pay for in-store music, we’ll dig in our heels and put in listening posts throughout our stores,” says Lane O’Reilly, owner with A&J Sound, which operates 19 stores on the west coast. “Our stores will be silent.”

Label executives interviewed are supportive of such views on the SOCAN stragmat, although few were willing to be quoted. Brian Robertson, president of the Canadian Record Industry Asso., sums up the view of many when he says, “In-store play of recordings has traditionally been very much a part of the promotional process in the relationship of record companies and the retail stores.”

“These stores play music which we supply, and now SOCAN is going after them for a fee. This is crazy,” says Barry Newman, president of Warner Music Canada. “In-store play is one of the main sources of introducing product to a consumer who is in a music store—not a grocery store or a restaurant—to buy music.”

Lisa Zhintes, president of BMG Music Canada, says, “Technically, in-store play is a public performance, but, realistically, it promotes sales of records, which benefits everybody.”

It’s an argument that cuts little ice with Spurgeon. “Radio airplay also induces buying, but broadcasters pay a performance rate,” he says.

Counters RMAC’s Duncan, “We are directly selling music; radio is not. They are trying to generate advertising and keep listeners.”

Several publishers contend that retailers also utilize music to create an attractive environment in their stores. “If retailers are using music to create an ambiance to sell music; they don’t compensate those who are creating that atmosphere?” asks Robert Ott, GM of BMG Music Publishing Canada.

“The only ambiance we’re trying to create with in-store airplay is to get people excited about music,” says Duncan. “Once it was intended as background music, we could subscribe to a background service.”

Due to SOCAN’s local representation of all international and domestic repertoire, Canadian music retailers have, in fact, little choice other than to play music whose stores are represented by SOCAN, to utilize a background music service, or play a radio in the store.

“Our view is that all merchandisers utilizing music to sell goods should pay this tariff,” says Spurgeon. “It doesn’t matter if they are selling shoes, food, or records. If they are playing a tune in their store written by one of our members, whether it’s emanating from a CD, a tape, or a radio speaker, our members want to get paid for that performance.”
Driving at So, to track drive unauthorized copying of music. Economic potential of waters from pirates.

Reciprocal’s music solution prevents unauthorized copying and creates a secure, robust environment that can drive new business opportunities and track customer usage. Get complete control over your digital music assets with a fully-customized solution that meets your specific needs.

So, when it’s time for your business to become part of the digital content economy”, Reciprocal can watch your booty.

For more information contact Reciprocal Music at 212.983.8200

Traffic Ticker

Top Music Info Sites

Unique Visitors (in 000s)

**TOTAL VISITORS**

1. mp3.com ........................................ 2,654
2. mchb.com ...................................... 2,582
3. sonicnet.com .................................... 1,583
4. rollingstone.com ............................... 1,566
5. launch.com ..................................... 1,357
6. peeps.com ....................................... 925
7. listener.com ..................................... 769
8. ubl.com ........................................... 661
9. bmgb.com ....................................... 603
10. vkt.com .......................................... 561

**AT-HOME VISITORS**

1. mp3.com ........................................ 2,173
2. mchb.com ...................................... 2,143
3. sonicnet.com .................................... 1,269
4. launch.com ..................................... 1,094
5. rollingstone.com ............................... 1,061
6. peeps.com ....................................... 774
7. listener.com ..................................... 626
8. ubl.com ........................................... 561
9. musicmatch.com ............................... 490
10. bmgb.com ....................................... 458

**AT-WORK VISITORS**

1. mp3.com ........................................ 588
2. rollingstone.com ............................... 538
3. mchb.com ...................................... 497
4. sonicnet.com .................................... 359
5. launch.com ..................................... 268
6. vkt.com .......................................... 183
7. listener.com ..................................... 158
8. peeps.com ....................................... 151
9. musicmatch.com ............................... 129

Source: Media Metrix, May 2000. Sites categorized by Billboard. Media Metrix defines unique visitors as the actual number of stems who visited each site, without duplication, once a given month. More than 40,000 individuals throughout the U.S. participated in the Media Metrix sample.

New Media

Sony’s ‘Uville’ Portal Is Still In Online Limbo

Media Metrix Buys Jupiter; S3 Debuts Multiple-Format Rio 600

Sony’s ‘Uville’ Portal Is Still In Online Limbo

This page's columns were prepared by Marilyn A. Gilien.

If UVILLE IT . . . Will they come?

One year after this month, Sony Music president of new technology and business development Fredric Shmueli unveiled plans during the Plug In conference in New York for a “major new Internet portal”—dubbed Uville—that would offer music news, reviews, and product sales from a number of different labels (Billboard, July 31, 1999).

So, to drive uncharted waters with the source located the site’s business model somewhere in the vast open space between GetMusic and Yahoo!

Launch date was set for the fall.

As the joke goes, no one actually said fall of next year. With the 2000 edition of Jupiter’s Plug In conference now right around the corner—it’s being staged July 20-26 at the Sheraton in New York—the planned music village is something of a lost city quietly existing online at unville.com. The site was never actually opened to visitors. News items are updated daily and chart data weekly—and live “buy” links take those who open to buy into the site's C3ron—but Uville is still awaiting its ribbon-cutting.

Sony declined to comment on the status of the site, but a source says that, despite some speculation on the matter, Uville is not being closed—nor could it be, since it never actually opened.

It is apparently being radically rethought, however. According to the source, Uville’s “functionality is to be included in a bigger project to be announced soon.”

Stay tuned.

Speaking of Jupiter, the online research company kept other analysts busy talking to reporters June 27, when it revealed that it would be purchased by online data-measurement company Media Metrix in an all-stock deal valued at the time of announcement at about $145 million (Billboard/Network, June 29).

Media Metrix chairman/CEO Tod Johnson will become chairman/CEO of the combined company—to be called Jupiter Media Metrix—while Jupiter chairman/CEO Gene DeRose will become president/vice chairman.

Under the terms of the stock transaction, which has been approved by both boards of directors and is expected to close within three months, Jupiter shareholders will receive 0.946 shares of Media Metrix stock for each Jupiter share they own.

Wall Street was cool to the news, sending Media Metrix's stock down 17%, or $4.875, to $23.375 on June 27, while Jupiter dipped about 8% to $21.96. The stock will trade under Media Metrix's Nasdaq symbol, MMXI.

Jupiter’s primary competitors include Forrester Research and International Data Corp., while Media Metrix competes with Nielsen/NetRatings, which is owned by Billboard parent VNU.

Upgrades: The MTVI Group has added six new VPs. New to the company, which is the online unit of MTV Networks, are former VH1 talent relations ever David Weiler, who is named VP of music and talent relations for VH1.com; radio vet author/website co-owner cy Mcnay, named VP of music and radio programming at SonicNet.com; and former Food Network VP of new media Sarah Cohen, named VP of programming and production for MTV.com.

In-house promotions include

(Continued on page 77)
**Home Video**

**MERCHANTS & MARKETING**

**Licensing 2000 Showcases Harry Potter, Rudolph For Kids**

**BY ANNE SHERBER**

NEW YORK—Unrelated merchandise targeted at kids 8 and under continues to be dominated by entertainment-related properties, as evidenced by the pervasive television and movie marketing campaigns that are in full swing at the record New York Licensing 2000 International trade show, June 13-15.

Warner Bros., for example, began staking out its retail territory for the upcoming film "Harry Potter And The Sorcerer's Stone." Based on the popularity of the books, the film, due out Nov. 15, 2001, is likely to be a merchandising juggernaut (Billboard, July 1).

In fact, Warner is paving the way for "Potter" with merchandise based on the books that will begin appearing in Warner Bros. Studio Stores this fall.

According to Rob Graun, executive VP for worldwide marketing and retail business development at Warner Bros. Consumer Products, Harry Potter merchandise will incorporate elements from the book and the upcoming film. Warner awarded the master toy license for Potter to Mattel, but it also has agreements with Fossil for watches, Gimbil for plashes, Max Alexander for collectible dolls, and Babysoft for Halloween costumes and accessories. The agreements cover the first two Harry Potter books and theatrical films.

While Harry Potter was the newest property at the show, Golden Book Family Entertainment is relying on an old family favorite for a holiday promotion. According to Mitch Friesel, senior VP of marketing for Golden Books, the "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" television and video classic will be part of a merchandising program offered exclusively at the Museland Group's stores. Products include recorded songs, home videos, DVDs, Rudolph and Island of Misfit Toys plushies, ornaments, musical snow globes, and T-shirts.

Additionally, because of the success of the DTV last year, the company will release a new Rudolph title with bonus footage of the show's creator, Arthur Rankin.

Another licensing effort tied to a children's video and DVD release was announced by 20th Century Fox. The company, which has a number of successful toddler properties—including "Telebabies" and "Thomas The Tank Engine"—is attempting to reach a slightly older audience with Eloise, the Plaza Hotel-dwelling little girl created by author Kay Thompson in 1955.

According to Elisey president Kenn Viselman, Eloise will star in two upcoming theatrical films and an animated television series. The first film is scheduled for release next summer.

Viselman says that books featuring Eloise and her nanny are being reintroduced to stores now along with a line of Catherine Bauman purses available exclusively at FAO Schwartz.

Even though license holders acknowledge the difficulty of selling merchandise to teenagers, it has not stopped them from trying.

According to Neil Vogel, chief corporate development officer at Alloy, an E-tailer that targets 12- to 16-year-olds, such media properties like "Charmies," "Buffy The Vampire Slayer," and "Beverly Hills, 90210" may be very popular with teens, but that doesn't always mean the merchant will sell. "Just because they like to watch it doesn't mean they want to wear it," Vogel notes.

Another drawback to marketing a teen property is that overexposure is considered highly uncool. Vogel says the demo wants to discover a property rather than have it foisted upon them.

World Wrestling Federation (WWF) Entertainment Inc. senior VP Jim Byrne agrees that overexposure is a teen property's major drawback. "As long as merchants the frequency model may be too high," he says, "it's too many impressions."

But despite numerous failures the studios and other producers are executing marketing plans targeting this hard-to-reach demographic.

Byrne, for instance, says that WWF is actively reaching out to teens and that its top-rated "WWF Smackdown!" has more than 100 teen-friendly sponsors, such as Burger King, Sega, and others.

On the film side, Sony Pictures Consumer Products has teamed with Marvel Enterprises to create merchandise for "Spider-Man: The Movie," due out in the fall of 2001. Teens will be a prime target in the licensing program, according to Peter Daag, president of Sony Consumer Products, and the studio has already begun reaching them through the Internet.

Warner Bros. Consumer Products hopes to appeal to teenagers with merchandise from "Gone6Mies-Kocks," the next film from the Farrelly Brothers, due in the spring of 2001. Artisan Entertainment will also attempt to lure teens with merchandise tie-ins for the Oct. 27 release of " looking of Shadows: Blair Witch 2."

According to Annette Jones, executive VP of worldwide marketing for the indie studio's new consumer products division, "The Blair Witch Project" generated approximately $1 million in licensed merchandise sales.

The studio has acquired the master toy license for McFarlane Toys, the PC games license to Designer of Dungeons, and the comic book license to Disturb of Orin. And Oni Press, Parachute Publishing, Artisan Entertainment, and Ron Davis. Children's Books announced a book series inspired by the legend of the Blair Witch. Iantam Books will market the series, called "The Blair Witch Files," late this summer.

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**VSDA Releases Details Of Retail Study; Broadway Archive Debut Details Collection**

CENSUS 2000: According to the Video Software Dealers Assn.'s (VSDA) video retail census, there are 25,758 video rental storefronts in the U.S. While the number may seem surprising to some who have estimated the number of storefronts at around the 20,000 mark, a bigger surprise is that the study counted more than 81,000 retailers that sold or rented video.

The study, conducted by the Arthur Andersen firm, only retailers that rented more than 10 movies made the final count. Sell-through dealers who have estimated the number of storefronts were also counted but were taken to concentrate on the rental business.

Reports from the National Assn. of Video Distributors were also factored into the study. Andersen asked dealers if video generated more than 50% of their revenue. When that was factored in, the total number of rental retailers dropped to 19,857, bringing it more in line with most industry estimates.

The 81,000 count includes every class of trade that carries some sort of video product in their store. Some of the stores were obvious, such as Target, Meadland, and Kmart. But also on the list were stores like Office Max, PetSmart, and Cracker Barrel, which indicates video continues to be a viable product for dealers outside of the norm.

The VSDA hasn't indicated what it's going to do with the results of the study, other than compare them with the results of future retail census reports. It expects to conduct the survey every few years.

At the upcoming VSDA convention, the old topic of "windows" will be opened up again. This time around, dealers are concerned that their pay-per-view windows are getting smaller and that some studios may begin releasing movies simultaneously on pay-per-view and on video. Dealers will wear red hats during the July 10 business session to silently voice their concerns.

The VSDA is endorsing a 60-day window between a video release and pay-per-view, but some studios already have moved to a 45-day window.

Also in the everything-old-is-new-again camp is the idea of video vending machines. This time, though, the twist is that the machines will dispense either VHS or DVD titles.

Las Vegas Import Export Inc. has obtained U.S. distribution rights to an Italian-manufactured vending machine called Mediascan. The company says thousands have been successfully deployed at various retail locations in Europe.

**PICTURE TITLES**

by Eileen Fitzpatrick

**Petrone is chairman.**

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<th>Distributing Label</th>
<th>Catalog Number</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
<th>Year of Release</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<td>AMERICAN BEAUTY (R)</td>
<td>Buena Vista Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Buena Vista Home Entertainment</td>
<td>85361</td>
<td>Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>29.99</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>GIRL INTERRUPTED (R)</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Video</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Video</td>
<td>10191</td>
<td>Winona Ryder, Angelina Jolie</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>Paramount Home Video</td>
<td>Paramount Home Video</td>
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<td>Johnny Depp, Christina Ricci</td>
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<td>ON THE MOON (R)</td>
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<td>Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jr.</td>
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<td>BEING JOHN MALLOKOVICH (R)</td>
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<td>FIGHT CLUB (R)</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Universal Studios Home Video</td>
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<td>Ben Stiller, Nutman &amp; Tressler</td>
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<td>THE GREEN MILE (PG-13)</td>
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**Notes:**
- **GOLD** certification for a minimum of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of $9 million or retail for theatrically-released programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at suggested retail for nontheatrical titles.
- **PLATINUM** certification for a minimum sale of 250,000 units or a dollar volume of $18 million at retail for theatrically-released programs, and at least 50,000 units and $2 million at suggested retail for nontheatrical titles. © 2000, Billboard/SP Communications.
Universal Unearths Classic Monsters For Halloween

BBoo: Universal Studios Home Video has rounded up a unique online hook for its Halloween promotion, marketed under “Universal Is Halloween.”

The promotion involves more than a dozen Halloween-themed classic, contemporary, and kids’ titles, some of which will be packaged with a decoder card. When consumers go to universaltitles.com and hold up the card to the computer screen, a prize is revealed.

Universal expects to ship a total of approximately 3.5 million units for the promotion, which arrives in stores Aug. 29.


All “Creature” titles, also available individually for $14.98 each, will be packaged with the exclusive CD-ROM game “The Hunt For The Creature From The Black Lagoon” instead of the decoder card.

While the “Classic Monsters” titles aren’t specifically aimed at children, they’ve been popular with kids for decades, and the decoder promotion is something that speaks directly to that demo, says a Universal spokesperson.

Most prizes will be T-shirts and posters, but the grand prize is a trip for four to Universal Studios for its “Halloween Horror Nights” next year. Universal is also offering online visitors a downloadable coupon good for $1 off the purchase of another Halloween title.

The promotion is running through Dec. 31 to give consumers more of a chance to redeem their prizes.

An 11-title kid-friendly promotion called “Universal’s Haunted House” includes new direct-to-video features such as “Alien And The Chimpunks Meet The Wolf Man,” “Archies Weird Mysteries,” “Archie And The Riverdale Vampires,” and “Monitor Mash,” each priced at $14.98.


A pair of titles, “Zoober’s Little Pals” and “Play Day At Animal Junction,” will be priced at $14.98. Each title is packaged with a free animal sticker play set. Warner Home Video is targeting moms with a print ad campaign.

The program is a mix of live-action, puppetry, animation, and clay animation. Merchandisers with “Zooboomafoo” header cards will be available in 24- and 48-unit configurations.

THREADED THE NEEDLE: Erwind Enterprises, home of the popular “Vegetales” series, is releasing the first Christian-themed children’s DVD title in November. But the company’s first DVD will be “A Porel Full Of Pigs,” from the “Threads” series.

Priced at $16.96, the title includes the first 30-minute “Threads” episode, a three-minute animated music video not found on the VHS edition, and a live-action music video featuring Christian music acts Nicole C. Mullen and Salvador performing a Latin/salsa version of “The Cake Song,” which is exclusive to the DVD.

ASSOCIATE: In preparing this column note provided by Lindsay Powers.

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**Top Kid Video™**

**This Week**

**2 Weeks Ago**

**No. 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
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<td>SALUDOS AMIGOS</td>
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<td>MARY-KATE &amp; ASHLEY: SWITCHING GOALS</td>
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<td>MARY-KATE &amp; ASHLEY: PASSPORT TO PARIS</td>
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<td>TAZMANIA: HUNGRY FOR KITTY</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>POKEMON: THE FIRST MOVIE</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>THE ADVENTURES OF ELMO IN GROUCHLAND</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>ELMO’S WORLD</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>MONSTER RANCHER: LET THE GAMES BEGIN</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>BARNEY. BARNEY SONGS FOR THE MOST MUSICAL MINDS</td>
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<td>AN EXTREMELY GOOFY MOVIE</td>
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<td>THE FOX AND THE HOUND</td>
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<td>POKEMON: JIGGLYPUFF &amp; POOCHY</td>
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**Universal Unearths Classic Monsters For Halloween**

**Wolf Man** videos.

The game cards are also good toward a $3 mail-in rebate with purchase of the Chimpunks video and two bags of the raisins. A national free-standing coupon insert reaching more than 50 million households on Oct. 15 will advertise the rebate and sweepstakes offer.

Consumers also will receive a $2 instant redeemable coupon good toward any Halloween candy with the purchase of any of the three new Halloween titles.

Both the Archie and Chimpunks videos will air on television this fall. In fact, “Archie And The Riverdale Vampires” will inaugurate a new Universal video series, “Archie’s Weird Mysteries”; a limited-edition free comic book will come packaged with this video, while supplies last.

The Web site will also download a $1 coupon, good toward the purchase of the three new Halloween titles.

**TICKET-IFIC:** “The Tigger Movie” makes its home video and DVD debut on Aug. 32 from Walt Disney Home Video. Featuring music from the Oscar-winning Sherman Brothers (“Mary Poppins”), “The Tigger Movie” is priced at $24.99 for VHS and $29.99 for DVD.

It’s Disney’s first DVD, and extras include a storybook, trivia game, sing-along songs, a “Build Your Own Family Tree” game, and behind-the-scenes interviews with the Sherman Brothers and the voice of Pooch, Jim Cummings.

Also featured is the ballad “Your Heart Will Lead You Home,” co-written and performed by Kenny Loggins, who had his own Pooch hit with Loggins & Messina’s “House At Pooch Corner.”

“They wrote music for the first Pooch movie in 1966, at the same time I was writing ‘House At Pooch Corner,’” says Loggins. “We come from different schools of songwriting, but we’ve been orbiting around each other for years.”

But it was “The Tigger Movie” that put Loggins together with 80-year-old Robert and 79-year-old Richard Wagner.

“We wrote the song in a cubicle at Disney’s Burbank offices—it was just like Tin Pan Alley, with an upright piano and hand held tape recorder,” says Loggins. “It was fun writing with them. Richard is an amazing arranger, and Richard is really fast melodically. I’d throw a melody piece out, and Richard would expand on it immediately.”

**CATCHING Z’S:** “Zooboomafoo,” the Emmy-winning PBS preschool TV series hosted by Chris and Martin Loggins, says Loggins.

--Billboard
The T.J. Martell Foundation recently held its 25th annual Humanitarian Award Gala at the New York Hilton. The foundation announced that it has raised a record-breaking $11.2 million for leukemia, cancer, and AIDS research. More than 1,800 music industry executives and celebrities attended the event, which honored charity founder/chairman Tony Martell.

Since Martell founded the charity in 1975, it has raised more than $155 million.

Ahmet Ertegun, left, co-chairman/co-CEO of the Atlantic Group, is pictured with Frances W. Preston, president/CEO of BMI, and Martell.

Shown, from left, are Polly Anthony, president of the Epic Records Group; Martell, David R. Glew, chairman of the Epic Records Group; and Mel Ilberman, vice chairman of Sony Music Entertainment.
JEFF BEZOS
BILLBOARD'S 2000 VIDEO PERSON OF THE YEAR
DOUBLE PLATINUM day and date **DVD** offers even more of the movies you love, the features you want!

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- 5.1 surround sound and 2.0 stereo surround sound
- English subtitles and closed captions

**Disc 2: Supplemental Material**
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- Feature length “making of” documentary
- 2 theatrical trailers
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- 2.0 stereo surround sound (English only)
- English, Spanish and French subtitles

**Disc 2: Supplemental Material**
- Deleted scenes with commentary by Paul Thomas Anderson
- Cast and crew information
- Michael Penn music video “Try”

Only $29.98 SRP!
n five years, Amazon.com has become one of the most recognizable names on the Internet, selling everything from books to DVD releases at a discount. The company’s founder, Jeff Bezos, has always been a proponent of technology and for selling all things to all people. This year’s Video Person Of The Year, Bezos spoke with Billboard about the competitive DVD and video market, and how technology is changing the world of commerce.

Why did Amazon want to get into the video business?

The same way we decided to get into all of our businesses—because our customers wanted us to. If you go back, the first thing we did after books was music. We got involved in music because we were literally getting a stream of e-mail from customers saying, “Why don’t you also sell music?” After we launched music, we started sending e-mail to our customers. We’d randomly picked a group of 3,000 customers and asked them, besides the things we sell now, What would you like to see us sell? And they’d come back with answers all over the place, like spark plugs or windshield wiper blades for a ‘92 Volvo. But video is a fantastic category and one that our customers really wanted us to enter into. One of the reasons is that it’s very underserved in the physical world. There aren’t many great video stores with broad selection. We have over 75,000 titles, and even specialty video stores in the physical world may have at the most between 5,000 and 10,000 titles; some of the bigger ones may have 15,000 titles. So, one of the things that made Amazon successful—whether in books or music—is that extensive selection. That’s the same thing we’ve done in the video store. And we have these great Advantage titles. (Amazon’s Advantage program sells videos from independent producers on a commission basis. The program is open to anyone who submits five VHS copies of their film.)

How much business does the Advantage program do?

It’s more than you would think, because we’re typically the only place where you can find those titles. Take “Chasing Amy” In Florida, for example. It’s in “Entertainment Weekly” and is outselling “Star Wars” on our site. It’s a case of “I saw it in ‘Star’ Love” and “Star Wars,” and it’s the kind of film that’s very difficult for the producer to get distribution. The problem is, when you’ve produced a film, you have two problems to solve. You have to promote the film, and you have to get distribution; it’s a chicken-and-egg problem because you really can’t promote your film until you have distribution, but no one wants to let in distribution until your film is successful. So we broke that: we open it to all comers and give people a place and a way to buy it.

So it’s more than someone’s mother buying these titles?

Oh yes, these things can break through. It’s happened in video, music, in books, M.J. Brouse started in the Advantage program, and her book eventually became a best seller.

Do you dislike shopping in traditional stores?

Personally, my least favorite physical-world shopping experience is electronics stores. In fact, we started in books, which is actually my favorite shopping experience in physical stores. Physical bookstores do a great job. Physical video stores, in my opinion, do not, and neither do electronics stores. What we’d really like to do is enter into these new business areas in a way where we not just improve, but literar revolutionize at least one aspect—preferably aequatal of the customer experience in that area.

For the last three years, DVD has been the growth category in video.

How much has DVD contributed to the growth of Amazon’s video store?

For us, significantly. It’s selling like hot cakes, and we also sell DVD players, and I can assure you they’re both selling really well. Again, DVD is not well served in the physical world. It’s hard to find the full selection. Some mass merchants sell maybe the top 100 titles, but they’re not selling the thousands of titles that are available. And, if you get out of the major metropolitan areas into smaller municipalities, you can’t find these things at all.

Has it been the biggest new category gainer?

I think it probably is our fastest-growing new category ever. One of the things that needs to be done—and it is happening, faster and faster every day—is to get more and more back catalog available on DVD. Internet Movie Database [which is owned by Amazon] lists more than 250,000 titles, and if we had all those films on DVD, we could sell them all. The ones that nobody has ever heard of, believe me, there are people who have heard of them and want them. If I were a studio executive, I’d be pushing to get everything on DVD. It’s a huge opportunity.

One of Amazon’s strategies is the ability to target-market products to individual customers. How are you improving this area?

I believe we are absolutely in the Kitty Hawk stage on this. I spend a lot of time thinking about this, and obviously I’m biased, but we’ve invested more in that technology than anybody else, and we’re further ahead than anybody else. But there’s still a long way to go, in terms of making that experience even more compelling. That is a big deal for customers, because there’s so much selection out there. If you can help people find things they really enjoy but they would not have been able to find any other way, you’ve created a huge value.

What other improvements would you like to make in the video store?

In terms of specific improvements, we don’t usually talk about what they might be, but what we’re focusing on is selection—just adding to selection. Also ease of use—like one-click shopping and purchase-choice information. Price is something customers care about, and we’re always going to be competitive on price. That’s our strategy.

Are there any other products or services that Amazon would like to add?

If you look at the company’s mission statement, what we’re trying to do is have universal selection. The company’s mission is to be the place where customers can come to find and discover anything—with a capital A—that they might want to buy online. In the illness of time, that should include things like movie tickets, but whether that’s something we’d do in the near future or not is a more difficult question to answer.

The e-commerce sector has taken a beating on Wall Street this year. Has it become a victim of overzealous press agents or is it just maturing?

I think it’s the investors who are getting more discerning. E-commerce is real and is going to be an important part of the future economy, but there were a lot of companies out there who were pursuing irrational business strategies based on the assumption that the capital was going to be free. There basically were two kinds of companies out there. One kind was trying to build a store. Then there’s a second group of companies that are trying to build lasting companies. For a while, I think investors were having a hard time discerning between the two. As the investor community has become more sophisticated in analyzing Internet companies, they are saying, “Look, I am not going to invest in a company that has $60 million in cash and spends $30 million of it in a single quarter on television advertising”—which was the strategy in 1999 for most Internet companies. It just doesn’t make any sense.

Amazon has been hit hard, as well. How does that affect you?

In our last quarter, losses declined. We are a famously unprofitable company, and that has been a conscious strategy and a conscious decision, not an accident. In fact, being investing in something that we believe is very big and very important. Investing is not new, but what’s unusual about us is that we’re in the investment phase as a publicly traded company. That’s unusual. Usually, when companies are in an investment phase, they’re either subsidiaries of larger public companies. Second, the scale at which we’re investing is unusual. Not just...
Selling Video And DVD Online:
Heavy Users Want It All Right Now

BY ANNE SHERBER

Despite a newly skeptical stock market, Internet-based commerce sites that sell home entertainment directly to consumers are thriving. Customers have taken to ordering prerecorded video, particularly in the DVD format, like a bunch of hungry fish in cyber-water.

The reasons, according to a number of entertainment e-tailing executives, are twofold. First, consumers who have become habitual Internet shoppers are the same consumers who are most comfortable with changing technology. They are most likely to own DVD players and DVD-ROM drives and to surf the Internet regularly. According to Len Cosimano, VP of merchandising and multimedia for Borders and Borders.com, “Online shoppers have PCs, with DVD-ROM drives and are much more interested in electronics. They are the early adopters, and the DVD market has been driven by early adopters.”

SHoppers AND COLleCtors

Cosimano says that online sales figures for prerecorded video also point to the dovetailing of Internet shoppers and DVD collectors. He says that online sales of prerecorded video at Borders.com are now split evenly between DVD and VHS, even though the installed base of DVD players is approaching 6 million and the installed base of VHS players has passed 60 million. In the company’s brick-and-mortar stores, the percentage of sales of prerecorded video in the DVD format is much lower, “around 35%,” Cosimano says. “We are a movie store, but we are primarily a DVD store,” confirms Steve Jacobs, director of marketing and commerce for Checkout.com, the online arm of Wherehouse Music stores. “We carry 250,000 different videos, but most of our sales—close to 80%—come from DVD. In the stores, it’s still 50/50.”

The second reason that Internet shoppers are particularly willing to purchase prerecorded video online is that it’s easy and fun. E-tailers, whether stand-alone Internet (DVD Empire) or electronic arms of brick-and-mortar retailers (Borders.com and Reel.com), have made great strides in harnessing the power of the Internet to create selling environments offering features that, for the most part, have proved impractical in brick-and-mortar stores.

From ease of use to the viability of a widespread system for consumer pre-ordering, to the successful promotion of catalog titles, online retailers have exploited the characteristics of their medium to make shopping for prerecorded movies enjoyable.

INTERACTIVE AND OPINIONATED

Fortunately every site that offers prerecorded video for sale features proprietary editorial content to entertain customers and help them select movies. The sites are designed to make the experience of buying online be fun, informative, interactive and simple. And, because everyone likes to give his or her opinions about movies, customers are even asked what they think.

Reel.com, the online subsidiary of Hollywood Video, has just launched its redesigned Web site, offering consumers fancier bells and whistles. The site has added more movie information, as well as more original streaming media programming and profiles of actors in new releases, trivia games, interactive polls and features on everything from the Cannes Film Festival to movie-release calendars. Additionally, Reel has added a streaming DVD review show e-tailer that has been on the Web since 1997. “Original content and customer-created content are what keep people coming back to us, and we have a high retention rate. Our heaviest customers spend a lot of time posting.”

Although the pre-recorded homevideo business is now in its third decade, online movie retailers have managed to do something that brick-and-mortar stores have always struggled with: get consumers to consistently pre-order movies in anticipation of street date. In fact, according to executives at a number of sites, pre-ordering accounts for a significant portion of sales of any new DVD release, including older titles that become available on DVD for the first time.

“A majority of sales come from pre-orders on major titles,” says Daniher. “We will post [the title] as soon as studios announce it, and customers start ordering immediately.” And, says Cosimano, Borders ships product to consumers “a day or two before street date, depending on where they are,” to ensure that customers receive their orders on its day of release. Cosimano says that Borders.com offers consumers incentives for pre-ordering—a gift with purchase, special contests, in some cases bounce-back coupons.

However, online pre-ordering of movies is much more widespread among purchasers of DVDs than those customers ordering in the
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**Midterm Charts**

The video recaps in this Spotlight are year-to-date (beginning with the Dec. 4, 1999 issue through the June 17 issue). For the Sales and Rentals lists, titles are assigned points based upon their position on the respective chart for each week the title appeared on the chart. In the case of DVD, rankings are determined by accumulating units sold, as compiled by VideoScan, for each week a title appeared on the chart.

These chart recaps were compiled by Anthony Ciombor and video-charts manager Marc Zubatkin.

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### TOP VIDEO SALES TITLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Label/Distributing Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE MATRIX</td>
<td>Warner Home Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME</td>
<td>New Line Home Video/Warner Home Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TARZAN</td>
<td>Walt Disney Home Video/Buena Vista Home Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BIG DADDY</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB</td>
<td>Artisan Home Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SAVING PRIVATE RYAN</td>
<td>DreamWorks Home Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SLIPKNOT: WELCOME TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD</td>
<td>Roadrunner Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MARY-KATE &amp; ASHLEY: PASSPORT TO PARIS</td>
<td>Dualstar Video/Warner Home Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>THE IRON GIANT</td>
<td>Warner Family Entertainment/Warner Home Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>COLUMBIA MILLENNIUM 2000</td>
<td>Turner Home Entertainment/Warner Home Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>STAR WARS: EPISODE 1-THE PHANTOM MENACE</td>
<td>FoxVideo</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>PLAYBOY'S WILDWEBGIRLS.COM</td>
<td>Playboy Home Video/Universal Music &amp; Video Dist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>YELLOW SUBMARINE</td>
<td>MGM Home Entertainment/Warner Home Video</td>
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### TOP VIDEO SALES LABELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>(No. of Charted Titles)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WARNER HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PLAYBOY HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>WALT DISNEY HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>NEW LINE HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>FOXVIDEO</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DREAMWORKS HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>MGM HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DUALSTAR VIDEO</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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### TOP VIDEO RENTALS TITLES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Pos.</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
<th>(No. of Charted Titles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WARNER HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL MUSIC &amp; VIDEO DIST.</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FOXVIDEO</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Continued on page 66
THE ULTIMATE EDITION DVD

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- Tunnel Scene Deconstruction Using Angles
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SELLING ONLINE
Continued from page 62

VHS format. According to Cosimano, "A significant amount of pre-ordering online skewed more toward DVD customers." The customer who purchases DVDs online tends to reserve titles in advance, he says: "It's convenience. If they can pre-order and reserve and have it come right to their house the day it's released, they appreciate that." Jeff Rix, CEO of e-tailer DVDempire, estimates that between thirty and forty percent of his site's sales of new releases on DVD are pre-orders.

FORMING ALLIANCES
As movie and DVD e-tailing has become more competitive, content and commerce sites are busy forming strategic alliances to bolster profits. A number of entertainment retail sites are linked to content sites to help make the space between getting information and making a purchase appear seamless.

Alliances between Internet sites can take several shapes. A content site—for instance, one that provides movie reviews—and a commerce site can share content, making both sites more powerful and providing more hits than either would have independently. Or a commerce site can purchase advertising at a well-traveled address—for instance, popular Internet portals such as AOL and Yahoo!

AMAZONIAN ACCESS
The grandaddy of online book and video retailing, Amazon.com, recently announced that, in the past seven months, it has signed deals worth $806.5 million just for giving other e-tailers exposure on its site. And those figures have not escaped the notice of smaller e-tailers. According to Cosimano, his company's Web site has developed a relationship with "Sessions At West 54th," the acclaimed PBS music series. "We've worked it out with the Sessions people, so we mention the URL on the show and feature [the CD and DVD] in the stores," says Cosimano. "And, if consumers go online to the Sessions Web site and want to buy the product, they can click over to Borders."

Cosimano and other e-tailer executives are looking hard at just these kinds of relationships. Daniher says that her company has deals with AOL GoNet and Alta Vista. "We run a series of [paid] banners," she says. In addition, DVDExpress provides entertainment-related content for the portal sites with links back to DVDExpress. "We supply content for them," she says.

Cosimano says that Borders.com is actively seeking out those kinds of relationships but is finding that some sites have priced themselves out of the marketplace. "It's becoming harder, because companies start to attach some significant revenue to an online relationship," he notes. "There are people who feel that there's a unique value to their brand and, consequently, may overvalue those links."
"Jeff Bezos/Amazon's database approach to the sales and marketing of pre-recorded video is revolutionizing the home-video business. We congratulate Jeff on this award and look forward to our continued partnership."

—Ben Feingold, president, Columbia TriStar Home Video

"We've enjoyed a very productive relationship with Amazon. In the brief time they've been in the video business, they've made a major impact on the business as a whole. The people who represent Amazon on a day-to-day basis are first-rate. They look at each studio's business, what their needs and strengths are, and how Amazon can complement the individual studio in the marketplace."

—David Bishop, president, MGM Home Entertainment

"It's great to know that we have something in common with a visionary like Jeff Bezos and Amazon besides product. Their core strategy is very much like ours: obseous about customers, not competitors."  

—Patricia Wyatt, president, Fox Consumer Products

"Everyone agrees that Jeff and his management team are true visionaries. However, in addition to being visionaries, they also have built an exciting company that exists in the here and now. There is simply no denying that their approach to Internet retailing is exciting and far-reaching. Amazon.com has already become a very important customer of ours, and we are delighted to have developed the personal and business relationships that we expect will serve us both very well now and into the future."

—Eric Doctorow, president, Paramount Home Entertainment

"Amazon has brought to the information age a shopping experience that is as revolutionary as Sears Roebuck was to mail order in the 19th century and Wal-Mart was to mass merchandising in the 20th century. One would think that the online shopping experience would be rather depersonalized. But Amazon has given it a personalization and an intimacy that is, by and large, unparalleled—except for when there was a local butcher and baker and fruit stand. The mechanizing techniques Amazon has introduced have created a site without equal. And this form of electronic shopping has been one of the catalytic agents to drive DVD's extraordinary growth."

—Warren Lieberfarb, president, Warner Home Video & Pay-Per-View

[Testimonial quotes compiled by Terry Barnes]
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INDEPENDENT TOP 5 IS RED ALL OVER (Continued from page 6)

YEARS
1
2
3
4
5

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Los Angeles-based world music label seeks marketing and product manager. Must be a self-starter, creative, and detail oriented to manage marketing of label. Having experience in alternative distribution and cross marketing to non-traditional retail sites is a plus. Responsibilities include creation of marketing tools, plans and internet strategies.

MUSIC PRODUCTION SPECIALIST

Music experience required. Must be able to read music and understand how to turn music into digital files. Please send resume to: Greg Fleming

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Mix Entertainment seeks National Sales Manager for video & music titles. Must have entertainment distribution experience and contacts. Forward your resume to: Fax: (323) 692-6701

An independent top artist Monifah is finishing her third album, "Home." Teddy Riley is executive producer for the set, which is due in October. Monifah's last album, 1998's "Mo'Hogany," was certified gold and featured the hit "Touch It," which peaked at No. 9 on The Billboard Hot 100. Shown, from left, are Riley, Monifah, and Motown recording artist Choco DeBarge.

‘We’re going to stay with [Nickelback] a hell of a lot longer than other people will, and when the next record comes out, it will ship 100,000. That’s what we’re really looking for.’

KEN ANTONELLI

Monifah’s ‘Home.’ Universal Records artist Monifah is finishing her third album, "Home." Teddy Riley is executive producer for the set, which is due in October. Monifah’s last album, 1998’s "Mo'Hogany," was certified gold and featured the hit “Touch It," which peaked at No. 9 on The Billboard Hot 100. Shown, from left, are Riley, Monifah, and Motown recording artist Choco DeBarge.

Greg Brown releases 15th red house album (Continued from page 11)

Greg Brown seems to have expanded his audience, because his music has a country/rock feel to it and it’s less folk,” agrees Mike Felten, owner of the Record Emporium store in Chicago. "We do pretty well with artists like Willie and Billy Bragg, and Greg Brown appeals to fans who like that music. [Brown’s] albums have been selling more than they were several years ago."

Rita Houston, music director for triple-A station WBUF New York, remarks, "Greg Brown is great. We treat his records like hits and paper pieces. It’s been interesting to see him develop his audience, especially in the past five years. I think the radio airplay has a lot to do with it. He’s not limited to just being in the folk-singer/songwriter category."

“Brown is a great benchmark for what’s pure”

BOB FELDMAN
get paid 100% in Poptones. It's idiotic that new bands have got to sell CDs for 13.39 pounds [$21]. Every record will be 9.99 pounds [$15]—that means we're the same as America and the rest of the world, so we can't get fucked over parallel imports."

Dickens may now be in bed with Sony, but McGee is adamant that he will never again sign a blanket deal with a major.

"We're going to do a label deal in Japan and individual label deals in America and we're going to work with people that we like and have something in common with the groups," he says. "What was good about the Sony machine was that they took the time to check they wrote me ... Listen, I'm being facetious. If you're going to go with a corporation, you may as well go with the biggest corporation."

Dickens says that his early dealings with Sony have gone "brilliantly" but he knows the rules. "It's a hit-driven business. I've been very successful with Warners, and I'm now part of Sony and they'll judge me the way I've always been judged. I know what it is like being them, with me being me.

"Without any prompting, each executive cops up in the other's conversation, perhaps understandably, given the importance of the meetings for the projects. The two have known each other since McGee had a label deal under Dickens' Warner tenure for his Eleva-

**PROJECT ZEUS**

(Continued from page 44)

Overseeing Project Zeus is digital rights management service provider MERCURIX, a National Computer Systems subsidiary and the company responsible for providing such services using technology developed by California-based InterTrust Technologies. The three-

miling Watermarking. Any page billed as the biggest such test in which any major international label has participated.

An Asia Pacific senior VP Michael Smelle says the company is taking "an unprecedented step" in releasing hits from top international and local acts.

"We want to invite consumers to enjoy secured digital music legitimately over the Internet—and to give their feedback regarding their experience. We are very keen to make it easy for the public to access digital music legitimately over the Internet without resorting to piracy."

MERCURIX COO Philip Wu adds, "The trial has so far been very successful, and since Project Zeus launched in April, we have learned and segmented very important technical and business issues. We are very impressed with the efforts that BMG Entertainment Asia Pacific is making to serve their customers."

According to MERCURIX, so far some 500 individuals have signed up with Project Zeus.

**LIFELINES**

**BIRTHS**

Girl, Aliza Helena, to Matt and Dana Walden, June 8 in Los Angeles. Father is the West Coast VP for Aristar Records.

Girl, Julia Lynn, to Dan and Linda Gurlitz, June 13 in New York. Father is VP/GM of WinStar Home Video.

**MARRIAGES**

Jill Giovanetti to Chris Tuthill, June 18 in New York. Bride works for Entourage Talent. Groom was recently appointed head of Talent Consultants International's corporate division.

Scott Weiland to Mary Fors-

May, 21 in Los Angeles. Groom is lead singer of Stone Temple Pilots. Bride is a model.

Kevin Richardson to Kristin Willits, June 17 in Lexington, Ky. Groom is a member of Backstreet Boys.

**DEATHS**

Mike Lushka, 54, of undisclosed causes, June 21 in Encino, Calif. Lushka was a sales and marketing VP for the Holland Group. He worked on the HDI "Gold Series" compilations, which included acts such as Freda Payne, the Chi-Lites, the O'Jays, the Four Tops, the Miracles, and the Temptations before moving to the Holland Group. Lushka is survived by a daughter, two stepdaughters, and a grandson. Services were held June 26 in North Holly-

**GOOD WORKS**

**INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS:** The Beijing Opera returned to the U.S. for the first time in 20 years on June 20 and helped raise funds for Columbus Presbyterian Medical Foundation's Shriver Pavilion and Sloane's Center for Endometriosis Treatment and Research. The troupe's concert, produced by Atlantic/Picture Music, took place at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. A total of $100,000 was raised for the hospital.
NEW YORK—Until relatively recently, ultra-high spin counts were a guerrilla tactic employed by only a handful of top 40 PDs and were seen more often at rhythmic top 40 than on the mainstream side.

Sometimes they were used by an upstart top 40 looking for anything to set it apart from an established competitor. Occasionally, there would be an iconic local PD who'd pull the hits 90-100 times a week. Often those PDs championed other programming theories that were just as iconoclastic in the mid-90s, such as playing all the hits, even if that meant segueing from hip-hop to country.

But better available product, more competition, and several other factors had driven spins up overall at both mainstream and rhythmic top 40. In late June '95, WWOQ (Q102) Philadelphia was spinning its top song 54 times a week. In a recent week, its No. 1 record got 75 spins, KKRZ (Z100) Portland, Ore., has gone from 61 detections to 81 since Q102, WHTZ (Z100) New York is up from 48 spins in '96 to 80 this year.

And those stations were far from the extreme. WKRQ (Q102) Cincinnati was at 90, while competitor WKFS was at 93, KXOK (Mix 96.1) San Antonio was at 95, and WPXY Rochester, N.Y., had at least that many. KCHY (99.3) Kansas City, Kan., is over 100, and rhythmic WBHM-FM (B96) Chicago was at 87 spins.

Now consider the national picture. In late June '95, the No. 1 mainstream hit, "I'll Be There For You" by the Rembrandts, was receiving an average of 56 spins a week. In 1997, that number dipped to 43 spins (for Meredith Brooks’ "Bitch"). By 1998, it was up to 49 for Alanis Morisette's "Uninvited". Last year at this time it was 57, for Ricky Martin's "Livin' La Vida Loca."

AN UNUSUAL EXAMPLE

To get a good gauge of where spin count was in 2000, we looked at several different songs. "Oops! . . . I Did It Again" has never averaged more than 54 spins per station. But that's an unusual example of a record that, for various reasons, never went into power rotation on many stations. Macy Gray's "I Try," a much less polarizing record for many PDs, averaged 57 spins in its top week. And 'N Sync's "Bye Bye Bye" hit 66 average spins.

Those rotations are putting mainstream top 40 in the neighborhood of rhythmic top 40, which spun its most-played record 51 times in late June '95, 44 the following year, and 46 in 1997. Then it shot up to 62 spins, 57 spins, and 66 spins, respectively, between 1998 and now. That may be because '98 was the first year that some more R&B-leaning stations were no longer part of the rhythmic top 40 panel. Many of those stations spun the hits just slightly faster than their mainstream R&B competition.

There's some fine print needed on the mainstream top 40 side, too. Some stations with a relatively low spin count on their powers are actually turning their records over pretty quickly but have morning shows that don't play much music. WFLZ Tampa, Fla., which has kept its powers right around 70 spins since '95, still turns them over every two hours, except in mornings, where it plays only three songs an hour.

Similarly, KUBE Seattle, which only reached 60 spins recently on its most-played song, down from 69 detections a week in '98, has added more mix shows, but its actual turnover over time has increased. But even with those factors, top 40 spins are up. Why?

IT'S THE START-UPS

Top 40 is increasingly a format of start-ups. In the mid-90s, many top 40s were returning from misadventures. And '98 was a high spins relatively early at stations like KQFX Seattle, Texas, and KXMX. While those stations had super-high current lists and a high gold quotient, the high rotations are now seen on other, more current-driven Clear Channel stations.

IT'S THE MARKET WARS

Top 40 is, increasingly, a format of market wars. And while few incumbent PDs would probably ascribe a programming change entirely to a rival, there are more than a few cases.

This story was prepared by Airplay Monitor editor Sean Ross.
MORE TOP 40S BUMP UP WEEKLY SPINS

R&B KTTR (B96) came to town, it was already at 75 spins.

OTHER FORMATS PLAY THE HITS

It doesn't always have to be another top 40 that helps prompt an increase. Rhythmic WJMN (Jamm'n 94.5) Boston had sped up its power slightly between 76 and 99, from 69 spins to between 73 and 75. This year, with the station facing R&B rival WBOT (Hot 97.7), it's up to 93 spins. And Hot 97.7 itself is in the mid-90s.

In the mid-90s, you wouldn't have found a lot of R&B outlets going that fast. But R&B's spin count is up, too, although rarely at that level. And even adult top 40, the format to which few programmers were willing to cede time spent listening in the early '90s, has, in the words of Vallier/Blachers Consulting's Jim Richards, "decided to spin our powers in three-hour rotation," which gave top 40 some wiggle room.

And WBIL Long Island, N.Y., P.D. J.J. Rice cites increased competition—inside and outside the format—in his station's decision to cut from seven powers to five, another factor that has raised spins for many stations.

LIBRARIES HAVE SHRUNK

Most PDs have cut their gold libraries down to an average of 75-100 titles, with some playing as few as 25-30. They didn't have much choice. The format's mid-'90s dol- drums and the number of markets with no mainstream top 40 meant that very few records from 1995-96 were widely heard. Anybody out to playing "Christy" by Color Me Badd? It was top five in '94.

Even when top 40 had more hits, its frequent stylistic changes made even the mega-hits hard to program for long. Suddenly, the years—the once standard cutoff for gold libraries—seemed like an eternity. Certainly, there are top 40s that still play "Sunny Came Home," and "One Headlight," but there are also rhythm- leaning major-market outlets that resist even today's modern AC hits, as the slow ascent of "Everything You Want" bears out. Fortunately, the perceived decline in usable gold coincided with the rise in the perceived numbers of currents that were worth playing more.

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Libraries have shrunk...
‘Sea Of Screams’ Greets U.K.’s BBMak
As Hit ‘Back Here’ Catches Fire U.S.

WHILE POP BAND BBMak has performed throughout native U.K. and across much of Asia, the trio of Christian Burns, Mark Barry, and Ste McNally were a little uncertain about what their opening slot during Britney Spears’ summer 2000 tour might bring.

In fact, the day following their first gig June 21 at Merriweather Post Pavilion in suburban Washington, D.C., the singer-songwriter ensemble seems a little shaken by the experience—but not because they felt they’d taken too much on; it was more the ensuing mania that greeted their pre-teen major-major UNIQUE. “We almost didn’t know what to do with ourselves,” says Burns, 20. “The crowd erupted into this big sea of screams. We just pulled each other up on a second before going onstage, saying, ‘Hey, it’s going to be OK.’”

And in BBMak’s world, it most certainly is. The fuel that ignited the live fire is debut single “Back Here” on Hollywood Records, which has catapulted The Billboard Hot 100, at No. 12. And the Hot 100 Singles chart, the single topped out at No. 5, and in it is the top in the top 10 on Airplay Monitor’s Top 40 Mainstream airplay chart.

Meanwhile, the band’s accompanying album, “Sooner Or Later,” held the No. 1 slot on the Heatseekers album list in the July 1 issue and this issue hit the top 100 of The Billboard 200 album chart at No. 79.

In addition, the band has pulled out some mighty publicity stokes. It’s the subject of the highly anticipated “Total Request Live”; it’s well-established on Radio Disney, where a live remote drew rabid response at the Times Square studios with “Good Morning America” a month or so ago; and it has an in-concert special on the Disney Channel that has aired unperturbed.

“It’s been amazing for us. We’re just over the moon,” Burns says. “For an act from any other country to break into the top 20 in America is the ultimate goal. The last English band to have a hit in the U.S. was Five (‘When The Lights Go Out’), and that was two years ago.” BBMak was recently joined by Irish quartz West-life, whose “Sweat It Again” also reached the top 20 of the Hot 100.

While hit single “Back Here” conjured a wave of hopes that their harmonies, their charm, and their musicality, the lyric actually takes on an ironic twist: It’s about the terror of missing the group, and the joy.

“Once we’re done recording,” actually says McNally, 20. “The guitar part is very uptempo, and it sounds like a happy tune. I think it’s really the sad song about a guy and a girl getting together; then the girl leaves the guy, and now he can’t live without her. People listen to it and say they love it because it’s so optimistic. I guess you could take it that way in that there’s still hope.”

“We must have sung that song 5 million times onstage, and I’m still not bored with it,” Burns adds. “I don’t know if it’s the lyrics or the guitar part, but I still love it even though we’ve played it to death.”

And not just in the U.S. Initial efforts to break in the U.K. met with some success, but when Japanese radio stations got hold of the track, it clicked with listeners so hastily that overseas label Telstar had to scramble to get the group to Asia for promotion. Within weeks, “Back Here” hit the top of the singles charts in five countries: Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan.

“Some stations in Japan got hold of the single, and we thought, ‘Great, someone over there is playing it,’” says Barry, also 20. “But then it got to the point where I was getting calls from, and some of the other major stations, and we realized we couldn’t ignore it. We went straight over and promoted and toured, and things went well. Originally, the plan was to do the U.K., America, and then Japan last. It didn’t matter as much what order we do it, as long as we can eventually get around to every country.”

Here in the U.S., radio was initially sluggish on catching up to the song’s impressive sales totals, but the track is at last spinning in nearly all of the top 25 markets and beyond.

“It’s a very solid effort. The hooks are so infectious, and the trade-off on the lyric and the vocals is great,” says Dan Pearman, director of national promotion for Radio Disney. “They’re a band that can pull it off live, as well as on the record. Not everybody can do that. They’re also one of those groups that you like right away and immediately and only want the best for them. Our research has been climbing steadily; the record is officially going to be a hit for us.”

“Once they get the song on radio, they’re green,” says TV producer Jay Michaels, PD of top 40 KRBE Houston. “They have a different sound; I don’t even consider them a typical boy band. At least part of that comes from the fact that they play their own instruments and have different producers than the rest. They’re also really nice and personable guys; they have that winning style.

“What makes the beat all the sweeter is that among the 12 cuts on ‘Sooner Or Later,’”written with Phil Thorne and produced by Oliver Leiber, was among the most natural to come by the way of the pen. “We wrote it in, like, 45 minutes, and we didn’t even have to think about it. It just came together so easily,” says McNally. “I find that if you spend too much time on a song, it starts to sound tired. You have to get with what you feel at the time.”

And there’s plenty more where that came from. “Sooner Or Later” is bursting with potential top 40 hits, including the wondrous harmonies. According to editor in chief Miller (single “I’m Not In Love”); the moody testimony to last love, “Ghost Of You And Me”; and the pop perfection of “The Next Time” and “Unpredictable.”

The distinguishing factor for the band: Besides co-writing seven of the 12 tracks, Burns, Barry, and McNally also play instruments. And unlike likely comparison acts ‘N Sync and Backstreet Boys, they are proud to admit that nifty dance steps are not part of their repertoire; instead, they prefer to rely on the strength of their voices.

“Whether we’re connected to any of the major labels, but it would be a shame if there were any other producers than the band,” says Burns. “We must have a synthesis of our own.”

Adds McNally, “I don’t like comparing our sound to anybody, but it would have to be somewhere between the Backstreet Boys and Sugar Ray. It’s commercial, it’s poppy, but it’s also mature, and there are a lot of guitars.”

“Fans of ‘N Sync will like our album, but so will people who like the Goo Goo Dolls,” Barry notes.

From the label perspective, “it’s all about the music with these guys,” says Hollywood senior VP of sales and marketing Daniel Savage. “They’re on their first hit into the marketplace, and the performances and the performances are giving them such an advantage as we cross the country. I’ve never seen anything like the reaction that they get when they just show up, set things up in five minutes, and start playing.”

Which, for Burns, Barry, and McNally, is becoming business as usual. “When a film first goes into the music business, we thought that as soon as you signed the deal, you’d made it. We were so naive,” says McNally. “Now, we realize that was just the beginning. You’ve got to get on radio on TV, and there are so many obstacles to conquer. But I’m really proud of all that we’ve done. I listen to our album, and I think it sounds great. Each step along the way has felt like an accomplishment.”
Third Eye Blind frontman Stephan Jenkins doesn’t claim to be a teacher, though an important lesson can be discerned in the band’s latest single, “10 Days Late,” which is No. 37 on this issue’s Modern Rock Tracks chart.

Jenkins says, “Specifically, the song is about what goes on in a guy’s mind when faced with an unexpected pregnancy. It is ultimately about this one guy’s journey into responsibility, and it comes from a first-person point of view. About five years ago, his girlfriend got pregnant, and they decided to have it. He was really young, and he didn’t have any money. Now, they have two kids, and their godfather has to make their own choices, and in this case, it was a really good one.

“This is more than just a modern rock hit about menstruation,” he continues, “It’s sort of acknowledging how life is going to come along, and your status quo will be interrupted. It’s gonna happen.”

"10 Days Late" first came together musically when Jenkins and bandmate Arion Salazar were collaborating. Says Jenkins, “Iri was the bass line and change going into where the guitar kicks in, so really you’re hammering along one way and then suddenly it totally reverses direction. I had the sensation of radical change, so I let a narrative unfold that dealt with that issue.

When the pair created a bridge for the song, Jenkins started singing over it with a choir-like voice. The group ultimately brought in a Catholic boy’s choir to sing the line “Baby boy keep your boo.” Jenkins says, “I thought it was funny to have them sing that because it is basically.humorous. A baby boy is the daddy of your baby, but not your husband. When they started singing for me, I started laughing and couldn’t stop. I couldn’t believe they were doing it. It was great to have these sorts of juxtapositions going on.”
**NEW VH1 EXEC: Sources say that VH1 has tapped Paul Marszalek to be its new VP of music programming (Billboard-Bulletin, June 21). Marszalek, who was previously PD of triple-a music station KFOG San Francisco, is said to be replacing Mike Trierweiler, who left VH1 earlier this year and is now an Epic Records senior VP. Marszalek will reportedly assume his new duties later this summer. VH1 had no comment.

**BET MOVES TO NYC: BET is moving its music department and production of its music shows to New York, with the move expected to be completed in early July. The music department is headed by VP of music programming Stephen Hill and includes music director Kelly G. BET’s remaining departments will stay based at the company’s headquarters in Washington, D.C.\n
The move to New York is expected to be to BET’s advantage since the majority of its music programming and music video producers operate out of New York. With BET’s music shows located in New York, the network’s programs will also have easier access to celebrities. BET will also be upgrading its current analog transmission equipment to a digital system.

The move to New York is expected to bring a major restructuring in the staff of BET’s music shows. Although several music staff, talent and producers have already been laid off, sources at BET say that they will have the opportunity to re-apply for their jobs if they decide to relocate to New York.

**THIS & THAT: Music series "Farnsworth.com" has added Match.com as its affiliate in Canada, where the show is on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. and midnight Eastern time. In the U.S., "Farnsworth.com" continues to air Mondays at 11:30 p.m. Eastern time on the USA Network.

Brian Bell has left video music producer P&M Media Video after six years with the company. He will be focusing on recording a new album with his band, the Cinematics. His E-mail address is bcinematic@hotmail.com.

14 hours daily
323-850-9400
www.americanradiohistory.com

**BLOODGOOD GANG, Moco

Defenestrate, Change In The House Of Dice (Kingpin Records, 2001)

Drugstore, Forgetting You (Mimetic, 2000)

Sugar, The Cleansing (Ten, 2000)

Screwdriver, Viva La Vida (Giant Mind, 2000)

So01, Iggy, That's My Slave (Iggy Pop, 2000)

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deals or trial deals—in which the act was given a budget to go in the studio and cut three or four sides. The label then determined if it wanted to go further based on the results of those sessions. The now multi-platinum Dixie Chicks were originally signed to just such a development deal at Sony Music Nashville.

The difference between demo deals and the new singles deals are that acts signed to singles deals may cut only one or two songs, with a commitment that the labels will release and work at least one to radio but with no promise of a full album deal on the table.

Of course, if the single takes off, the act will record a full album for the label. And most labels, even those turning to singles deals for some artists, continue to sign other acts to development deals.

Warner Bros. recently signed brothers/sister act Kincaid to a single deal, and this is a relatively new type of setup for an artist, making sure you’ve got the right music out there for the people before an album is available to buy,” says Paige Levy, senior VP of A&R for Warner Bros., Reprise, and Asylum.

Levy says singles deals are making inroads because it’s taking so long for singles to climb up the charts. Historically, we had 3-4 singles out every year on an artist, and now we’re lucky to have two. If you’re experimenting only with two singles a year, that may not give you enough information to warrant putting out an album.

If you release two singles and you really feel are the best representation of that act and not just happen to be two songs, with four losses there instead of spending a quarter of a million dollars on an album that will sit on a shelf.

“The expense of launching a record has quadrupled,” says Renee Bell, VP of A&R for the RCA Label Group, comprising the RCA, BNA, and Arista/Nashville imprints, each of which has just seven artists on its roster.

Bell is currently negotiating RLG’s first singles deal since the label for an act she declines to name.

“We’re spending so much money and the slots are so few on rosters, so a singles deal helps you make the right decision,” she says. “If we’re just signing one act a year, it’s a scary thing. The slots are so few and far between that you have to be a million percent sure. This way we get to put something out there and see how the audience reacts to it.”

Bell says labels will still be "locked" into doing full album deals in situations where there is a bidding war among competing labels for a new artist.

THE COST OF BUSINESS

Even labels that are not yet doing singles deals say they would consider it or at least understand why other labels are doing them. "I think it’s a little ridiculous that business doesn’t make sense,” says Virgin Records Nashville president Scott Hendricks.

"It’s understandable given the cost of business and the current slowing down of the format,” agrees Barry Coburn, a former artist manager who runs the Plettenburg/RLG’s Nashville operation.

Coburn says the cost of recording and marketing an album, including video, dribrode, and other expenses, coupled with the expense of launching an act at radio, including a station tour and/or showcases, can easily run $500,000. "It’s really easy to get nervous about putting something out because the problem is now the sales aren’t what they used to be,” says Coburn.

“We’re all looking at how we can make deals work given the hard reality that sales aren’t there,”

Giant Records president Doug Johnson says his label has actually signed a few acts to singles deals that then turned into full album deals once they got into the studio.

Obviously we want to do album deals he adds. "If we didn’t have an album to sell, we don’t make any money.

But Johnson says he’s "certainly not opposed” to starting with singles and "As long as records are at point this can’t break an artist at radio, I’m sure we can deliver for that artist, every opportunity I’d like to have them.

“As expensive as everything has gotten, I understand why people are doing it,” says a senior VP of A&R Doug Howard.

A singles deal “gives everyone an idea if this is going to work at radio, if you have something the consumers want, and it allows you to really go ahead and (decide if you) have a hit act here, without making the album itself, but you don’t have any more of a commitment in terms of marketing the album. It’s totally in the record company’s best interest to do this, as opposed to the artists.”

Still, Howard says, “I don’t think we’d do a singles deal, because it doesn’t give the kind of commitment a label would need to have. I’m not sure even it sends a great signal to radio.”

Lyle Lewis, president of Mercury Records, says his label is unlikely to do a singles deal because “we’re more inclined to commit to artists as opposed to singles.”

But while Audretch says “we have a lot of different kinds of deals” at Sony, no acts have yet signed to what would be considered a singles deal. "The artists because we believe the artist is going to have a long career, not because we think they have a song,” he says.

Coburn has one hesitation about singles deals. "If you’ve got an active single, then you have to rush to make an album,” he says. "The longer the song campaign for me, will the album be everything you would have wanted it to be if you had spent the time making the album from the beginning?”

But Hendricks and Johnson, who are both producers as well label presidents, say as long as hit songs continue taking up to six months to peak, there’s still plenty of time to record a quality album.

“I’m not saying I wouldn’t do a singles deal, but the single element this thing is that need to be said thing is a major breakthrough in recognition and album sales of some new artists,” adds Coburn. "That’s released.”

Robertson says a singles deal is an option only for a certain kind of act. “It would not work, he says, for “an artist the record does to the note table creatively that people needed to hear the whole work.” It would work for an act that was “totally a hit-driven, radio-only kind of artist.”

PUBLISHERS PERSPECTIVE

One of the challenges of singles deals is finding top quality songs for what that don’t write their own material.

"Historically, publishers have not been interested in giving us songs for singles deals because they feel it’s going to take a longer period of time for a particular song to be released on an album," says Levy. "We need to re-educate the publishers to let them understand that it’s better for all of us if we start slowly and build and create an album that’ll just sit on a shelf but create it at a rate at a rate at a rate at a rate.

Pat Finch, VP of publishing company Famous Music, says, “I honestly, I don’t know what the deal is for doing what they’re doing, and I understand it.” Nevertheless, he admits that “if we’re pitching songs to an act we know just have a singles deal, maybe we’d be a little more concerned about keeping up a song for that. Alternatively, the positive side, however, publishers - that gets songs cut for full albums have no guarantees that their songs will be singles. But for an act with a singles deal, the odds of having a single are dramatically improved. So, he says, if the label "believes in the act, I’m willing to take a risk.”

Ironically, Finch was instrumental in the development of the group McAlister, currently negotiating a singles deal with MCA Nashville. Evidently, the act consists of two men and two women from Pensacola, Fla., and helped shop them around to labels. "We say this particular deal was not his first choice, “in this climate, with all the consolidation [and so] few acts getting signed, we’re just lucky to have something.

PROFESSIONAL GAMBOLLING

Radio programmers and consultants are more understanding than you might expect about why labels are turning to singles deals, although most would still prefer to have a full album deal to do that, rather than a "to determine a new act’s potential.

"I will play the hits regardless of whether the artist has an album single and also a hit on Moody of McVay Media. "I understand the predicament the labels are in with the high cost of creating a new act deal. That said, what if you’re a new artist, I like to be able to hear more than one cut. An artist . . . with several potential hits on a debut album will rate higher with me, for example, if the artist is one who just happened to find a great song. We need new stars we can build the format around, not more disposable talent.”

"Radio is long for longevity," says WUSN (US99) Chicago PD Justin Case. "I would be more comfortable knowing that there were three or four records in the can, even if they don’t put out a full album.”

Atlantic’s Coburn says the fact that the label was able to play a full album’s worth of material for new artist Craig Morgan helped his debut single, “Something To Write Home About,” at radio.

"I personally don’t care what Nashville labels do as their business model as long as they give us good songs by potential superstar artists,” says radio consultant Jay Albright of McVay Media. "I don’t care if it is an album, a single, or an EP. If its absolutely great, radio will play it. If it’s a 15-cut album full of mediocre material—and hasn’t there been a lot of that over the last three years—radio shouldn’t."

But other programmers are more concerned by singles deals. “While this may be a healthy short-term economic fix for the record labels, I think it will be detrimental to country music in the long run,” says Becky Brenner, operations manager of KMPS Seattle.

“A move like this may give the labels the flexibility to sign more "test cases," but it leaves far fewer slots to commit to even to an even larger glut of new artists,” she adds. "What happened to finding and developing stars? A new artist can’t be judged on one single alone.

Radio consultant Keith Hill believes singles deals may leave some talented newcomers on the sidelines if they can’t prove themselves fast enough. “The album and multi-album deal means that if the first single doesn’t succeed they try again, and again, and perhaps again before they throw in the towel on a million dollars," says Hill. “So it means stronger commitment and trying harder in a higher risk. Sometimes lightning doesn’t strike until single three or four. So some potential winners will be under-recorded." But Hill adds, ”Cost-cutting and at the same time increasing cash flow is the mission of every business including country radio. It’s like the record business at the level to influence it, I would be sending everyone who walked in my office . . . to singles deals. It reduces the risk without substantially reducing the potential payoff.

"The record business is professional gambling," Hill concludes. "Doesn’t it make sense to bet on more numbers on the roulette wheel with a smaller ante per number?’"
Newsmakers

Capitol Signs Precious. U.K. act Precious has made a deal with Capitol Records. The five-member team's first single is "Say It Again," with an album to follow in the fall. Shown, from left, are Kalli Clark-Sternberg and Louise Rose of Precious; Roy Lott, president/CEO of Capitol; and Sophie McDonnell, Jenny Frost, and Anya Lahiri of Precious.

New Entry At Club Exit. Club Exit in New York was the scene recently for the launch of ClickRadio, the Internet-enhanced digital radio service located in the city's Silicon Alley. Sisqō and the Village People performed. Shown, from left, are MTV Networks chairman/CEO Tom Freston; ClickRadio founder/CEO Hank Williams; Sisqō; and David Benjamin, ClickRadio vice chairman/senior VP of entertainment.

Strait To 25th. The Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) recently presented MCA Nashville artist George Strait with a plaque commemorating his 25th platinum album, a feat second only to Elvis Presley among solo male artists. Shown, from left, are John Henkel, director of gold and platinum at RIAA; Hilary Rosen, president/CEO of RIAA; Strait; Royce Risser, director of regional promotions at MCA Nashville; and Jennifer Bendall of Seagram/Universal Studios, the label's parent.

'Music' Men And Women. The Q Records release, via Atlantic Records, of the current Broadway revival cast album of "The Music Man" brought together a number of folks associated with the album at a party held recently at Chelsea Bar & Billiards in New York. Shown, from left, are Don Spielvogel, director of sales and marketing at Q Records; Hugh Fordin, producer of the album; Craig Bierko, the lead in "The Music Man"; Cynthia Daniels, the recording engineer; Michael David of Dodger Productions, producer of the show; Alan Rubens, GM of Q Records; and Amy Wigler, director of marketing at Dodger Productions.

Handling The 'Curves.' Guitarist Jeff Golub recorded "Dangerous Curves," his first album for GRP Records, at Los Angeles' Cherokee Studios. After the album was released June 20, Golub hit the road as part of the Guitars and Saxes tour. Shown at the recording session, from left, are keyboardist Mitchell Forman; drummer Steve Ferrone; Golub; and bassist Lincoln Gones.
EMI's merger with Warner moves closer to fruition

(Continued from page 1)

adopt new articles of association, and convert convertible deferred shares into ordinary shares.

Traditionally, meetings involving EMI's top and bottom-line results, and the annual 10-k report. The meeting often dwindles to the board's favor or against the proposal. Board members will have more say in the joint venture.

almost two-thirds of shareholders, which votes on the merger, and most shareholders are expected to vote for the merger. Time Warner will have more say in the joint venture.

Ashcroft, EMI Group general counsel, was named the board's chairman, a ceremonial position, but with control of the board. Niocol said, "In practice, it would be very unlikely to find one or two board members overruling the board's majority action." Niocol said.

In its circular to investors, EMI further clarifies the situation. It states, "EMI and Warner have agreed to create two entities to conduct their music businesses through-out the world. One, WEM U.S., will be responsible for music in the U.S. and Canada, and the other, WEM U.K., will be a company incorporated in England and Denmark. EMI and Warner will jointly own 50% of the equity of each in WEM U.S. and WEM U.K."

On a positive note for Warner and EMI employees, it would seem that the unemployment rate of EMI's staff has decreased. When the deal was announced in January, EMI Recorded Music president/CEO Ken Berry said that as many as 1,900 staff positions would be lost over three years following the merger. At the shareholders' meeting, however, Niocol stated that the figure was reduced to 1,719.

One bonus that further staff cuts would help bring is the estimated 250 million pounds ($378 million) in annual synergy savings that the new company will have. That figure helped win the backing of EMI's corporate investors to swing the vote so substantially in favor of the merger. Of EMI's largest shareholders (as of May 18) were the Merrill Lynch & Co. group of companies, which owns nearly 60 million shares, or 7.52% of EMI; the Warner Music Group/EMI Capital Corp. (5.14%); the Capital Group Companies (4.71%); the Prudential Plc group of companies (3.83%); and Putnam Investment Management and Putnam Advisory Co. (3.78%).

After the vote, Berry told Billboard that the company will focus on working to secure merger clearance from competition authorities on both sides of the Atlantic. EMI has "not yet been asked that many questions by the U.K. competition authorities," he said.

The joint venture will give the combined company the ability to make acquisitions and divestitures, and it will also allow the company to pursue new partnerships and alliances. The new company will have a more streamlined management structure, with more focus on the core business of music creation and distribution. The company will also be better positioned to negotiate with artists, retailers, and other industry stakeholders.

With the joint venture in place, EMI and Warner will be able to leverage their combined resources to create new revenue streams and expand their market reach. The new company will have access to a wider range of talent, resources, and technologies, allowing it to innovate and evolve in the fast-changing music industry.

While there may be challenges ahead, the merger represents a significant step forward for EMI and Warner. The combined company will be better equipped to compete in today's highly competitive market, and it will have the opportunity to create a new chapter in the history of music.
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Cancellations must be received in writing. Cancellations received before Sept 1 are subject to a $150 administrative fee. No refunds will be issued after Sept 1.
Radio stations played the single for a sure-fire hit. The popularity of the Rock and the WWE, complementing Wyclef’s musical fan base, provides them with a huge sales base,” says Sam Weaver, operations manager/ PD at KPRS Kansas City, Mo. “It can’t miss.” The single went to radio in June. The Rock joined Jean on MTV’s “Total Request Live” to premiere the Hype Williams-directed video on June 28.

TYING IN WITH WTFF

The relationship will also result in Jean taking part in some WWE-related events. “We will be working with the World Wrestling Federation to get Wyclef’s music played in the arenas during their events, as well as contests that tie in Wyclef’s album,” says Demette Guidry, VP of black music for Columbia Records. “We will also be working on getting him to appear on WWF television.”

The track on “Ecleptic” that is most likely to raise eyebrows is “Where Fairies Go.”

“Everyone asks me when the Fugees go recording,” says Jean, who is managed by DAS Communications. “Where Fugees At” will hopefully answer all those questions before I get out on the road this time. The song is not a diss. It’s just a battle record.”

Other tracks will feature with Earth, Wind & Fire, the Product G&B, and Supreme C, all of whom are signed to Jean’s Refuge Camp imprint.

Jean says, “I like working with artists who are on their way up. That’s why whenever there is another MC on my album, they’re usually an unknown. I like working with artists who need a break.” Mary J. Blige also appears on “Ecleptic,” accompanying Jean on the second single, the emotional “911.”

“A lot of times, women get hurt in relationships, and they can explain that, while she’s often holding it in,” says Jean, who is published by Sony/ATV Tunes. “911 is just a confessional where the club is hurting as much as her girl. It was originally titled ‘Ghetto Romeo & Juliet.’”

Jean also tackles the heated topic of the Amadou Diallo shooting involving his son “Diallo.” According to Jean, the song was recorded not to attack the New York Police Department but to address the issue from both sides.

“In every organization, there is good and bad,” says Jean of the song, which ends with Diallo’s spirit rising, representing the energy of Africa. “But what I’m saying is, whoever committed that crime is a murderer.”

THREE-TIERED APPROACH

Retailers look for Jean to continue his successful streak with “Ecleptic.” "Based on his previous success with his four multi-platinum albums, I think it will do very well,” says Sony Askey, urban music buyer for Musicland.

However, Askey wonders if time will play a factor in the success of Jean’s new set. “In rap music, a few years between albums can be a long time,” she says. "Our's is prepared to give the album a full push. The label set up a three-point approach, targeting the streets, college stations, and marketing." For the streets, Columbia released white-label 12-inch vinyl "copies of "Pullin Me In" and "However You Want." In addition, the label organized a college radio tour in April, where Jean was featured on 12 shows. "We wanted to stay true to our roots, college radio and the colleges," says Guidry.

Columbia serviced major video outlets with a promo video, "Thug Angels," April 4. The Guy Guitelli-directed clip was the centerpiece of a promotion that Columbia co-sponsored with the Box.

“We also ran a three-week promotion with the Box where there were two Thug Angels’ videos with separate endings, and we let the viewers decide which video was running on the Box,” says Guidry. The single went to college radio and mix shows at the same time.

LIVE APPEARANCES

Columbia has also scheduled Jean to perform at various events, including the Canum All-Star Festival, Alfonzo’s Evening Groove, and the American Fashion Awards. The label also hosted an A-list Hollywood listening session where Jean and a band played the entire album live. Jean, who is booked by the William Morris Agency, was also tapped to headline the Columbia Road Show.

An aggressive advertising campaign includes billboards, snippets, and 15- and 30-second cable and television commercials.

According to Guidry, Columbia also sponsored an event for Time Warner’s Music Choice at New York’s S.O.B.’s. The concert, which was taped April 20, will be broadcast from May to July. There will also be advertisement packages tying into the album’s release in the top 20 markets and contests in which Time Warner and Columbia gave away autographed guitars from Jean.

The artist will make various television appearances throughout the week of the album’s release. There are also in-store appearances scheduled for New York and Philadelphia.

Columbia will market the album online via scheduled chats and a listening party. The S.O.B.’s event was also cybercast on the Sony Web site. “We are looking to build on the reputation that already exists—the 17 million albums sold with the Fugees, and his writer-producer credits with Santana and Whitney Houston,” says Guidry. “We look to work this album through Christmas.”

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TREES IGLESIAS: “Be With You” by Enrique Iglesias (Interscope) holds at No. 1 for a third consecutive week on The Billboard Hot 100, as the rest of the contenders for the top slot fell for make up enough ground to overtake the Latino superstar. Aaliyah’s “Try Again” (Blackground/Virgin) is actually closer to No. 1 than it was a week ago, even though the title drops 2.5 million listeners; “He” loses 9.5 million audience impressions and sees its sales decline by 14%, sliding down 30 units for the week. “I Turn To You” by Christina Aguilera (RCA) holds at No. 3 with a slight gain (less than 1%) in overall points, which is the balance attained when its loss in airplay is deducted from the 6,000-unit gain in sales, an uprising that is enough to earn the Greatest Gainer/Sales designation. Next issue Vertical Horizon makes a bid for No. 1, as first-week sales for “Everything You Want” will be added to its 80-million audience figure. “Want” will need to scan in excess of 25,000 units to have a shot at reaching the top.

WOUND UP: New York-based rock label Wind-up earns its first top 10 song on the Hot 100, as Creed’s “Higher” jumps 11-9. It’s been quite a ride thus far, as “Higher” first appeared on the chart 10 months ago, debuting in the Sept. 11, 2000 issue and peaking at No. 32 a month later. The track fell off the chart in January after its initial 20-week run and resurfaced in March with the onset of airplay at atop 40 and mainstream top 40 stations. “Higher” is from the quadruple-platinum album Human Clay, which rests at No. 7 on The Billboard 200. Thanks to “Higher’s” resurgence at top 40 and the current No. 1 song on the Mainstream Rock Tracks chart, “With Arms Wide Open,” “Clay” has spent the past 10 weeks in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 after dropping to lower rungs almost six months ago (Nov. 20, 1999).

TRUELY JUMPIN’: “Jumpin, Jumpin” by Destiny’s Child (Columbia) is the Greatest Gainer/Airplay title on the Hot 100, moving 37-22 with an audience gain of 6.5 million. “Jumpin” is the fourth top 40 song from the group’s album’s “The Writing’s On The Wall,” two of them, “Bills, Bills, Bills” and “Say My Name,” reached No. 1. “Jumpin” is building a strong foundation for another run toward the top of the chart, as its growing audience total will soon be supplemented with sales figures in the form of a maxi CD and a two-disc 12-inch vinyl that will hit stores July 18.

Besides various mixes of “Jumpin,” the product will also include the previously unavailable “Upside Down,” which Destiny’s Child performed at VH1 Divas 2000: A Tribute To Diana Ross.

ENDZ ZONE: Baltimore duo Ruff Endz make the biggest leap on the Hot 100, climbing 38 spots to No. 38 with “No More” (Epic). “More” entered the chart at No. 76 last issue due to its debut in the 75-position Hot 100 Airplay chart and its huge hit this issue thanks to its first week sales of 16,500 units. That sales count places “More” at No. 9 on Hot 100 Singles Sales. On the airplay side, “More” gains 5.5 million listeners and moves 74-49.

HOT 100 SPOTLIGHT
by Silvio Pietroluongo

Wyclef Jean goes ‘Ecleptic’ on Columbia Set
(Continued from page 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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| 3    | "No Doubt: Tragedy/Interscope"
      | "12.98/18.98"                                                        | The Marshall Mathers LP
| 5    | "We Are One"                                                         | Justin Timberlake ft. T.I.
| 6    | "Dope! I Did It Again"                                               | 50 Cent
| 8    | "White Pony"                                                         | The White Stripes
| 11   | "Welcome to NXTasy"                                                 | The Veronicas
| 14   | "The Heat"                                                           | Bon Jovi
| 17   | "I Got That Work"                                                    | K-Ci & JoJo
| 19   | "Crush"                                                              | 98 Degrees
| 21   | "Perfect Circle"                                                     | John Mayer
| 24   | "Life and Times of S. Carter"                                        | T.I.
| 26   | "Red Hot Chili Peppers"                                              | Red Hot Chili Peppers
| 29   | "Drown"                                                              | Pearl Jam
| 32   | "On My Own"                                                          | Cyndi Lauper
| 34   | "Breathe"                                                            | The Corrs
| 36   | "My Boy"                                                             | No Doubt
| 37   | "Jagged Edge"                                                        | 50 Cent
| 39   | "I Wanna Be With You"                                                | Mariah Carey
| 41   | "All the Way... A Decade of Songs"                                   | Slightly Stoopid
| 43   | "Keep It Up"                                                         | T-Pain
| 44   | "Signs of Life"                                                      | Kottonmouth Kings
| 45   | "Sweet Kisses"                                                       | JoJo
| 47   | "Enrique Iglesias"                                                   | Enrique Iglesias
| 49   | "Lacuna Cove"                                                        | Lacuna Cove
| 50   | "Somebody's Watching Me"                                             | Michael Jackson
| 51   | "The Greatest Hits"                                                  | Various Artists
| 52   | "Happiness"
      | "12.98/18.98"                                                        | Blink-182
| 55   | "Return of Saturn"                                                   | 50 Cent
| 56   | "Invisible Summer"                                                   | 2Pac
| 58   | "Can't Make Me Home"                                                 | 2Pac
| 60   | "The Slim Shadey LP"                                                 | 2Pac
| 62   | "Emotion"
      | "19.98/25.98"                                                        | Enema of the State
| 63   | "Madden Girl"                                                        | Big Mama
| 65   | "Big Momma's House 4"                                                | 2Pac
| 66   | "One More Time"                                                      | 2Pac
| 67   | "Come On Down"                                                       | 2Pac
| 69   | "War & Peace Vol. 2 (The Peace Disc)"                                | 2Pac
| 70   | "BBMak"                                                              | BBMak
| 71   | "Slipknot"                                                           | Slipknot
| 72   | "Stone Temple Pilots"                                                 | Stone Temple Pilots
| 73   | "Lonestar"                                                           | Lonestar
| 74   | "Trick Daddy"                                                        | Trick Daddy
| 75   | "Big Finisher"                                                       | Big Finisher
| 76   | "Disturbed"                                                          | Disturbed

The Billboard 200 is a chart of the 200 most-sold albums in the United States. It is published weekly by Billboard magazine.
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**TOP ALBUMS A-Z (LISTED BY ARTISTS)**

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**EURO AUTHORS, IFPI IN STALEMATE** (Continued from page 8)

or even 20%, and yet the standard contract only gives credit for 9%, so [record producers] are constantly paying royalties on a lot of [their] music that they're not entitled to. [He continues.] "A basic principle in discussions with IFPI has been that it would be fair for us to pay a royalty on the money that we received as a result of why we wanted to change the base from PPD to AEP but IFPI has just refused." Although the disagreement has halt-ed talks, there is a chance that a standard rate can be agreed on in the future. "A door is always open to discuss it with BIEEM," Taylor says, and he is willing to continue some discussions with BIEEM, in particular on the developing-markets issue, where there is still something to talk about. In the absence of a standard contract, BIEEM is expected to continue offering the 9,000% rate to the industry. But it now will be up to the relevant national bodies in each territory to determine the conditions for mechanical royalties. BIEEM's secretariat general Ronald Mosu was unavailable for comment, and the remaining members replaced the word BIEEM/IFPI agreement, almost everyone close to the issue is choosing to remain tight-lipped. Taylor tells Billboard that IFPI and BIEEM had been monitoring the progress of similar mechanical discussions in Australia. Those negotiations resulted in a victory for the record companies when, on June 14, the Australian Copyright Tribunal set an interim mechanical royalty of 80%, based on the previous rate of 9,360% of PPD, minus a 7.5% reduction (Billboard, June 24). That rate still has to be ratified—probably in early 2001—but hopes are now fading that the Australian deal would help ease the way for Europe. It's not the first time that Europe's standard mechanical royalty rate agreement has expired without anything new in the pipeline. The latest IFPI/IFPI deal (0.06%) was signed in 1986, at a rate of 9,360% that had expired July 1, 1987. Both parties agreed to backdate the new rate to July 1, 1980. It had been thought that a similar arrangement would be made this time around, with any changed rate being backdated to June 30, 2000. But the breakdown in talks diminishes that possibility. On backdating any future standard agreement, Taylor says, "It happened last time, when it was backdated six months, but once you go beyond a certain period of time, it gets harder and harder to backdate, after distributions have been made, etc., etc. But if we were to reach agreement at any point we would not exclude it having some retroactive effect."

**PARALLEL IMPORTS** (Continued from page 8)

release cycle and marked product. Whereas it has been a big problem for the first four months of the year, the measures they have taken seem to be working. "We have pushed back so that one gets the product on street date and the other gets it the day before street date," says Minyan says, president of BMI Group Distribution, says BMI "is getting tremendous cooperation from our Canadian company" on the issue. He says that BMI has marked parallel imports and identified some of the parties that are violating copyright laws by shipping it out of their country. BMI Canada, in conjunction with the RIAA, the U.S., is dealing with it accordingly up north, he says.

Another major distribution executive says that while there is a problem with Canadian imports, the volume of product coming out of Canada isn't so large as to warrant the concern expressed by New York one-stops. On the other hand, that executive concedeS, "virtually all of the product coming out of Canada winds up in one market, it can make the problem seem big to the wholesalers there." Minyan says the problem is so severe that he has pulled the plug on plans to more than double its warehouse space, from 12,000 to 30,000 square feet, until he sees the majors making some headway on the problem. Minyan says that the company, which enjoyed robust growth over the past few years, has still managed to eke out a 6% increase in sales so far this year. But he adds, "My profit is down to almost zero, just trying to keep my sales." He says that he has been planning for a "tax" on the majors, but once you go beyond a certain year, but that "it would be stupid for me to try and go to the next level if this [import problem] is going to continue. The majors see it like they are interested in stopping it, but they have not come out with a resolution to this issue."

Another problem that although the record companies may have stemmed the flow of hit product somewhat, independent merchants are now starting to buy catalog product from the Canadians. An executive at a major record company concedes that the catalog aspect of the problem is harder to deal with. It's easier to catch culprits by marking new releases than by marking catalog product, which doesn't sell through as quickly, he says.

**ROSS/SUPREMES TOUR** (Continued from page 8)

thought it went well. It was a great show for promotion was such and such," says Bob Rice, director of the Ice Palace. "Ticket sales were a little less than we would've wanted, but we're happy."

Compay Center in Houston was seeing similar numbers for a June 28 show. "It's not doing as well as everybody had hoped it would," says building director Jerry MacDonald. But in some markets, the tour is a big hit. In St. Louis, for example, the tickets sold first in New York, which Fogel says is typical of the tour and concert business in general. Prices range from the high $30s to about $250 for the opening show, and show venues are offering discounts and special price promotions. Fogel says TNA is not second-guessing its price structure. "With tiered pricing, people find their own price level. If the $295s are doing fine, we're fine," he says. And if final numbers fall far short of TNA's last venture—the Creation's New, Nash & Young reunion tour, which grossed $43 million and played to 92% capacity (Billboard Bulletin, April 24)—such a notion would likely be the case. Pulling the plug on Return to Love has not been an option. Sometimes tours capture the public's enthusiasm, while other times they don't," Fogel says. "I do know that [Return to Love] is a fantastic show and the people that are going are going home happy." The Diana Ross & The Supremes tour wraps Aug. 5 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. TNA will also produce the tour's 22-city fall tour by Neil Young and the Pretenders, which kicks off Aug. 8 at the GTE Virginia Beach (Va.) Amphitheatre, and is in the midst of a highly successful Marc Anthony tour that concludes with a July 27-29 stand at American Airlines Arena in Miami. Other tours are in the works, Fogel adds.

**AOL/INTERTRUST** (Continued from page 8)

Told Raker, an analyst with Credit Suisse First Boston, praises the AOL deal, noting in a report to investors that the arrangement validates InterTrust's market position and should facilitate and expedite others deals. "When we see you expect the DRM market to be massive, we believe that our expectations were probably six to nine months ahead of where the market is today."
Top Members of CISAC, the international confederation of rights societies, are planning a special meeting with members of the SecurDigital Music Initiative (SDMI) to discuss the implementation of devices that recognize artists’ copyright-protected works and block illegal files. “We need an agreement with SDMI,” says Fraser Teller, a lawyer at the British firm Linklaters. “If we don’t, it will be very difficult for us to make sure that our clients can use these devices without being sued.”

Cologne, Germany-Based Music Channel Viva Has Set a Target Date of July 19 for Its Initial Public Offering (IPO) and Has Announced Preliminary Plans to Expand into the U.S. Market. Viva CEO Dieter Gorn says the company wants to raise up to $100 million in a share offering. “We don’t want to give away the company to large media companies,” Gorn says. “Without an agreement, there will be no possibility to identify works. Needless to say that software and hardware manufacturers are quite reticent. But for us, it is crucial and we cannot afford the opportunity to lose.”

EMI Recorded Music has generated cash flow of $4.4 million (€14.15 million) on revenue of €9.38 million (€36.8 million) in second-quarter 1999, results show.

Amazon.com chairman/CEO Jeff Bezos said June 28 that, despite reports to the contrary, the online retailer is in no danger of burning through its available cash. “On Friday [June 20] there was a single analyst who wrote a report which isn’t correct—or without even calling us—predicting we would be out of cash by December or something like that,” Bezos said. “I got his keynote speech at PC Expo in New York. ‘We have a billion dollars in cash. We actually expect to generate cash from operations.’

C2 Records, the offspring that Columbia Records formed in 1998, is dropping its separate promotion to focus on the aftermath of the exit of senior VP of promotion Dennis Reese, sources say. Asked to comment on the fate of the C2 promotion department, a Columbia spokesman said things are “still being worked out.” The label is home to Ricky Martin, Joey McIntyre, and the soundtrack to “The Sopranos.” The spokesman said the C2 logo will be retained. Reese is believed to have taken a post at Elektra Entertainment. At C2, Reese reported to Columbia senior VP of promotion-Jerry Blair, who is thought to be mulling a move to AET.

IFPI Platinum Awards Dinner Lures Top Talent to Brussels

Warner Music International chairman Stephen Shirlington concedes, “The IFPI Platinum Awards 2000 will be the third such event in six years, and even in that context, it has been an important date on the European music industry calendar. It is a celebration of the success of artists in Europe, with the added bonus of being a show that will also carry an important cultural and political message to the European Parliament.”

Shirlington says that with “artists performing at both the TUIaal and this year’s show, the Platinum Awards brings some of the excitement of the industry into the capital city of Brussels that, as a result, will perhaps better understand the music culture that has such an impact on the millions of people throughout the continent of Europe.”

One of the main events of the evening will be the handing over of the IFPI artist representative baton from French electronica artist Jean-Michel Jarre to Irish siblings the Corrs.

Shirlington says that the group is happy to be taking over the IFPI representative role and will use its celebrity to bring industry issues to the wider notice, especially the area of Internet copyrights.

“If you’re doing interviews every day, very often you would have the opportunity to be the first band or act to bring this up,” she says. “I think that’s the way you can use somebody who’s already achieved a certain amount of success to bring the opportunity to use what they have as a medium for getting certain issues across, and that’s the great thing about being the Corrs.”

Says Shirlington, “This is an important task for our industry, and the four young people who make up the Corrs will, I’m sure, be effective, articulate, and popular ambassadors for both the artists’ community and the European music business during the next two years.”

Additional reporting was provided by Paul Sexton and Sirc Stavros Damos.

FOR THE RECORD

The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) was among the groups and individuals that signed a letter sent to House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) in support of a bill that would allow record makers calling for a non-compromise repeal of the copyright law that makes sound recordings in copyright “works made for hire.” NARAS name was omitted from a list of signatories in a July 1 article about the letter.

A story on Nonesuch Records in the July 1 issue should have noted that singer/songwriter Duncan Sheik remains signed to Atlantic Records but is recording a single album for Nonesuch that is scheduled for release later this year.
Taylor, Saxe Receive New Appointments

Billboard is announcing two major editorial changes. Chuck Taylor, who has served as the magazine's radio editor, has been named senior writer. Succeeding Taylor as radio editor is Frank Saxe. The appointments are effective July 3, and both will report to managing editor Don Jeffrey.

"These appointments are exciting ones for Billboard," says Billboard editor in chief Timothy White, "because they reward skilled editors with new responsibilities ideally suited to their considerable talents. Chuck has a seasoned feature writer with a great deal of experience, and Frank is a fine reporter of both the radio and wider music programing landscapes who has an evident news sense. Both will bring us more energy and ideas to new projects in order to help keep Billboard highly competitive and consistently interesting in its coverage."

In his new position, Taylor will write features on recording artists in a variety of genres as well as articles on trends in the music business. He joined Billboard in October 1995 as editor of the Programming section and founded the radio-specific Airwaves column in January 1996. In September 1998 he took on the additional responsibility of single reviews editor, which he will continue to be. In addition, Taylor is the charter host of Billboard Online's weekly countdown show at billboardradio.com, which launched in March 1999.

Before joining Billboard, Taylor was employed by Washington, D.C.-based IMS Publishing as a reporter for Radio World newspaper, charter editor of its European edition, and founding editor of Radio World magazine. Prior to that, he was a reporter at Washington Business Journal, Taylor, native of Lynchburg, Va., graduated from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va., with a B.S. in communications.

Saxe will be responsible for Billboard's coverage of the radio industry, spearheading the magazine's weekly Programming section.

He has been a writer/reporter at Billboard's sister publication Airplay Monitor since January 1999, covering Wall Street and Washington for the four Monitor publications, for which he will continue to write the Capital & Capit column. Prior to that, he was an associate editor at radio trade weekly Radio Business Report. Previously, Saxe spent seven years in broadcast news at radio stations in New York and New Hampshire. He was the reporter and anchor for newstalk WROW-AM Albany, N.Y., and a state capitol reporter for newstalk WCSS-AM New York. Saxe, a native of Rochester, N.Y., graduated from the State University of Buffalo, N.Y., with a B.A. in communications and political science.

MARKET WATCH
A WEEKLY NATIONAL MUSIC SALES REPORT

YEAR-TO-DATE OVERALL UNIT SALES

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YEAR-TO-DATE SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT

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TOTAL CD SALES BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

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A *Teens Want To Win And Take It All

WHEN ALL IS SAID and done, it’s been a long time since a cover version of a previously charted Abba song appeared on The Billboard 200. It’s just shy of 20 years since the last time, and the song wasn’t even one of the Swedish quartet’s most popular hits. In August 1974, British duo Sweet Dreams (Polly Brown of “Up In A Puff Of Smoke” fame and Tony Brown) became one of Abba’s most successful releases in the U.S. with their version of “Money Honey.” Abba’s original entered the chart two weeks later and became the more successful release, peaking at No. 27.

This issue marks only the second time in chart history that an act has taken a previously charted Abba song back to the Hot 100. Stockholm Recording’s A*Teens, who have been on the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart for 16 weeks, finally entered the main chart with “Dancing Queen.” Their remake of Abba’s only No. 1 single in America is new at No. 97, although it bulleted 20-14 on the sales chart.

In Sweden, A*Teens are already working on a second album of original songs, but their first release, “The Abba Generation,” is made up entirely of Abba covers. That CD takes a 20-point leap on The Billboard 200, landing at No. 77.

With the Abba revival going strong in 1998, it’s surprising to see how long one of the group’s songs to encore on the Hot 100. Erasure won airplay for its remake of “Take A Chance On Me” in 1992, but the track was part of an EP and was not a commercial single, so it wasn’t eligible for the Hot 100. In 1989, the Minneapolis group Information Society took “Lay All Your Love On Me” to No. 88, but Abba’s original version (the B-side of “On And On And On”) never charted.

SHE SHOULD BE SO LUCKY: Does the name Kylie Minogue ring a bell? In the U.S., she had a mere three chart entries on the Hot 100, and only her version of “The Loco-Motion” fared well, peaking at No. 3. In the U.K., however, she was a chart powerhouse from 1988 to 1994, with four No. 1 hits and seven singles that peaked at No. 2. Her first seven chart entries all made the top two, and her first 11 entries made the top five.

Tired of her pop image, Minogue split from producers Mike Stock, Matt Aitken, and Pete Waterman and went in an alternative direction. Except for the No. 2 single “Contide In Me” in 1994, her chart-busting days were over.

But now the pop princess has returned to her earlier ways, and the result is “Spinning Around” (Parlophone), her first U.K. No. 1 since a remake of Little Anthony & the Imperials’ “ Tears On My Pillow” in January 1990. The single also marks the first time at No. 1 in the U.K. for co-writer Paula Abdul. As an artist, Abdul’s highest ranking in the U.K. was with "Opposites Attract," a No. 2 hit in 1990. “Spinning Around” is also the first U.K. No. 1 for former Billboard staffer Kara DioGuardi, who has been writing and recording since leaving our good company. Congrats, Kara.

"Spinning Around" also debuts at No. 1 in Minogue’s home country, Australia.
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