Blackwell's Islandlife Has Wide-Ranging Goals

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

NEW YORK—Forty years after launching Island Records, founder Chris Blackwell is starting over with Islandlife, a new umbrella company for his various lifestyle and entertainment concerns.

As the company continues to ramp up, Blackwell is already actively making deals, such as a potential acquisition of Rykodisc (Billboard, May 9), and negotiating with his former label, Island Records, to rerelease the seminal 1992 Bob Marley boxed set, "Songs Of Freedom" (see story, page 97).

Islandlife is the parent company for a number of entities, including Palm Pictures, a DVD, CD, and film company; Manga Entertainment, a Japanese animation theatrical, DVD, CD-ROM, and home video release company; as well as a theatrical distribution outlet for Palm Pictures; the music publishing company Blue Mountain Music; the licensing company Bob Marley Music; the World Wide Web site www.islandlife.com; and Island Outpost, the hotel and recording studio division.

Blackwell formed Islandlife earlier this year, following his departure from PolyGram in November 1997. He had sold Island Records and Island Pictures to PolyGram in 1988. Among the top executives at Islandlife are former Island executive VP Hooman Majd and Larry Mestel, previously executive VP/COO at Island.

"We've spent the first few months after leaving PolyGram getting our company structure organized and working on getting our slate of music and video releases together," says Mestel. "The key here for us, which we want to try to get across to all of our employees, is that this is a company where employees don't necessarily work for one division; they work for Islandlife. There are going to be people who use our hotel and resort business, and there will be times that business gives a boost to our entertainment division. It's a cross-pollination of ideas between every part of Islandlife."

Many Islandlife and Palm Pictures staffers, some of whom worked with Blackwell for years, say having all the companies under one roof—and one owner—makes doing business easier: "It feels almost like it was PolyGram," says Suzette Newman, who heads Palm Pictures' London office and who has worked with Blackwell for more than 20 years. "There's a lot less of a middle layer. It makes it easier to follow the vision. It's all about getting your hands dirty, and you couldn't do that when you had a parent company, because everyone had a specific role they had to follow."

- (Continued on page 97)

Buddy Guy Looks To Expand Audience With Silvertone Set

BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—Buddy Guy's new Silvertone album, "Heavy Love," set for release June 2, aims to secure a fresh foothold for the blues singer/guitarist among younger listeners and R&B-oriented audiences.

Guy's label and management (Continued on page 96)

IFPI Meeting To Focus On Budget, New Leader

BY ADAM WHITE

LONDON—Fighting the good fight for the global record business is an increasingly expensive task. Now, industry leaders must decide anew how much money will be spent, where it will come from, and who will be held accountable.

The debates and decisions will (Continued on page 98)
Lenny Kravitz

5

featuring “If You Can’t Say No”

Produced, written, arranged and performed by Lenny Kravitz
Representation: Craig Fruin and Howard Kaufman/HK Management

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AOL Keyword: Virgin Records
Wherehouse Links Garth To Used-CD Promo

BILLY FAY PATRICK

LOS ANGELES—Nearly five years after Garth Brooks denounced the sale of CDs, one retail chain singled out by the country superstar is driving sales of Brooks’ “The Limited Series” boxed set with a trade-in offer.

Towering, Calif.-based Wherehouse Entertainment is selling “The Limited Series” for $14.99 when consumers trade in five CDs. The set, released May 5, is priced at $39.98.

Surprisingly, Wherehouse’s bold promotion is not generating public opposition from Brooks, Capitol Nashville, and competing retailers, many of whom are still angry over what they see as the set’s low profit margins.

The Wherehouse promotion, called “Get Garth For A Lot Less Green,” is good until May 18. The chain will not accept promotional copies as part of the deal, and all trade-ins are subject to manager approval.

The offer is good in all 220 Wherehouse locations, one of whom is Las Vegas stores where the sale of used CDs is prohibited.

Originally, Brooks’ label, Capitol Nashville, had set a $9.95 suggested retail price, but retailers are allowed to price the set at $7.95, for the set (Billboard, April 11). Several weeks ago, though, the label set a MAP of $27.95 and suggested the retail price.

Capitol had also planned to press only 2 million copies of “The Limited Series,” but President Pat Quigley says the label has upped that to 2.5 million.

“Most retailers are going to be out of the title by Friday [May 8]. It’s a monster,” says Quigley. “We’ve allowed retailers to place one reorder, but we’re shutting down at 2.5 million. It’s a huge number for others, but a small one for Garth.

He says the label was not pressuring retailers, who were angered that the lack of a pricing policy would result in a market free-for-all and slim profit margins.

“A MAP price felt good to our distribution company [EMI Music Distribution],” says Quigley, “except for CMT that needed it, so we gave it to them.”

Wherehouse country music buyer Jeff Stoltz says the chain did not use co-op dollars for the title in question.

As a result, Quigley says, the chain will not be penalized for advertising the title below MAP.

“IT’s not my kind of promotion, but we really don’t care,” says Quigley.

Wherehouse rolled out the promotion to remain competitive with deep discounters. “Used CDs are a core business for us, and we decided that since most of the racks and mass merchants will be pricing this at $27.88, this is a way for us to break through the clutter,” Stoltz says.

Apparently the strategy has worked: the chain expects to sell 8,000 units of the title during the first week of its availability; 3,000 more than it had originally expected to move. But Stoltz adds that he cannot yet quantify how many of the sales were part of the trade-in offer.

Brooks had no comment on the Wherehouse promotion.

One retailer isn’t that concerned about the Wherehouse promotion.

“I think it’s a clever idea,” says Tower Records president Russ Solomon. “The people who are going to sell tonnage on this title are [mass merchants], and I’d be amazed if we sell a lot.” Tower is pricing the set at $39.95.

Indeed, Kmart is likely to do well with the title, since Brooks is promoting the set with an exclusive Kmart ad that features the artist stock shelves and filling a switch that momentarily changes the “K” in Kmart into a “G” for Garth. The ads are scheduled for the second TV flight.

Kmart has the box on sale at $27.99. One Los Angeles location received only 10 copies of the box, which it sold the first day.

Last fall, Brooks did a similar ad for the mass-merchant chain with “Sevens.”

Other retailers are also selling the box at a significant discount. Borders Books & Music is pricing the set at $29.99, while Virgin Megastore has it at $31.99.

Both chains would offer no comment on the Wherehouse promotion, but they blasted Capitol’s marketing strategy.

“I understand Garth is concerned that his fans didn’t get gouged by spending $45 for six new songs,” says Borders VP of merchandise, “but I don’t think it’s lining his pockets. It’s an exercise in charging for music and video Len Consino.

‘But in many cases, the retailer is making about 14 cents on this title. It’s a lossy precedent that Garth and Capitol are selling something with no margin.’

The boxed set contains Brooks’ first six albums, with each featuring a previously unreleased bonus track. Capitol has placed all six titles on a moratorium to drive sales for the set. After the boxed set sells out, which the label expects by the end of the year, each of the singles will be released on an anniversary date (Billboard, April 11).

Quigley defends the strategy and adds that orders were “heavier” from the retail chain than from mass merchants.

Touting His Own Horn. On April 13, President and Mrs. Clinton presented Washington, D.C., an eight-grade student Gregory Thompson with the president’s personal saxophone. Thompson, a young saxophonist who has played in the Washington, D.C., Youth Orchestra and the Duke Ellington Youth Music Festival, was selected to receive the instrument after a teacher recommended him through the VH1 Save the Music program, which is designed to restore music programs in public schools across the country. Pictured, from left, are President Clinton, Thompson, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and VH1 president John Sykes.

P’Gram Joins EMI As Option For Suitors

BY MARK SOLOMONS and ROBBERT TILL

LONDON—The prospect of two of the world’s major music companies changing hands has generated interest among Universal’s giant Philips on May 6 confirmed heightened suspicions that the group is evaluating its options for its majority stake in PolyGram (Billboard Bulletin, May 7).

“PolyGram’s situation is still very much in the balance,” says one New York-based analyst, referring to EMI Group’s admission April 30 that it was in receipt of “an approach” from an unnamed private equity group “believed to be Universal’s music parent Seagram (Billboard, May 9). Observers now consider PolyGram—with its emerging film interests—to be an even more attractive acquisition for the Canadian company, which also owns Universal Studios in Burbank, Calif.

Other potential suitors for EMI are also in the frame as possible bidders for PolyGram, including Disney, Viacom, and DreamWorks. Competition laws are thought to rule out one of the other major players—Sony or BMG, for example—for a play for PolyGram.

PolyGram’s shares rose 12% in Amsterdam and New York May 6, after Philips issued a statement that it would “embrace any strategic option to maximize (the) value to shareholders” of its 75% stake in the major. The company’s stock closed in Amsterdam that day at 98 guilders, up 10.8 guilders, with 1.8 million shares traded, nearly four times the average figure for the last three months. In New York, May 16,000 shares changed hands, and the stock ended the day at 96.25, up 5.125. The prices value PolyGram at 17.84 billion guilders ($8.56 billion). Philips’ own stock rose 4.2 guilders to 188.6 guilders.

EMI’s stock, in contrast, closed down in London 2.7% on May 7, at 574.1 pence.

Phillips’ statement is thought to have been prompted by recent press speculation that PolyGram might want to acquire EMI Music Publishing from EMI Group.

Philips spokesman declined further comment. Says one Dutch analyst, “PolyGram is a far more interesting sale proposition than EMI Music Publishing.” Dutch observers pointed out that the Supermarket appeared to have been carefully timed to avoid publicity, coming on the same day as a general election in the Netherlands.

Analysts in both markets believe Philips is likely to buy up outstanding PolyGram shares in order to sell the entire group as a single entity, rather than sell its existing majority holding. “They’re not going to sell (Continued on page 14)
USTR Cites Bulgaria As Worst Piracy Nation

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Bulgaria has been cited as the nation with the worst-offending worldwide CD piracy problem now that China’s enforcement efforts have improved.

On May 1, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Charlene Barshefsky placed Bulgaria on the office’s Priority Watch List for the annual U.S. trade law’s Special 301 review, which examines intellectual property protection in more than 70 countries.

Without improvements in copyright enforcement, nations on the Priority Watch List could face further U.S. trade sanctions. They also endanger their sta-
tus as members of the World Trade Organiza-
tion (WTO).

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) estimates that Bulgaria produces $15 million CDs a year—one in eight sold worldwide.

In January, the USTR warned that Bul-
garia would be identified as a Priority Foreign Country—the top tier for prob-
lem countries—unless gains were shown. Since then, Bulgaria has announced the establishment of a CD manufacturing-plants licensing decree that seeks to close illegal CD plants and says it is committed to placing CD plants under 24-hour surve-

ience.

The action follows strong lobbying by IFPI executives of Bulgarian leaders, in-
cluding a meeting with Interior Minister Bogomil Bonev April 27.

Bulgaria’s first prosecution of an alleged pirate collapsed last June, but authorities there have more than 80 cases of suspected copyright infringement.

Piracy costs the international record industry an annual $2 billion worldwide; U.S. companies estimate $125 million in losses.

In Asia, much illegal CD manufacturing has shifted from China—where enforcement efforts against piracy have improved since a 1996 trade policy show-
down with the U.S.—to Macao and Hong Kong.

In addition, the USTR put Macao on its Priority Watch List and Hong Kong on its third-tier Watch List. Hong Kong could have received a more severe citation if it had not for CD factory raids conducted April 26 and April 28 by Hong Kong authorities in which 7 million CDs were seized. The USTR said the plants were operated by a “major copyright piracy syndicate.”

Barshefsky says the new actions are encouraging and calls the number of seized discs “staggering.”

Facing international pressure, Hong Kong recently enacted new legislation, effective in August, that will require licensing of all CD production facilities.

Implementation of the World Intellec-
tual Property Organization treaties by member nations will result in rules requiring nations to provide tough intel-
lectual property protection across the board—and across national boundaries.

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by Jeff Clark-Meads in London.
OLIVIA NEWTON JOHNN "Back With A Heart"

Over 20 Million Albums Sold
"Back With A Heart" Olivia's first new album in the U.S. in over 5 years.

MAJOR MEDIA EVENTS:
ROSIE O'DONNELL April 28th
OPRAH May 1st
PEOPLE (50 Most Beautiful) May 4th
THE TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO May 12th
THE VIEW (with Barbara Walters) May 14th
VH-1 Ru PAUL May
THE TODAY SHOW June 12

The first single
"I Honestly Love You"
is currently being played
at multiple radio formats.
Look for the video on VH-1 and CMT

Available May 12th
BY DON JEFFREY AND DOUG REECE

NEW YORK—The online custom compilation business is picking up steam, as confidence in the new sales channel rises among labels and investors.

Platinum Entertainment and K-tel International have announced plans to sell custom-made CDs through their World Wide Web sites, even as new compilation specialist MY-CD (www.my-cd.com) readies its four-month-old launch and existing service CustomDisc.com expands its music selection.

Platinum is planning to create an Internet site from which people can purchase albums, order customized CDs, and digitally download tracks to make their own mixes.

An independent, publicly owned record company, Platinum says it will make available 500,000 titles for sale on the Web site that it expects to debut in the third quarter (Bulletin, April 30).

Several companies are now selling music online, the most recent being direct music marketer K-tel International and Internet book-seller Amazon.com. So far, the leaders in the business are online retailers CDNow and Music Boulevard.

Visitors to Platinum’s Web site will also be able to select tracks from Platinum’s catalog of 12,000 masters, from which the company will create a customized CD and mail it to the customer. This is a relatively new business that several companies have entered as well, including Supersonic Boom, Music Connection, and CDutive (Bulletin, Feb. 7).

New York-based MY-CD, which is financed by Bandai Toy Co., kicked off its “soft launch” May 1 with plans to become increasing aggressively in the next few months.

The company has already announced a partnership with broadband service provider Net, which, according to MY-CD CEO Ed Bennett, will help the company’s efforts to enter the digital-download arena. The new K-tel will also allow users to download and burn custom albums at the site.

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BY CHUCK TAYLOR

NEW YORK—Sony Music’s sales and income soared in fiscal year 1998, bringing the entertainment company’s first double-digit growth in both margins.

Overall, Sony Music posted a 17.3% increase in sales and operating revenue to $5.27 billion. GAAP operating income increased 19.6% to $409.7 million. Figures are for the year ended March 31.

“We’re extremely pleased with the fiscal year’s performance,” Sony Music Entertainment president/CEO Thomas Mottola tells Billboard. “It is reflective of our ongoing commitment to grow our artist development and our aggressive approach to the global marketplace. Despite continued difficult industry conditions, our new fiscal year has gotten off to a strong start, and we’re looking forward to building on this year’s successes.”

According to the company, strong sales were anchored by a number of album titles that fostered global success. Chief among them were the motion picture soundtrack to “Titanic”—which this issue ends a 16-week reign at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 (see Between the Bulletins, page 160)—and continues to top album charts in many other nations—and Celine Dion’s “Let’s Talk About Love,” whose “Titanic” theme “My Heart Will Go On” has become a worldwide success. Each project has sold in excess of 15 million copies internationally, Sony says.

Other top-performing releases include the Fresh Garden’s self-titled debut, Mariah Carey’s “Butterfly,” and “Be Here Now” from Oasis.

These successes offset disappointing results for the company’s independent record label, in which Sony is a 50% partner. As well, industry slowdowns in Europe and parts of Asia brought in revenue below projections.

Overall results for parent Sony Corp. were also rosy, with a 19.3% increase in sales and operating revenue. In addition to music, the company’s interests include electronics, computer games, PlayStation, and motion pictures.

BY CARLa HAY

NEW YORK—Prominent music industry organizations, including the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA), plan to oppose a bill introduced May 5 in the Michigan state legislature that would regulate concert attendance by children under the age of 18.

The bill SB 1000, which was introduced by Republican Sen. Dale Shugars, would give local governments in Michigan the authority to decide whether specific concerts are harmful to minors (Bulletin, May 7). Venues that host concerts deemed harmful to minors would be required to post under a 30-day advance notice period, to prohibit any minor from attending those concerts unless accompanied by an adult. In addition, those attending such concerts would be required to obtain information about the restricted access to minors. Violations by event sponsors would result in a $500 fine.

Shugars, who is serving his first term in the Michigan state senate, tells Billboard, “This bill gives parents the right to know what kind of concerts their children might be attending.

As Stock Soars, K-tel Offers Words Of Caution

NEW YORK—In the first week of May as K-tel International’s stock continued to climb to new heights on Internet fever and the company’s announcements of new alliances, the direct music marketer warned investors that its online venture faced intense competition and required substantial investment.

A warning came in K-tel’s third-quarter report, in which it posted a loss and lower sales than a year ago. These results, however, were said to be expected due to music business conditions.

The latest announcement from K-tel was that it had formed an agreement with inforntial producer Innovative Multimedia to develop and produce half-hour programs promoting K-tel’s proprietary music programming, beginning in June. The infomercials would also plug the company’s World Wide Web music web site, K-tel Express.

A few days earlier, K-tel had announced it had made a deal with Bill Board Music Group to run ads during half-hour segments every Friday morning on its Web site. This report apparently sent the stock soaring more than 80% in two days.

The news that K-tel was going to sell music over the Web was actual-
Microsoft Upgrades Music Apps

BY DOUG REECE
LOS ANGELES—Simultaneous with the June 25 release of Microsoft's Windows 98 software, the company will issue a new version of its Microsoft Plus! pack with software featuring several new music functions, including retail links. Microsoft Plus! '98, which will sell separately from Windows for a suggested $44.95, offers the program Deluxe CD Player, which can identify songs being played on a computer by linking to the Internet and can connect users the online music and retail world. Web sites Music Boulevard (www.musicblvd.com), Tunes.com (www.tunes.com) and Billboard Online (www.billboard.com).

The program, which operates only when used in conjunction with Windows 98, also offers an array of games and utilities meant to enhance Windows.

"It's going to provide huge benefits over previous CD players, the software," says Kim Akers, Windows 98 product manager. "If you wanted to have song titles listed on the Windows 95 version, you had to type them in and save them. Now the computer will find the titles in a few minutes and save that information so that each time the album is played it remembers the track listing."

Akers says Microsoft Plus! '98 will have a dialogue box offering several options. Users will be able to search the Internet for information about the album or artist on the playlist or listen to artists, view Billboard reviews of the album being played, and make purchases and consult out information at Tunes.com or Music Boulevard.

Melissa Jordan Grey, Microsoft's program manager of business development and strategic communication for Windows multimedia, says the links were provided at no cost to its content partners.

In fact, Grey says, she contacted several other music companies that declined to participate for various reasons or failed to return phone calls. Still, new links can be established after the product launches.

"We would be very happy to accommodate as many people as we could participate," she says. Grey says, "All they have to do is work with us to allow for the proper uploading and downloading of data. The main reason we seek was to get a broad experience for people using Windows. We're not interested in getting a part of anyone's sales."

For the other enhanced retail function being added to Microsoft is cautiously optimistic.

"It would have to be user-driven," says Akers when asked if the links could someday be used to suggest new music to users based on their listening habits. "People don't want all their personal information being made available like that. But there could be a time for it, if someone said they wouldn't mind being monitored and having recommendations about, say, artists in the same genre they're listening to."

Microsoft declines to divulge how many units would be sold under Microsoft Plus! '98. Rob Ennderle, director of desktop and mobile technology for Cambridge, Mass.-based consultancy and analyst firm Giga Information Group, predicts that Windows Plus! '98 will sell several million copies.

According to Ennderle, the Windows 95 Plus! pack contained essential "dial-up" features that are now standard in Windows 98. Those features were required by many companies wanting to facilitate smooth access to the Internet and help built an installed base.

Although the new version is targeted mainly toward home users, Microsoft Plus! '98 is expected to sell briskly in opening months, he says.

"The Plus! pack tends to move to the top of the sales charts from day one," he says.

instead of a feature that will be available only to 16,000 customers who paid $99 for a year's subscription.

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Intel biz Flocks To Cuba
Trade Fair Reveals Growing Business

BY JUDY CANTOR
HAVANA—The presence of dozens of representatives from foreign labels at Cubadisco '98, a five-day festival showcasing current Cuban talent, underscored the growing outside interest in this country's vital music scene.

The second edition of the Cuban record fair kicked off April 18 here. Featuring conferences, product presentations, a Cuban music awards ceremony, and nightly concerts attracting audiences of up to 500, the event attested to both the current health of music on the island and its increasing strength as a leading Cuban export.

"The main goal of Cubadisco is to promote Cuban music's presence in the world," says Ciro Benemelis, president of Cubadisco and an official at the Cuban Music Institute. According to Benemelis, 41 foreign label representatives attended the event. Among them, the presence of executives from EMI and Universal in Havana is evidence that multinationals are renewing their stance in the region with Cuba.

"A major key to success was the monopoly interested in the local music market," Benemelis says. "We're hopeful that this trend will continue."

UMC to Promote Cuban Music

UMC also confirmed its interest in Cuban music by announcing a joint venture with the island's leading record label, Ediciones Musicales de Cuba.

UMC's promotion of Cuban music will take place through its Latin division, which is scheduled to launch in 1999.

UMC's move into the Cuban market comes at a time when the island's music industry is experiencing a boom.

According to Benemelis, the number of Cuban musicians has increased by 50% in the past 10 years.

In Havana, the presence of dozens of Cuban musicians and industry professionals also underscored the growing interest in Cuban music.

"We're interested in helping Cuban musicians make music that's relevant to the world," says Benemelis.

In addition to promoting Cuban music, UMC also announced plans to establish a Cuban division within its Latin division.

UMC's Cuban division will be responsible for signing and promoting Cuban musicians, and for developing and marketing Cuban music in the United States.

"We're looking to build a strong Cuban division that's dedicated to promoting the best Cuban talent," says Benemelis.

Music Helps Seagram's 3rd Qtr.

NEW YORK—Music was a high note in the third quarter for Montreal-based Seagram Co., which saw its spirits business sag dramatically during the same period.

For the quarter, which ended March 31, the entertainment and beverage company's Universal Music division posted solid growth as revenue rose 20% higher than in the same period last year, at $12 million. Revenue fell from $367 million to $334 million.

For the nine months ending March 31, cash flow at Seagram's music division was $77 million, up from $62 million the year before.

William Hauser, and nearly all of the remaining staff, fueled rumors that Warner was withdrawing from the Christian market.

Among those still at Warner Alliance, recently promoted VP of gospel Debbie Derwin, Alex Alexander, national promotion director Brenda Smith, and Eric Mollet in marketing.

The current roster mainly consisted of gospel acts at Beverly Crawford, O'Landar Draper, Carlton Pearson, Donnie McClurkin, and the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, as well as British group: World Wide Message Tribe.

Gales, who has headed WCD since its upstart in the fall of 1985, says Warner is very much committed to the Christian market. "The reason this company is growing and moving forward is because of the vision of Dave Mount, Val Azzoli, and Phil Quartararo," he says. "Make no mistake, these are the three primary forces in us going forward because of their commitment."

Quartararo is well-known in the contemporary Christian arena for his support of the genre. He signed de Talk and the Newboys when he was the head of Virgin.

RECORD COMPANIES. Mercury Records in New York promotes Steve Ellis to senior VP of promotion. He was VP of promotion.

Arista Records in New York promotes Gary Pacheco to VP of special markets. He was senior director of special markets.

Un-D-Nyable Records in Chicago appoints Maurice White senior VP of promotion and Rhonda Nileen senior director of marketing. They were, respectively, Midwest regional promotion manager, R&B music, at MCA Records and Northeast regional promotion manager at RCA Records.

Universal Records in New York promotes Wendy Watson to VP of media relations, black music. She was senior director of media relations.

Tommy Ray Music in Los Angeles appoints Kevin Weaver to head the soundtrack division. He was senior director of A&R at Lava Records.

N2K Inc. in New York names James P. Mathews III VP of human resources. He was VP of business operations, finance, and human resources at Warner Pharmaceutics.

Virgin Records in Los Angeles names Edwina Mossett VP of human resources and administration. She was human resources manager at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan.

Mitchell Cohen is appointed CFO at Everything's Jake in New York. He was CFO at Katz Digital Technologies.

Columbia Records Nashville names Mike Rogers executive VP of national country promotion. He was manager of Nashville regional, at Epic Records Nashville.

Universal Music Group in Los Angeles names Scott Belmont senior corporate VP of business information technology and Sharon Kim manager of strategic planning and business development. They were, respectively, regional VP at EMD and senior consultant at Booz, Allen and Hamilton.

Mute Records U.S. in New York names Steve Brennenoff national manager of media relations and promotions. He was corporate VP of business at Universal Music Group.

Harmony Records in Brentwood, Tenn., names Sharon Heyward senior director of marketing. She was an associate director of marketing at 3M.
George Strait

George, you the man!

CONGRATULATIONS!

"One Step At A Time" Shipped Platinum

"One Step At A Time" Debuts #1 on the Billboard Country Chart

Academy of Country Music award for Top Male Vocalist

Academy of Country Music award for Album of the Year for "Carrying Your Love With Me"

George Strait Country Music Festival 18 history-breaking dates
Stewart Revisits His Roots

‘New Boys’ Warner Set Captures Classic Flair

BY LARRY FLICK

NEW YORK—After a string of refined adult-pop efforts, Rod Stew-
art fondly revisits his raunch-rock roots with “When We Were The
New Boys,” a spunky Warner Bros. collection that bal-
ces the sound of his Faces-era tenure with material penned by
a slew of new-genera-
tion rockers.

Slated for world-
wide release on June
2, the project firmly
casts Stewart in the
almost fatherly role of
quintessential rock
interpreter, covering
cuts such as the Oasis
anthem “Cigarettes &
Alcohol” and Primal
Scream’s “Rock’n’Roll,”
alongside more classic fare such as the Ronnie Lane/Iron Wood com-
position “Ooh La La.”

According to Bob Dickens, chair-
man of Warner Bros. (U.K.), the plan
was to draw a direct link between that
curly-haired in the singer’s career and
the music being made today.

“Albums like ‘Every Picture Tells A Story’ continue to be an inme-
asurable influence on young music-
ians,” he says. “I wanted Rod to make
an album that unabashedly staked
such a claim. Also, I wanted to once again
pull the down-and-
dirty rock’n’roller from within him and
make an album that wasn’t overblown in
its presentation.”

The first step in that process was sell-
 ing the concept to Stewart. “He was a bit
cautious at first,” Dickens says with a
laugh. “It was like, ‘Do we really want to go down that road
again?’ But the songs I presented to him
soon took over, and he was hooked.”

Stewart agrees. “The bands com-
(Moved to next page)

Luther Allison
Honored At Handy Awards

Luther Allison
Honored At Handy Awards

BY CHRIS MORRIS

MEMPHIS—Perennial W.C. Handy Award winner Luther
Allison got a last round of posthumous accolades from
the blues community April 30, as the late singer/guitarist, who
reaped a total of eight awards in 1996–97, received five Handy
honors during ceremonies at the Orpheum Theatre
here.

Allison, who suc-
cumbed to cancer last August (Bill-
board, Aug. 23, 1997), was named
dues-ax player of the year, man
contemporary blues artist of the
year, and guitarist of the year.
His 1997 Alligator album, “Reck-
less,” was selected as contem-
porary blues album of the year.

Additionally, writer Jerry
Lynn Williams’ song “Living In
The House Of The Blues,”
from “Reckless,” received the nod
as blues song of the year.

In remarks during the cere-
mony, Blues Foundation execu-
tive director Howard Stov-
all acknowledged
recent pass-
ing of Alli-
son and sev-
eral other
well-known
blues figures
(who were remembered in a
videotaped presentation). How-
ever, Stovall also noted the
arrival of a new generation of
gifted blues artists—several of
whom were on view during the
evening’s performances.

The nonprofit Blues Founda-
tion, which presents the
Handys
based on ballots from some
15,000 blues fans, also saluted
singer Ruth Brown and har-
monica player Carey Bell with
multiple Handy trophies.

Brown—who returned to the
Handy podium for the fourth
consecutive year to co-host the
awards with guitarist Robert
Cray—was feted as female
(Continued on page 101)

Arista/Austin’s Strategy
Reaps Hit Single For Sister 7

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—Sister 7 bassist Dar-
drell Phillips calls his Arista/Austin
band “the-dear-road dogs,” and the
Texas rock act’s hard rockout
ethic, along with the star power of
vocalist Patrice Pike, is now paying
off with the hit single “Know What
You Mean.”

The group, whose label debut al-
bum, “This The Trip,” came out last
July, had already built a loyal fan club
list of more than 200,000 names prior
to its major-label signing and had put
in more than 500,000 miles in a van
promoting its self-released and self-
marketed previous albums with road
shows, karaoke fans and industry wars
speechless.

“Every time I saw them was an in-
credible musical event,” says Arista/
Austin VP of A&R, development
Steve Schnur, who describes
himself as an “obscene fan” and
especially cites Pike’s vocal prowess.
David Passick, Sister 7’s
manager, refers to a review in Rolling
Stone as likening Pike to Tina Turner,
Bessie Smith, Janis Joplin, and Robert
Plant—“all rolled into a
tiny but explosive package.”

“They’re in the generation of what
we remember rock’n’roll bands to be,”
says Passick. “They play with an
urgency that makes you sweat, com-
plete with unique fusions of
down-and-dirty rock’n’roll with the tremendous voice of
Patrice, who is one of the most
extraordinary frontwomen I’ve seen
in many a year.”

But Sister 7, which also includes
guitarist Wayne Sutton and drum-
mer Sean Phillips (no relation to Dar-
drell), also knew how to promote itself.

“We toured for years and built up
a following through word-of-mouth
and updating our mailing list,” notes
Darrell Phillips. “We kept in touch with
our fans, and they’d bring five new
people to the next show—and the
crowds kept getting better.”

The years of touring contributed
in a strong sense of direction among
the group members, who brought dif-
ferent musical influences and
writing styles to the table when they
formed Sister 7 in 1991, when they
were first called Little Sister.

“They spent so much time liv-
ing together on the road that they
had a good understanding of what needed
to be done—and their mission,” says
Danny Kortchman, who produced
“This The Trip.” “They’re not shy
about expressing themselves to each
other, and that has a lot to do with
making a great band.”

Sister 7’s touring schedule contin-
ued nonstop after the release of
“This The Trip,” with Arista/Austin
initially targeting the existing fan
base and sending the band to retailer
evénets prior to working radio.

“In the years since they formed in
1991, they had done everything that
record companies try over and over
to create,” says Schnur. “Setting up
a tour base, a database, building up
new pockets of support over and over
again to where they had pretty good
crowds in certain markets. They took
1,000 people in a club on their
own in some cases, so we wanted
to cater to those kids first and build
from there.”

At Austin, Texas, record store
Waterloo Records & Video, owned
by John T. Kunz, has been one of Sister 7’s
largest
supporters since 1992, when its
disc, “Freedom Child,”
came out.

“They were still Little Sister then, and
they did in-stores and we championed
them with our ‘Hear Texas Here’ program spot-
lighting Texas artists,” says Kunz.

“Then they did the live album ‘Free Love And
Nickel Beer,’ and by that point they
were selling a thousand pieces. So
we’ve had a longstanding love affair with
them, and now radio is jazzing
on and taking them from something
that was a home-grown product into
something that’s blossoming every-
where.”

Radio joined the party via “Know
What You Mean” last month, adds
Kunz, spiking sales from a steady
eight to 10 pieces to “well over a box
a week” at Waterloo currently. The
single, says Kortchman, was “obviously
a strong tune” when he first heard a
voice/guitar demo; he moved a Sutton
guitar lick from the back to the front of
the track and made Sean Phillips’
drum part more “characterful” to give
the song a “hypnotic kind of quality.”

The single was remixed by Ben
Grosse and released in February.

“Initial response was fantastic, and
now the band is touring around the
country playing in front of radio sta-
tion executives, on radio stations, and
at radio-sponsored shows,” says
Schnur.

Tommy Mattern, assistant PD/
(Continued on page 10)
Trisha Yearwood
The Triple Crown

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Guitarist Jimmie Vaughan Gets 'Out There' With Rootsy Epic Set

BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—Jimmie Vaughan plumbs the gutbucket roots of his Texas guitar style anew on his second Epic solo release, "Out There," in stores June 16.

The Austin, Tex.-based musician implies that the title of the new album is in keeping with its musical orientation.

"It's all the stuff that I like—it's got the real roots Texas guitar in it, which I really love, and all the songs are a little bit off," he says. "You know the RCA dog, the way he's got his head tilted a little bit? That's the way I want it to be. I want it to be just a little off."
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ing up through the ranks right now are incredible. When I heard ‘Weak As I Am’ by Skunk Anansie, I was dying to sing it. It felt like a natural song for me.’

With the decision to include that tune on the album—along with Superstar’s sterling self-titled composition, Ron Sexsmith’s ‘Secret Heart,’ and Mick Scott’s ‘What Do You Want Me To Do’—the time had come to begin cutting tracks.

‘Rod asked about producers,’ Dickens recalls. ‘Knowing the answer, I asked him who had produced those classic early records, and he said that he had. ‘Then you have your producer,’ I replied.’

Stewart was instantly keen on the idea. ‘It was nice to eliminate the middleman for a change,’ he says, adding that he and longtime friend and keyboardist Kevin Savige “had a fantastic time” digging into the task. ‘By this point, the album had become a mission to me. It was a chance to prove that I wasn’t an old geezer ready to pack it in.’

The end result of these sessions is an ornament, guitar-heavy set that largely re-creates the tone of a live concert. ‘Rock’ n’ roll’ plays like the lip-smackin’ sequel to Stewart’s ’70s-era smash ‘Hot Legs,’ while ‘Ooh La La,’ with its intricate mandolin lines, is the flip side of ‘Maggie May.’

But how will a world that has gotten comfortable with the softer sound of recent Rod Stewart recordings react?

‘Quite frankly, we always do well with Rod, no matter what he does,’ says Tim Devin, GM of Tower Records in New York. ‘The ladies, in particular, just love him. The old Faces fans that jumped off the bandwagon could very well come back with this one, which makes this one of his bigger albums in recent times.’

Retailers in the U.K. are equally intrigued by the project. ‘The fact that it has a lot of covers of popular U.K. bands makes it extra interesting here,’ says Ron Boayers, buyer for Record Tower, an indie outlet in London. ‘At the minimum, people will want to hear what Rod does to a song like ‘Cigarettes & Alcohol.’ It could do quite well, at the end of the day.”

The radio outlook for “When We Were The New Boys” is equally positive. Although the label isn’t slated to begin soliciting pop, AC, and mainstream rock airplay in the States on the first single, “Ooh La La,” until Tuesday (12), programmers are optimistic about its future with listeners.

“It has that classic ‘Maggie May’ sound that I think people will gravitate toward,” says Blake John, assistant music director at KCMU Seattle.

Radio promotion for “Ooh La La” in the U.K. and throughout much of Europe begins Monday (11).

Now that the creative part of the project is behind him, Stewart, who is managed by Arnold Stiefel and Annie Challis, is eager to get back on the road. He’s scheduled to begin a world tour, booked by International Creative Management, July 14 in Hartford, Conn. Much of the tour will be promoted by De Shields/Slater.

“I can’t wait to play these songs,” Stewart says. “I’m not like a lot of other artists who hate to be on the road. I actually get quite jittery when I’m away from the stage for too long.”

POLYGRAM JOINS EMI AS OPTION FOR SUITORS

(Continued from page 3)

[their stake],” comments one analyst. “It’s cheaper to buy the 25% they don’t own; then they can do pretty much what they want.”

A key player in a future sale of both EMI and PolyGram is likely to be London-based fund manager Mercury Asset Management, which controls just less than 10% of EMI stock and is thought to be the single largest shareholder in PolyGram after Philips, with nearly 3 million shares, or about 1.5% of the company. A Mercury spokesman said that the company does not discuss individual stocks.

Analysts have said that Philips wanted to keep PolyGram in order to have an interest in a major software company as it develops new entertainment technologies. But it has had a change of heart about that philosophy and is known to have been keen for some time to divest its PolyGram holding in order to focus on core businesses.

“They feel they’re not getting the value out of PolyGram,” adds the analyst. “They just don’t like having to manage the business quarter by quarter.”

PolyGram reported a net profit of 15 million guilders ($7.5 million) for the first three months of this year, compared with 122 million guilders ($59 million) in the same period in 1997.

Assistant in preparing this story was provided by Don Jeffrey in New York.

Before he hits the road, Stewart will shoot a video clip for “Ooh La La” with director Randee St. Nicholas. He’ll also spend much of May and June making TV appearances. At the top of the agenda is an episode of VH1’s “Storytellers” that he recently taped at New York’s Supper Club.

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illegal cartel under British and European law. The network began parallel actions in the U.K.’s High Court and in a complaint to the European Commission; the actions cited both VPL and the major labels as represented by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). On May 6, both of those actions were dropped after a settlement between the sides (Billboard Bulletin, May 7). Had the Commission upheld MTV’s complaint and ruled that VPL’s collective licensing was illegal, all similar societies in all rights sectors in the EU would have had their legal foundations removed.

The settlement of MTV’s case has come out of the blue and in unusual circumstances. Normally, such issues are resolved in the context of a courtroom, with a judge announcing that the case has been settled within the framework of the legal dispute. However, this settlement has been reached away from the court; the U.K. and European legal actions have ceased simply because MTV’s initial complaint was withdrawn.

When contacted by Billboard, each organization referenced a joint statement that notes that the settlement agreement “contains a confidentiality provision which precludes the parties from disclosing its terms.”

The dispute has gained a large number of complexities in its six-year passage through the British and European legal systems. One of those complexities is that, during the six years, four of the five major named in the initial complaint have split from VPL in this area and done their own direct deals with MTV. Only Warner Music hasn’t done so, although it has been suggested that Warner has reached a deal with the broadcaster that precipitated the settlement. However, it is known that Warner Music has not struck such a deal and remains in negotiation with MTV over rights and payments.

Asked about the settlement, president of MTV Networks International Bill Roedy only says, “I’m pleased we’re not fighting further, but because of the confidentiality clause, that’s all I can say.” Calls to VPL and the IFPI had not been returned by press time. The end of the dispute removes a thorny problem for the European Commission and a profound threat to the EU’s collecting societies. It’s highly unusual for the Commission to consider a complaint such as MTV’s for six years without being able to reach a public conclusion. Sources within Commission circles in Brussels suggest the Commission was reluctant to make a ruling that, if it had favored MTV’s position, would have outlawed a continent-wide working practice.

Indeed, the dilemma the Commission faced was evident in 1994, when the DG16 internal market department and the DG4 competition department were in open dispute about the case. DG4 executives were eager to pursue the issue and, because of their predilection for free trade, appeared to be leaning toward MTV’s position. In contrast, DG16—a department whose sole responsibility is the smooth running of the single European market—was equally keen that the status quo of collective licensing be undermined.

Senior record industry figures in the U.K. believe Brussels civil servants feared to act. The British High Court decided three years ago that it would not hear the dispute until a decision had been made public by the European Commission.

Some procedural matters did come before the court, however. The last of these was in February, when a High Court judge ruled that MTV must disclose to its opponents sensitive commercial information. MTV had asked the court to let it keep the information secret.

**Arists & Music**

**MTV Europe settles Licensing disputes with U.K., EU groups**

(Continued from page 1)

music director at modern AC WALK St. Louis, says about “Know What You Mean,” “It’s been top 10 in phones since we put it on and fits our audience perfectly.”

“The beauty of this situation is that so many bands have a single and suddenly gain a radio and sales base, which is so fragile,” says Schuur. “But this isn’t an overnight success story, but a band that’s developed over the years in many markets. We made sure we catered the album to that fan base, with the right song or two to take it to the next step.”

The next step, Schuur notes, includes “a more adult” image shift, as evidenced in the video for “Know What You Mean.” The Progressive Global Agency-booked band is planning to expand its base internationally, having toured Germany with labelmate Abra Moore last fall and performed a residency stint in Paris.

Pike, meanwhile, says she expects the band to grow artistically. “What’s attractive about Sister 7 right now is due to a mainstream single that’s really a watered-down version of what the band does as a whole,” says the vocalist, a Warner-Tamerlane writer, along with the rest of the group. “It’s the safest song on the record for radio and isn’t risky at all.

“But the band’s a rock band,” Pike adds. “Most of our stuff pushes things ahead of the curve, and we hope to put things out that are more representative of what we do.”
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**Geffen’s Pure Sugar Works Its Starr Power**

**BY LARRY FICK**

NEW YORK—As the June 16 release of its self-titled Geffen debut draws near, Pure Sugar aims to build upon its increasingly high club profile. With flamboyant front woman Jennifer Starr as its not-so-secret weapon, the act is poised for a major pop breakthrough.

In mid-March, the label issued the club-focused 12-inch single “Hands To Heaven,” a house music anthem that has scored immediate turntable action throughout the U.S. The track is No. 15 on this issue’s Hot Dance Music/Club Play chart.

While DJs have solidly bonded with the state-of-the-street remixes by Mijangos, Rhythm Masters, DJ Icy, and Pure Sugar masterminds Richard “Humpty” Vission and Pete Lorimer, it is Starr’s vibrant, delightfully over-the-top vocal that has triggered the loudest raves. “It’s unusual to discover a dance singer who can not only sing but also has the personality to be a star,” says Billy Rhodes, a Seattle club DJ.

Marlon Creaton, manager of the independent Record Kitchen in San Francisco, echoes Rhodes’ sentiment. He adds that Starr “makes the dance genre look good, because you know she has a great future ahead.”

And the idea of dealing with an act that’s capable of being more than a limited turntable entity is what attracted Geffen A&R executive Craig Column to Pure Sugar in the first place. “The problem that most labels have with dance music is that they basically throw it out on vinyl and maybe at some point to radio and wait for miracles,” he says. “Pure Sugar will be marketed as all other serious artists on the label are. Our focus will begin at the club level and then [move] to radio and television.”

(Continued on page 41)

**Continental Drift**

UNSIGNED ARTISTS AND REGIONAL NEWS
EDITED BY MELINDA NEWMAN

BOSTON: Singer/songwriter Nate Borofsky knows what makes his folk songs rock. “Honesty,” he says. “I think a lot of my energy comes from that.” Part of a new breed of songwriters influenced more directly by Ani DiFranco than Woody Guthrie, Borofsky harnesses his honesty on his self-produced and self-recorded album “500 Miles,” blending in healthy doses of musicianship and humor. “I guess I’d say I’ve got one leg stuck in folk up to my knee, and the other leg is kind of flailing around in the air,” he says. Perhaps because he started performing literally in order to communicate, the 22-year-old’s live show is where he really shines. As a teenage exchange student in Germany, Borofsky says, he made friends his age by becoming “a kind of human jukebox, learning to play a bizarre range of stuff from Cat Stevens to the Red Hot Chili Peppers.” Now his shows at coffeehouses and bars have audiences throughout New England hopping, as they were at a recent songwriters’ circle at New York’s Dark Star Lounge. Borofsky says watching DiFranco’s career develop has influenced his choices so far: Her success, he says, has shown him that “he can do music for a living, not be dirty rich, and most importantly, not sign with a big major label.” But with characteristic humor even about his own ethics, Borofsky evokes Vance Gilbert’s words: “This career is great — there’s literally hundreds of dollars to be made every year!” Contact Borofsky’s Finocchio Records at (617) 626-1741 or mail@finocchio.com. IWAN HIKELER

ATLANTA: For three years, the Lost Continentals have been serving up an intoxicating blend of smooth swing rhythms, rockabilly riffs, and sultry, country-tinged vocals to packed clubs around the Southeast. “We do the swing thing, but it sure doesn’t sound like Vegas,” says vocalist Amy Pike. “It sounds like Georgia.” From Atlanta’s Cotton Club to the Centennial Park stage at the 1996 Summer Olympics, the Lost Continentals’ infectious sound has stirred a wide audience beyond the zoot-suit and martini set. “People are really ready for music they can dance to together,” Pike explains. With a lyrical style that ranges from soft andassy to downright bawdy, Pike puts a new spin on swinging’s tough-guy image. “We get a lot of girls who tell me they identify with us,” she says. “I think a lot of them appreciate the idea that a sexy woman can be a strong woman.” Although swing music hasn’t yet earned a category at the Atlanta Local Music Awards, the band has received nods from the local industry as best rockabilly band for two consecutive years. Since January, the band has also been getting serious attention for its debut, “Moonshine And Martinis” (Landslide). In its first month, the album landed near the top of the sales charts of several local independent music stores with more than 1,000 copies sold, and it entered into heavy rotation at Atlanta’s WRAS. Recently serviced nationally, the album has already sold more than 3,000 units and has garnered airplay on nearly 100 college and roots-music stations in 33 states. Contact Pike at 404-524-8607. BRUCH HUCKLEY

NASHVILLE: Hard-rapping rock music in this town won’t be booked on the Grand Ole Opry any time soon, but the members of Stone Deep have their sights set on bigger stages. After winning a National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences unsigned band competition in 1996 — beating out 2,500 other groups — the band showcased in New York and Los Angeles. That same year, the band’s hometown named Stone Deep the outstanding unsigned artist of 1996. Pulling together a group that fuses intelligent rapping with electric guitar and throbbing bass took musicians from both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Hailing from New York’s Long Island, guitarist Glen Cummings migrated to Music City on a lunch that he could hook up with like-minded musicians. Enter Nashville native Konzo “Beast” Cartwright. The two hit it off, writing music that combines rap and blues-based alternative music. Bassist Tim Brooke and drummer David DePriest completed the lineup. “Music is wherever you are,” says Cartwright. “Place doesn’t matter so much. But for us, this is a good place to live. It’s just about keeping it real.” Stone Deep has received airplay on WKDF Nashville and college station W1VU. Contact John Corton at 617-777-7425. SANDRA SCHUMAN

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songs or other people had written that I thought were vague trying to say what I would have liked to say, this we’re really trying to say what I want to say, thank you.”

The first single, the shuffling single a-long “La De Da,” will go to top 40, triple-A, and hot AC radio June 1.

Also sure to grab attention is Starr’s harmonica-drenched, bluesy take on “Love Me Do,” which, as Beatle archivists will note, is the only No. 1 single on which Starr did not play drums, although he is on the album version.

“I’m on the album, and nobody can tell the difference, so it’s not like drummer Andy White was doing anything critical here, but George Martin wasn’t too happy with the drummers before me, shall we say. So when I was coming down, he didn’t know anything about me. He wanted to play it safe, and he had Andy White ready for it. I always said, ‘Oh, you can’t do Beatles music.’ Well, why not? And as Mark was saying, ‘You were one of them, you know.’”

Despite Starr’s icon status, radio play is no guarantee, a fact Zieman acknowledges. “I think it’s safe to say that it’s going to be a real challenge for us to get exposure at radio, but we feel the music will speak for itself,” he says. “We’ll be aggressively attacking radio, but there will be several other things we do that will create awareness to back up our promotional assault.”

Certain to draw media attention is the taping of the video for “La De Da,” which will be shot partially on Sunday (11) at New York’s Shea Stadium, site of the Beatles’ groundbreaking U.S. date in 1966. “It will be a Beatles’ return to Shea Stadium,” says Zieman. “Ringo’s going to the stadium and will lead the audience in a verse of ‘La De Da.’”

The marketing plans also include a slate of high-profile TV appearances by Starr the week of the album’s release, including slots on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” “The View,” and “Live With Regis & Kathie Lee.”

Other release-week activities include a syndicated radio special June 15 to world-premiere the album. The special will include interviews with Starr and album guests. “The great thing about marketing Ringo is you get to try to tap into the incredible Beatles fan base, which is one of the largest fan bases there is,” says Zieman. “They’re all over the Web and meeting on a regular basis.”

To that end, Starr will hold a chat on America Online the week of release, with one chat participant winning a trip to see Starr in concert in London with the All-Starrs.

More specifically, Mercury is working with the organizers of Beatlefest to coordinate a mailing to recent convention attendees. The postcard mailing will offer a deal whereby fans who preorder the album will receive a 7-inch single of “La De Da” backed with a non-album track.

Additionally, Mercury is tying in with the British Rock Symphony tour, a summer outing that will feature an orchestra and rock band doing Beatles, Who, and other Brit-rock material. “We’ll have displays for Ringo’s album on site because they’re doing Beatles music and because Ringo’s son [Zak Starkey] is in the band,” says Zieman. “Many of the people interested in Ringo will go to that tour.”

Mercury is also offering a special deal through Best Buy. Customers who preorder “Vertical Man” from the consumer electronics chain will get a three-song CD with tracks not on the album.

A limited-edition Digipak, with a run of at least 100,000 units, will be available to all retailers, along with the jewel-box release: “Ringo had a lot of input in the Digipak,” says Zieman. “It has some additional artwork and a die-cut design.” The limited edition will be the same price as the regular CD.

Starr’s sheer affability can also help entice music consumers, says John Artale, buyer for Carnegie, Inc., a National Record Mart. “He always was the Sunny Bono of the Beatles; everybody likes him,” says Artale. “It sounds like something that should be pretty easy to market, and people are very aware of him because he’s been doing the shed tours [with the All-Starrs]. I think people that like music like him.”

Indeed, Ringo’s All-Starrs (with Jack Bruce, Peter Frampton, Procul Harum’s Gary Brooker, Bad Company’s Simon Kirke, and Mark Rivera, saxophonist for Billy Joel) will be touring Europe and Russia this summer. As with All-Starrs lineups in the past, each artist, backed by the others, takes turns as the front man, performing his or his group’s greatest hits.

However, other than a few select appearances, including Tuesday (12) at New York’s Bottom Line and a Wednesday (13) taping for VH1’s “Storytellers,” Starr will not be touring solely to promote “Vertical Man.”

“I don’t really ever want to do the two hours where it’s just me,” says Starr. “I like the mixture of the All-Starrs because it’s so much fun. I get down in front and do the entertaining thing, and then I’m back behind the drums, and it can’t be bad backing Jack Bruce and Peter Frampton and having all the fun while they take the weight.”

### Time Out New York

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Artists & Music

GMA Week Festivities Take Wing Despite Nashville Tornado

Though a tornado ripped through downtown Nashville just three days prior to the start of the convention, the Gospel Music Assn.'s GMA Week went ahead as scheduled April 19-23. Seminars, showcases, award presentations, and other festivities kept the more than 1,900 paid registrants busy. The week was capped by the 29th annual Dove Awards at the Nashville Arena.


During GMA Week, Phil Vischer, president/CEO of Big Idea Entertainment (better known to "Veggie Tales" fans as the voice of Bob the Tomato) announced that the popular children's series would be introducing a new character, Madame Blueberry. Vischer and company won the Grady Nut Humor Award during GMA Week's opening ceremonies and netted the Dove for longform music video for "A Very Silly Sing-A-Long." Pictured, from left, are Gaylord Entertainment CEO Terry London; Vischer; Vischer's wife, songwriter/creative consultant Lisa Vischer (the voice of the character Junior Asparagus); and Squint Entertainment president Steve Taylor.

Sparrow labelmates Steven Curtis Chapman, right, and Andy Griffith chat prior to appearing on TNN's "Crook & Chase" show to promote the Dove Awards. Chapman became the evening's most-lauded winner with five awards.

Word rock group Petra took home the Dove for praise and worship album for "Petra Praise: We Need Jesus," Pictured, from left, are band members Louie Weaver, Kevin Brandow, Pete Orta, Lonnie Chapin, and John Schlitt.

Southern gospel trio the Martins hosted the GMA's annual songwriter showcase during GMA Week, which featured performances by Steven Curtis Chapman, the Steeles, and Michael W. Smith. Later in the week, at the Dove Awards, the Martins made history with their third consecutive Dove in the Southern gospel album of the year category for "Light Of The World." Pictured, from left, are the Martins' Judy Martin Hess and Jonathan Martin, Smith, and the Martins' Joyce Martin McCollough.

The GMA awarded Billboard magazine the Mainstream Contribution to Gospel Music Award. Billboard's Wade Jessen, country and contemporary Christian chart director, and Deborah Evans Price, Christian and country associate editor, accepted the honor during the convention's opening ceremonies. Pictured, from left, are Roland Lundy, president of Word and chairman of the GMA's board of directors; Jessen; Price; and Frank Breeden, president of the GMA.

In addition to honoring Dove-nominated songwriters Steven Curtis Chapman, Kathy Troccoli, and Toby McKeehan, BMI gave certificates of recognition to industry veterans Charlie Daniels and the Florida Boys' Les Beasley, president of the National Quartet Convention, at an awards dinner held at BMI's Music Row offices during GMA Week. Daniels was recognized for his "contributions to the fields of Southern rock, blues, country, and gospel music." Beasley was honored for his "contributions to the National Quartet Convention and preserving and enhancing Southern gospel music." Pictured, from left, are Beasley, BMI president/CEO Frances Preston, Daniels, and BMI's Roger Sovine and Thomas Cain.

Dove Awards co-host John Tesh greets fellow co-host Naomi Judd. Tesh has signed a deal with Word Entertainment to take him into the Christian music marketplace.

Veteran songwriter Dottie Rambo, left, shares the stage with Whitney Houston as she accepts the Dove Award for traditional gospel recorded song for Rambo's classic "I Go To The Rock." They are pictured with Andral Crouch, right, who won in the contemporary gospel album category for "Fray."
R&B MUSIC

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The Heatseekers chart lists the best-selling titles by new and developing artists, defined as those who have never appeared in the top 100 of the Billboard 200 chart. When an album reaches this level, the album and the artist's subsequent albums are generally ineligible to appear on the chart. Note: indicators such as * are available under “#” albums with the greatest sales gains. © 1998, Billboard/RP Communications.


Dressed To Kill. Josh Rouse's intelligent, emotionally charged debut album, "Dressed Up Like Nebraska," bowed on Slow River/Pysiodus via April 28. Rouse returns from Europe, where he is opening for Richard Davies, and is slated to play May 29 and June 11 in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, the first single, "Late Night Conversation," is airing on public stations KGRW and WXPN Philadelphia.

McMahon, an original lead soloist from “Riverdance,” is performing the show at the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood through May 17. Paradigm will be focusing on each market that the classically trained singer/harpist visits as the "Riverdance" troupe moves across the country.

Possessed: Following up their Loosegroove debut, "Loaded," the Hi-Fi Killers tweak their experimental old-school funk/hip-hop vibe on the full-length "Possession," due June 9. The album, which features vocal contributions from such artists as Lonnie Marshall, Tobias Flowers, and Reggie Watts, also re-employs renowned Muscle Shouts Horns member and session player Jim Horn—the father of Hi-Fi Killer Johnny "Guitar" Horn—on sax and flute.

Possession is being released as a limited-edition double-album including a bonus CD of instrumental cuts and outtakes from earlier sessions.

I'M A SLUT: Slipknot/Mercury is hoping to break a furious, thrashing cover of Berlin's "Sex (I'm A ...)" by industrial rock act the Roshack Test. So far, the Seattle-based group's track is getting spins at such mainstream rock stations as WREZ Chicago, WLZT Milwaukee, and KXTE Las Vegas.

Double Threat: Windham Hill signed smooth jazz duo the Braxton Brothers—comprising twins Nelson and Wayne—re-released their debut album, "Steppin', Out," April 7. The album, which was originally issued by Kokoell Records, spawned the successful AC song "When Love Comes Around." This new version adds two new tunes, "In the Spring" and "Happy Again."

The Braxtons also appear on Windham Hill's "Melrose Place Jazz" album, which bowed early this year with such artists as Earl Klugh and Elita James.

Songbird: "Just What You Want," the debut album from Eboni Foster—first artist on Nightbird Records—was released by Nightbird/MCA April 28. Foster, formerly of the female rap trio Nutty'N' Nice, performs May 24 in New Orleans, followed by appearances May 27 in Phoenix and May 28 in Orlando, Fla. A clip for her first single, "Crazy For You," is being aired on the Box.

ROADWORK: Melbourne, Australia-based Sherry Rich will be backed by Wilco members James Stirrat, Tim Coomer, and Jay Ben nett, who also played on her Rubber Records release "Sherry Rich & Courtesy Move," when she begins U.S. dates Thursday (14) in New York and Saturday (16) in Nashville. Also en route from Down Under is Australian Record Industry Assn.-winning Warner Bros. act the Super-


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SOUL ASYLUM
Candy From A Stranger
PRODUCER: Brett Knibbe
Columbia Columbia 6716
The follow-up to its timeless 1990 opus, "Let Your Dim Light Shine," which fell short of its potential by "only" going platinum-Soul Asylums'"Candy From A Stranger" will hit the band's fans where they live possibly inspiring new horizons for the Minneapolis quartet. From the energetic first single, "I Will Still Be Laughing," and the similarly styled "Creatures Of Habit" to the retro-pop of "No More Waiting," the album benefits from the presence of the Rolling Blackouts. Showcasing its sound-alike "Impala," the glittery, indeed admirably produced album, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," the band's songs seem to be inspired by the Beatles, with a modern twist.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Largo
PRODUCER: Rick Riechert, Rob Hyman
Blue Griffin/Mercury 3136 5877
Concepted by producer-label-entrepreneur Rick Riechert and Hooters co-founder Rob Hyman, "Largo" is a salute to Czech composer Antonin Dvorak, who journeyed to New York in 1892 to teach music theory and was so inspired by the musical metropolis he found there that he composed his famous Ninth Symphony, "From the New World," based on American folk themes. This album consists of re-interpretations of Dvorak's "Largo" theme by the likes of the Chieftains, Hyman, and Garth Hudson, as well as new, Dvorak-inspired songs penned by Hyman, collaborators, Howard Donaldson, and others and performed by an eclectic cast including Cyndi Lauper, Joan Osborne, Carrie Xiong, Tal M. Ahla, Willie Nile, and David Forman. Bottom line: the album offers some tasty music with plenty of potential for tripe, A, and pop airplay, including the anthem "Hand In Mine," sung by Osborne and Hyman; Mahalia's "Freedom Rider," the Bergen "Distant Express;" and King's touching "An Uncommon Love," also sung by Osborne. A wonderful meeting of musical minds.

SHORT, Chico DeBarge, and Adina Howard are blasting—but also an underdeveloped knack for sequencing. Suity ballads are lapped over hard-core tracks, and high-energy pop songs are interspersed with grimy mid-tempo tracks. And that's just to mention the clear misses-tracks from MC Lyte, Heavy D, Warren G, and Nate Dogg. Singularly, most of the single will bang at radio, but collectively, the project lacks focus. One can only hope the movie hangs together better.

LEAH RIMES
Sittin' On Top Of The World
PRODUCER: William J. Crooms
Curb 79795
With this release, which is all over the chart, Leah Rimes continues to build on her reputation for much-needed quality and presence she once had. "My world is turning," she says, "and it's a wonderful, wonderful world." The album includes the much unfocused songs so far, and that seems to sum up her apparent desire to try to keep a country audience happy while achieving pop success. Yes, she has one of the finest natural voices in recent history and no, she is not taking advantage of that fact. Going from "The Star-Spangled Banner" to "I'll Stand By My Man," it's no single on the last album to covering Prince's "Purple Rain" here does not seem to represent musical virtuosity as much as musical confusion.

MARISELLA
Vanilla
PRODUCER: Enrique Iglesias
Arista/EMI 57915
"Loco," a soothing take on Paty Cline's evergreen "Crazy," leads off a pleasant, pop-crossover disc that is one of the most commercially viable albums cut in years by smoky-voiced diva Marisela. Among the other potent radio prospects on this romantic package are sugary crumbs "Vuelve," shuffling ranchera entry "Vete Con Dios," and aching love song "Fácil Es Perdonar."
**R&B**

**ARETHA FRANKLIN** Here We Go Again (2:30)

**PRODUCERS:** Jeannine Dops, Manuel Sanch

**WRITERS:** Aretha Franklin, T. Burton, W. Garfield, D. Ramos, M. Melovin

**PUBLISHERS:** S.R.K./GIBMrs (ASCAP), Elektra-Applique Communications

**Prefix:** Listen in Music/WARC, ASCAP, Crown Tower/Smitty

**SonicSound/Sony Songs, BMI**

Although popsters are still banking in the glow of "A Rose Is Still A Rose," R&B talent, it seems, prefers to project another genre from Last Supper's current epoch. This time, she teams up with Jermaine Dupri and Manuel Sanch for a soul-shaking' chick cruiser that keeps her on the tip of what is hip, while also keeping it marginally more for older listeners in production frills. Popped by a chorus that simply won't quit, "Here We Go Again" actually has the muscle to franken's biggest multi-format single in ages. Hope you're in Lisbon, however, to serve her core audience at 1R&B radio first.

**COUNTRY**

**OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN Iを中心に恋愛 (3:13)

**PRODUCERS:** David Foster, Tony Brown

**WRITERS:** Michael Masser, Michelle de Valade

**PUBLISHERS:** Irving/ferry Barry, International/Weaksong, CMC 7025 (us format)

Rerecording a classic ricky business, especially when the artist doing the cover isGet it on a major hit single. However, in re-cutting "I Honestly Love You" for her new album Back With A Heart," Newton-John tackles the head-lean and wins. As charming as the original was, on this take, Newton-John turns the song into a sultry, belting Does a love song with a woman who has experienced life and fully conveys the depth of emotion in the lyrics. Newton-John's abandonment of the simple pop tunes of the past, and this record, seems to have gone over the head of background, although the recent release of "100% She" has been a hit with the target audience.

**MARTINA MCBRIDE Happy Girl (1:39)

**PRODUCERS:** Martina McBride, Paul Worley

**WRITERS:** Robert Reynolds, Martina McBride

**PUBLISHERS:** Arrows/Amoca/ASCAP, Sony Songs, ASCAP RIAA 60595

In the '70s Dora Hartke offers the chart with "The Happiest Girl In The Whole Of Our Land," her debut single. Her new record`s sound produced by the Eagles, Jackson Browne, and the like with ajangent girl. Her new single, "Happy Girl," is a soulful that keeps the music timely. This song is an engaging, story-teller's tale of singing, which allows for a lot of potential for those who make the most of that opportunity on "Black Valentine," which manages to tap into the eternal, time-honored tradition of contemporary and competitive at both rock and top 40 radio. This hit, brown-eyed, Ok, OK, it's time to introduce the fine forthcoming album "California."

**RICKY MARTIN** Everybody Loves A Good Comeback (3:50)

**PRODUCERS:** M. Delegado, V. Vidal

**WRITERS:** M. Delegado, V. Vidal

**PUBLISHERS:** EMI/Prado/Usa, Sony Songs, ASCAP

**Prefix:** Pop/Rock/ASCAP

After a bit of deja vu to health problems, Ricky's back in business with a record that is country to the core. He's got the voice to keep pace with the sweeping steel and the big country guitars, and it's a bit of a heartbreak to the audience, often out of the well-written lyric. It's great to hear the continued hitmaker Kenny as co-producer with John Guess. Kenny knows how to deliver a solid country smash (his credits include Roger Miller, Johnny Rodgers, the Statler Brothers, and Reba McEntire), and he and Guess have cut one of the best records Stone has delivered since "Pine Box."

**CHRISTOPHER CROSS Walkin' On A Dream (4:42)

**PRODUCERS:** Christopher Cross, Rob Prince, Steve Tisch

**WRITERS:** C. Cross, R. Meyer

**PUBLISHERS:** Christopher Cross/Songs/Meekst, BMI

Christopher Cross still has that crystalline tenor voice that made "L-O-V-E hits like "Sailing" so indelibly imprinted on our memory. This single dance has laid back, nifty layered chic of the new American popular music. The funk-funk-beat is embellished with pillowy keyboards, light acoustic guitar, strumming, and harmonies tones that are worthy of Steve Wonder.

**KENNETH LOGGINS Just Breathe (4:42)

**PRODUCERS:** Kenneth Loggins

**WRITERS:** Kennedy Loggins

**PUBLISHERS:** Green/Park/Feek, ASCAP

Loggins love this trendy tune from "The Unimaginable Life!" and remains a testament to the melody of the balloons, wallop, pop musical bed. The fax-funk-beat is embellished with pillowy keyboards, light acoustic guitar, strumming, and harmonies tones. The words are downright poetic, and are sure to appeal to the audience at any station this fine recording graces.

**SCOTT THOMAS** Black Valentine (2:54)

**PRODUCERS:** Tom W. Evans

**WRITERS:** Scott Thomas, Andrew Williams

**PUBLISHERS:** hit the mark on a jeep dia-in-training that having the chance to work under the mentoring guidance of Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliot. After all, she's got industry juice and songwriting chops that leaves sample-happy rappers a long way behind. She has that sort of unsimilarly solid slice of the soundtrack to "Can't Hardly Wait." She has a memorable style that will draw friendly commentary to her music. Her lyrics are so smooth, so versatile, so easy to get into. That's a real treat for her fans.

With all the world happily lost in '70s and '80s nostalgia, it makes perfect sense that someone would begin mincing the various dominant sounds of those eras and more than covers the sphere of hits. Enter Thomas and company, who conjure up pleasant memories of the hits of the Black Eyed Peas and Black Eyed. The rock sound populated by the Eagles, Jackson Browne, and the like with a jangletastic girl. Her new single, "Happy Girl," shows how the right mix of those erasFar in the chart with "The Happiest Girl In The Whole Of Our Land," her debut single. Her new single, "Happy Girl," is a soulful pop tune that keeps the music timely. This song is an engaging, story-teller's tale of singing, which allows for a lot of potential for those who make the most of that opportunity on "Black Valentine," which manages to tap into the eternal, time-honored tradition of contemporary and competitive at both rock and top 40 radio. This hit, brown-eyed, Ok, OK, it's time to introduce the fine forthcoming album "California."
The Beatles' first U.S. release, "Please Please Me," was followed by "From Me to You" and "Thank You, Girl". These songs, along with "Love Me Do" and "I Saw Her Standing There", were key in establishing the Beatles as a force in the music industry. Their music was characterized by its catchy melodies, innovative harmonies, and relatable lyrics, which helped them to connect with a wide audience. The Beatles' impact on music cannot be overstated, and they continue to influence musicians and fans alike today.
R&B

ARTISTS & MUSIC

Regina Belle Displays Diva Diversity On New MCA Set

BY MICHAEL PACELLA

Since making her debut as a solo artist in 1987 with the album "All By Myself," Grammy winner Regina Belle has steadily crafted a style that merges the old school with the new. Over the years, Belle's success was spoiled by her position in the spotlight as a song stylist, intertwining a soulful spirit, heartfelt emotion, and technical proficiency. Yet somewhere along the way her musical vision, as well as her image, got slightly altered. With the June release of "Believe In Me," her fifth album and her first for MCA Records—Belle is poised for a dynamic return to form.

"It feels so good to be making the kind of music I truly want to make," she says. "I am all about variety, which is something my first two albums really explored. By the third album, I was getting more dictation from my label in terms of the direction I should go. And quite honestly, I'm not the kind of artist who can work that way. I know where I can go and where I fit in, more so than anybody else.

"Even at a young age, I was a seasoned singer," she adds. "So I could fit into many musical genres. I realized that we just have to find a way where it works for me and my audience. And I don't think that was a formula my former label was using." During her tenure at Columbia, Belle says, she was pigeonholed as an AC artist. At MCA, "the atmosphere is quite different. In fact, the label—whose diva roster includes Patti LaBelle, Gladys Knight, Mary J. Blige, and Chanté Moore—left the singer alone in the studio. "They let Regina be Regina," says Belle. "I exercised everything about myself. I was able to create things that I hadn't been able to create in such a long time."

At press time, a Columbia spokesperson was unavailable for comment.

On past recordings, Belle worked with such name producers as Nick Martinelli, Michael J. Powell, Narada Michael Walden, and Walter Afanasieff. For "Believe In Me," she enlisted such fresh faces as her brother Bernard Belle ("I Got U"); Martinelli produced "Colored Charley" ("I've Had Enough") and "Never Should Have Let You Go"); and Erick "Smooth" Hicks, who produced eight songs on the album, including the upbeat first single, "Don't Let Go," one of four songs for which Belle penned the lyrics.

"While I have worked with some great producers in the past, Erik let me create on my own and do things myself," Belle says. "Honestly, it took a lot for him to trust me, because he didn't know anything about my writing ability. I feel great about being able to write with somebody who has a formula for what I've always wanted to do but (was) never given the chance. This sure feels good."

Although not released commercially as a single, "Don't Let Go" was serviced to radio April 27 and received early play from WILD Boston, Houston's KMJQ, KJMS Memphis, and WZHT Montgomery, Ala.

(Continued on page 40)

R&B

ARTISTS & MUSIC

Retailers, Label Executives Sound Off On Absence Of Remixes At Stores

BY TRACY E. HOPKINS

Amidst capitalizing on the R&B and pop chart success of teen recording artists such as Usher, Brandy, and Monica, Lil' Man Records will release "Home" by 14-year-old David Miller on April 13.

The album's first single, "Hard To Handle," which samples the memorable piano hook from the Juice Crew hit "In the Mix," was released as a promotional 12-inch April 13. Lil' Man's West Coast marketing manager, Tammie Holt, says that the label will not commercially release "Hard To Handle." But, Holt says, street teams have distributed copies of the 12-inch promo to small retail chain buyers, club DJs, and mix show hosts.

The singer is the second protégé of producer-songwriter Anthony "Lil' Man" Carter. The first artist launched by the 3-year-old label, which is a co-venture with Interscope and is distributed by Universal, Carter is billing by his musical mentor as the next Michael Jackson. However, the New Haven, Conn., Cooperative Arts High School sophomore says he's just "a normal teenager." In addition to singing, Miller is studying dance and plans to study photography in college.

"A lot of people say I'm a 'good boy,'" he says, "but I like chilling with my friends and playing video games. We did a lot of work on the album over the summer, and that was hard because people were outside having picnics, but I couldn't go," says Miller.

The singer was brought to the attention of R&B in 1996 when one of his uncles, a member of the R&B group Shariyari, played the demo tape. Riley was said to have exclaimed, "Oh my God! Listen to this kid."

The album was already put together because David had been signed to MCA Records but was dropped. What a big mistake," says Riley, who describes Miller's sound as "soothed bubble-gum music," adding, "He has a unique voice that will appeal to kids, and he knows how to use and control his voice."

When Riley invited Miller to his Virginia Beach, Va., home for Thanksgiving dinner that year, he says he was surprised by the young performer's wisdom.

"David doesn't talk much. He's like Michael Jackson. Everything happens on the stage," the 15-year-old music veteran says.

Miller had delivered a complete album to MCA, and Riley is now reworking that project. Riley paired Miller with a vocal coach, reduced the number of samples used, wrote several original tracks, and added a cover of Jackson's "Music And Me." A video clip for "Hard To Handle" is set for release.

Although a number of remixes exist for singles such as "Home," and a previous album, "Keep It Movin'," the label has refused to release any of the tracks commercially as a single.

"When consumers can't find a remix at retail, "it makes them very upset," he said. White, who also owns Underworld Records & Tapes in Compton, said that often his customers don't want to buy the album, just the remix. "In order to make remixes work, [the label] should make sure that the remix that goes to radio is pressed in advance, so it can be sold," he said.

"While there is no question that remixes still serve as a powerful promotional tool in certain genres, commercial singles are becoming scarcer, while the number of remixes for a given song has steadily increased. By servicing multiple mixes to R&B, top 40, rock, and country, labels hope to snare airplay in as many formats as possible."

Another debate ensued later that afternoon at the "Retail Summit II." The three-part panel included such heavyweights as Sony Music Distribution chairman Danny Yarbrough, EMI Music distribution president Richard Rottell, and MCA chairman/COO Dave Mount. Among the topics discussed at the summit was the problem of illegal mix tapes.

Although it's an issue that has often been blamed completely on the entrepreneurial efforts of hip-hop DJs, Yarbrough said that mix tapes were initially done in "good faith to create a demand for product. The problem comes with the illegal sale and duplication. But the way to maintain the benefits is...to be more discriminating...in...telling illegal mix tape DJs to the attention of the [Recording Industry Assn. of America] for enforcement."

As a solution to help eliminate airplay of illegal remix albums, Yarbrough, an entertainment lawyer who was in the audience, suggested putting pressure on radio DJs to play only the label-sanctioned versions.

However, some label executives who weren't on the panel don't necessarily agree with the opinion of the smaller retailers, who are the most vocal about the remix issue.

Lionel Ridenhour, senior VP of black music at Arista (U.S.), says that the label and its imprints plan the release of mixes carefully. He says that one of the issues to be understood is that additional remixes are often created after a commercial single's release. While the commercial single may include some mixes, subsequent remixes often occur too late in the life of a single to warrant a second release. "[Remixes] are done at a point where there is already commercial product out," Ridenhour says. "People are looking at the initial product and don't see the remix and assume it's not out."

Marc Offenberg, VP of sales at Universal Records (U.S.), says there is no way of alerting the consumer to the fact that the remix they hear on the radio isn't going to be on the album.

Six weeks ago, Offenberg says, the label decided to add the remix of Chico DeBarge's "No Guarantee," which features Joe, to future copies of DeBarge's album "Long Time No See." "But it's impossible to put a remix from every single on an album," he says. "The culture of a record label is different from retail. Retail wants to feed the consumers' hopes and desires, but we at the labels want the music as accessible as possible to radio programmers. We believe the more airplay we get, the more records we'll sell."

Offenberg says the implication from retailers is that record companies are purposely trying to "screw" consumers. However, he contends that consumers who hear a remix and buy an album aren't disappointed when a remixed version of the single isn't included on the album.

"We're not saying, 'Let's put out a record that people can't buy,'" Offenberg says. "We don't think like that."

He says that A&R executives often turn to remixes as a means to breathe new life into a record that may have only been mildly received at radio.

"It's a dichotomy between retail and the labels," Offenberg says. "The happy medium would be for the label to release it commercially, but that's not going to happen. The real solution, he suggests, is for retail to realize that remixes are part of a marketing plan, not a "be-all, end-all."

(Continued on page 40)
**High Hot Singles**

**Battle Anybody?** Hip-hop has always had one foot grounded in competition—or as it's called in the genre—battle. Whether it's the two DJs showcasing the creativity of their scratches or cut selections, an MC lyrically dismantling an opponent with ill-will and metaphorical or verbal potshots, a graffiti artist tagging another's work, or a break-dance competitor battling another小麦 with cutting-edge choreography or new techniques, battling has always been the cornerstone of keeping one's skills up to par and breaking new ground.

So it's not really a big deal that a battle has arisen between Canibus (Universal) and LL Cool J (Def Jam). It has just been one of two forms of battle that the lyrical and physical problems between 2Pac and the Notorious B.I.G. and the larger East Coast/West Coast rap rivalry.

"There's a lot of hype surrounding this [battle] right now," says Tabari, product manager at Universal Records. "But we don't want to turn this into something we see shit, because it's not necessary. Everybody involved thinks this is a healthy thing for hip-hop, and we want to keep it at stake. The situation has opened yet another pathway for hip-hop to return to its roots, and folks are excited about it. At the same time, the artists are being careful not to let the situation be manipulated into a negative force like that of the lyrical and physical problems between 2Pac and the Notorious B.I.G. and the larger East Coast/West Coast rap rivalry.

Breathing since late 1997, the battle between the two MCs began over a lyrical misunderstanding during the recording of LL's single "4,3,2,1," on which Canibus, Redman, Method Man, DMX, and Master P were featured. As a result of the misunderstanding, LL's verse on the single collapsed the lesser-known artist's path to recognition.

In early '98, Canibus released "Second Round K.O. as an answer to "4,3,2,1." It was serviced to radio the week of March 23, to video outlets the second week of April, and to retail during April 13. The track was produced by Wyclef Jean, who manages Canibus, and features boxing champ Mike Tyson as his trainer. "Canibus recorded the track, not to gain recognition or fan the flames of competition, but for themselves," he says.

"He just felt he had something to get off his chest, not for competition," Tyson says. The battle was taken up another notch when Def Jam serviced LL's "The Ripper Strikes Back" to radio April 29.

"LL said he wasn't going to do [an answer record]," says Lyor Cohen, president/CEO of Def Jam. "But then we got a call from [Canibus'] lawyer on Thursday [before the radio release date of 'Ripper'] saying he did one.

The label won't be releasing the single commercially, but it will be included on the first volume of Def Jam's limited-edition collector's CD set, as part of the label's forthcoming "Survival Of The Illist" bodybuilding camp. The discs will be packaged with Def Jam's debut set, "It's Dark And Hell Is Hot," due May 19. Def Jam execs say word of the single's release has doubled pre-orders of DMX's album from 400,000 to 800,000 units.

"[LL] doesn't want this to go any further than it already has," says Cohen. Tabari says he is unsure exactly what plans Canibus has (he is in Europe as part of Def Jam's tour), but that he would like both artists to discuss any outstanding issues.

"Canibus doesn't want to get pigeonholed as just the kid who went up against LL," Tabari says. "It's a dope MC, and he wants to move on. The next single is going to be 'How Come,' which is on the 'Bulworth' soundtrack, and that is more of what he is about. Everybody knows he is the battle cat, but he is really a mathematical, scientific rapper.

Canibus' upcoming album, which is being recorded on the road, is slated for release in July and is tentatively titled "Lyrical Warfare."

Many are hoping to bring the battle to the studio or at least pay-per-view. Air personalities at WQHT-FM New York have expressed their desire to give both artists an opportunity to battle live at the station's Summer Jam concert in June. But no commitments have been made. According to Cohen, the only scheduled live performance of LL's single will be at the Ebanzer Holyfield/Henry Akinwande fight, slated for June 6 at Madison Square Garden in New York.

**Strictly For The Ladies:** Internet radio show 88hip-hop.com will be going "live" with the upcoming August premiere of Blaze magazine. Helmed by Jesse Washington, Vibe magazine's former managing editor, the publication will focus on the music genre, including artist interviews ("Sirens: Females On The Forefront"), executive interviews (" Pillar Priest: Women At Work"), and a final roundtable segment discussing the various issues women in the industry face ("Nashen [pronounced nation]: Focused Women Building"). The show was created by DJ Mecca, who spins on 88hip-hop.com weekdays at 1 p.m. Eastern time, and on Sunday mornings from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. EST (9-11 p.m. CT). Mecca co-hosts the program with Zenobia Simmons, publicist at Penalty Records.

"When I told people about the show, they said it wouldn't last beyond four shows because they only know about four female MC's," says Mecca. "But I explain that we're going to feature on our show like Kim and Queen Pen, but also independently signed artists like Heather B and What From Natural Resource. We [also] decided not to talk just about the artists, but the women who are the driers, the go-getters, in their careers, from the stylists to the publicist to the receptionist to the street-team recruiter.

"We want to let people know that women do everything in the industry," says Simmons. [We're] not just video dancers. We want to give goals to little girls who might want to get into the industry."

"And at the end of the show, we're going to talk about love like sex is the business, racism, motherhood—all kinds of stuff related to hip-hop," says Mecca. "I talk to all these women during the day, and we all have the same issues, and I'm hoping that ["Nashen"] will bring about some resolutions."

Mecca hopes that Queendom will eventually be extended to a two-hour program, as 88hip-hop.com was. "I know we are going to run out of time with the discussions," Mecca says. "So I am hoping that [parent network pseau-do.com] will see the need for our show to be extended." If so, Mecca plans to expand the show to include b-girls and female graffiti artists.

The show is produced by Monica Allen, and the chat discussions are handled by Gabriela. They are holding auditions for female DJs for the show. For information, call 212-925-7900, extension 122.

**Strictly For The Gents:** Vibe Ventures is honing its cover story on the hip-hop with the upcoming August premiere of Blaze magazine. Helmed by Jesse Washington, Vibe magazine's former managing editor, the publication will focus on the music genre, including artist interviews ("Sirens: Females On The Forefront"), executive interviews ("Pillar Priest: Women At Work"), and a final roundtable segment discussing the various
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*Albums with the greatest sales this week. Recording Industry from America (RIAA) certification for shipment of 500,000 albums unit. A RIAA certification for shipment of 1 million units, with multipliances titles indicated by a numeral following the symbol. For boxed sets, and double albums with a running title that exceeds two hours, the RIAA multiples shipments by the number of tracks and/or tapes. * Asterisk indicates LP is available. Most tape prices, and CD prices for BHM and V2K titles, are suggested list. Tape and CD prices marked CO, and other CO, prices are equivalent, while the projected wholesale prices. Giant Guide shows chart sargent's unit and increase. Presssetter indicates highest percentage growth. Beadakun Impact shows albums removed from Hotillas R&B week. **indicates past or present Heatseeker title. © 1998, Billboard/BP Communications, and Soundscan, Inc.*
One self-confessed Belle fan, Vivian, has always been a music lover: "R&B is the soul of the music industry, and it's something that will always be a part of me." She is a regular at the local R&B club, The Uptown, and is known for her extensive knowledge of R&B music. She enjoys the vibrant dance floor and the friendly atmosphere.

Belle's music career took off in the mid-1990s, when her debut album, "The Best Of Me," was released. The album featured hits such as "Show Me The Way," "Feel Good," and "Reachin' Back," and quickly garnered her a loyal fan base. She followed up with several successful albums, including "Blue Belle" and "The Belle Experience," which continued to showcase her powerful vocal abilities and her ability to connect with her audience.

Belle's music is characterized by its emotional depth and her ability to convey powerful messages through her songs. She is known for her innovative and dynamic performances, which often feature elements of R&B, soul, and funk. Her music has been praised for its authenticity and her ability to bring joy and comfort to her fans.

Belle's career has been marked by several milestones. She has won numerous awards, including Grammys, NAACP Image Awards, and BET Awards, and has collaborated with some of the biggest names in the music industry. She has also released several R&B singles, including "It's All About Me," which was a huge hit and helped solidify her place in the music industry.

In addition to her music career, Belle is also known for her philanthropic efforts. She has been involved with several charity organizations and has used her music to raise awareness for important issues, such as domestic violence and education.

Belle's music continues to inspire and entertain fans around the world. Her unique sound and powerful performances have made her one of the most beloved R&B artists of her generation. She remains a trailblazer in the music industry, and her impact will continue to be felt for years to come.
### Billboard Hot R&B Airplay

**MAY 16, 1998**

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**R&B Singles A-Z**

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**About Billboard**

Billboard is a weekly magazine and website for the music industry. It is one of the most influential music-orientation media in the United States. Each week, Billboard publishes a list of the top-performing songs and albums in the United States, compiled from data collected by Nielsen SoundScan. The lists are based on sales, streaming, and consumption data from a variety of sources, including both physical and digital sales, radio airplay, and online music streaming. The magazine was founded in 1894 and is published by Billboard Media LLC, a division of McClatchy. The magazine covers the music, television, and digital media industries and is widely read by music industry professionals, fans, and the general public.
It was all about the extra little gut-tightened push Boy George gave the words “I’ve the strangest void for you” as he worked his way through an exceptional, high-octane emotional performance of the Culture Club classic “Victims.”

In those fleeting seconds, the eyes of the audience at the Hollywood Starburst—gathered at the Sony Music Studios in New York appeared to glaze over with private memories triggered by George’s soulful, seem-it-delivery. This was no longer a frivolous foray into ’80s nostalgia. It was validation of music that may have been underestimated the first time around.

After all, who would predict that Culture Club—the act that inflected the maddeningly “Karma Chameleon” upon the world—would still pack such a wallop after all these years? Certainly not even the band members, if their occasionally surprised reaction to the audience’s glee during a recent taping of VH1’s “Storytellers” was an accurate indication.

Swedish Dance Acts Honored

BY KAI R. LOFTUS

STOCKHOLM—Swedish techno duo Antiloop was the big winner at the Swedish Dance Music Awards, held at the Barnhuset’s annual Big Ball dance confab.

The Stockholm/PolyGram act earned four nods in the competition for house/tech act, dance album (for their album, the Electric Circus’ subsidiary Antiloop Records, and dance single (for “In My Mind”).

Since its domestic release in March 1997, “In My Mind” has scored a slew of turntable action in territories throughout Europe. The act has yet to seek a U.S. label release, though a PolyGram-associated label is likely to issue the project later this year. Antiloop will perform July 11 at the Love Parade in Berlin.

Other key winners included Sash!, who won for best international dance act; Eric Gadd, who took home best hip-hop/R&B artist honors; the C&N Project, in the best remix category for “Burnin’”; and Deniz Pepp, as best producer. The Swedish Dance Music Awards are based on nominations and votes from 350 DJs from across the Nordic region. E-Type, a labelmate of Antiloop at Stockholm Records, says that the awards “are very important to me and to other awards, because they are voted by DJs who come direct off the dancefloor, and it makes it all much fresher.”

The event took place April 27-29 on board Silja Line’s Symphony cruise ship sailing between Stockholm and Helsinki. It was founded by Dee Jay Promotions, which is also responsible for compiling the Scandinavian, Norwegian, and Finnish dance charts (based on weekly playlists from its member DJs). Denmark will be fully covered by Dee Jay Promotions when a Danish office opens next year, moving toward the company’s ambition of a truly Scandinavian dance chart.

Dee Jay Promotions founder and managing director Rolf Bjorndal de Souza, who was given a special dance industry media award at the ceremony, says, “It’s a sign of confidence that all major record companies are willing to spend three working days of a week on this event.”

Singer Ultra Naté underscored the differences in the dance music markets in Scandinavia and the rest of the world by saying, “One significant difference is that you can actually sell records in the U.S. market, the odds are really against you for making it in a big way, because the industry doesn’t support dance music. It’s a lot more possible here for an artist to really make a career out of what they do. If you’re trying to make a living, you have to go beyond just doing a track, sell a couple of thousand copies, and do a couple of shows.”

Actors who performed live at Big Bang included Naté, 666, Boris D’Gogosch, Alexia, 2 Unlimited, Sweet Box, Sonic Dream, and Basic Element.

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Additionally, Antiloop’s self-titled debut album has been nominated for a Swedish Dance Music Award in the Best Dance Act category.

The Swedish Dance Music Awards have grown in popularity in recent years, with artists from across the globe vying for recognition in various categories. Antiloop’s award win is a testament to their continued success in the dance music industry, and it marks another milestone in their career.

The event took place on board the luxurious Silja Line’s Symphony cruise ship, providing a picturesque backdrop for the awards ceremony. The cruise ship sailed between Stockholm and Helsinki, offering a unique and memorable experience for the attendees.

Overall, the Swedish Dance Music Awards have become an important event for dance music enthusiasts, celebrating the achievements of artists and acts from across the region. With Antiloop’s victory, the ceremony marked another successful year for the awards, recognizing the talent and creativity in the dance music scene.
HI GHTS

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All entries will be judged by Billboard Dance Music Editor Larry Flick. Performance slots are on Thursday, July 9 and Friday, July 10 at venues in Chicago to be announced. Billboard is not responsible for artist travel & lodging.

CONTACT INFO

Michele Quigley
Special Events Director
212.536.5002 ph
212.536.1400 fx

Larry Flick
Dance Music Editor
212.536.5050 ph
212.536.5358 fx

REGISTRATION FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early bird - payment received by May 29</th>
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<tr>
<td>$275</td>
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<td>Full registration - after June 19th and walk up</td>
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BILLBOARD DJs & RECORD POOL DIRECTORS

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<td>$199</td>
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Cancellation Policy: All cancellations must be submitted in writing. ALL REFUNDS WILL BE PROCESSED AFTER THE CONFERENCE. Cancellations received on or before May 29th are subject to a $75.00 administrative fee. Cancellations received between May 29th and June 19th are subject to a 1.75 administrative fee. No refunds will be issued after June 19th.
# Billboard Hot Dance Music Chart May 16, 1998

**Club Play**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Bill Witham</strong></td>
<td><em>Missing</em>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Jodeci</strong></td>
<td><em>Miss You</em></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Faith Evans</strong></td>
<td><em>My Boo</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>N Sync</strong></td>
<td><em>I Want You</em></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Da Brat</strong></td>
<td><em>Grown Woman</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Destinys Child</strong></td>
<td><em>No, No</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Ice Cube</strong></td>
<td><em>Ain't Nobody</em></td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Aaliyah</strong></td>
<td><em>Are You That Somebody</em></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Missy Elliot</strong></td>
<td><em>Get Ur Freak On</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Aaliyah</strong></td>
<td><em>Miss You</em></td>
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**Maxi-Singles Sales**

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**Greatest Gainer**

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<td>1</td>
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<td><em>Too Much (Part 2)</em></td>
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<td><em>Are You That Somebody</em></td>
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**New 1**

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<tr>
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**Hot Shot Debut**

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**New**

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**Power Pick**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Ice Cube</strong></td>
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**Greatest Hit**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jodeci</strong></td>
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**Bias Pick**

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td><em>My Boo</em></td>
<td>1</td>
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**Dance Charts**

- **Top 1 Series 1976-1997**: Chronological listings of every song that reached the top position on the Club Play and Sales charts. Each year, Billboard issue date, artist, and label. - **$50.00**
- **Top 10 Series 1976-1997**: Annual listings of every song that reached number 10 or higher on the Club Play and Sales charts. Lists title, artist, and label. Titles are listed alphabetically within each year. Number 1 records are indicated. - **$50.00**
- **Top 100 Series 1976-1997**: The annual charts of the top songs of the year in rank order as published in Billboard's Year End Special Issues. Lists title, artist and label. - **$50.00**

---

*Numbers with the greatest sales or club play increases this week. Power Pick on Club Play is awarded for the largest point increase among singles below the top 20. Greatest Gainer on Maxi-Singles Sales is awarded for the largest sales increase among singles anywhere in the top 50. † Videoclip availability. Catalog number is for vinyl maxi-single, or CD maxi-single if vinyl is unavailable. On Sales chart: (M) Cassette maxi-single availability. (T) Vinyl maxi-single availability. (CD) CD maxi-single availability. © 1998, Billboard/BPI Communications.*
BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Collin Raye has carved a unique niche in the country music industry as someone who can succeed at country radio whether he’s delivering punchy, uptempo tunes, romantic ballads, or poignant social commentaries. “The Walls Came Down,” due June 30 from Epic, features all those elements.

The first single, “I Can Still Feel You,” an energetic uptempo tune, is No. 38 on Billboard’s Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart. The 13-cut album covers a gamut of emotional topics, from the wistful “Start Over Georgia,” which Raye co-wrote with his brother Scott Wray, to the Steve Wariner/Bill Anderson-penned stone country weeper “Make Sure You’ve Got It All” to the murky intensity of the instrumental “Dark Secrets,” which serves as a prelude to “The Eleventh Commandment,” a disturbing song about child abuse.

On “Extremes” there are some poignant, beautiful ballads, and on “I Think About You” there were social commentaries put to music that were powerful, meaningful, and important,” says Sony Music senior VP of sales and marketing Mike Kraski. “This album is a nice melding of the best of both of those albums. It’s loaded with great hit songs across all the tempo lines.”

Rays says co-producers Paul Worley and Billy Joe Walker Jr. at first resisted cutting “The Eleventh Commandment.” “They said, ‘Nobody is going to want to hear that,’” Raye says. “I said, ‘Some people will, and those who don’t can skip it on the CD if they don’t, but at least they’ll hear it once, and if they do, mission accomplished.’

Raye says Karen Taylor-Good (who co-wrote the song with Lisa Aschmann) let him keep the song on hold for two years. “I just believe that [song] is a torch that I’ve got to carry and was going to use it as a specific vehicle,” he says. “We’ve set ourselves up for this by some of the singles and videos we’ve done in the past, like ‘Little Rock’ and ‘I Think About You’ and What If Jesus Comes Back Like That.’ I hope that setup is enough where it won’t shock or disturb people too much, but I think child abuse has got to be the No. 1 obsession in the world today.”

Raye says he plans to do a video on the song (even though it probably won’t be a single for radio) and run in the video a number of people can call to help abused children. His video for “Little Rock” included the numbers for Al-Anon and Alateen, and Raye says the organizations have since received 200,000 phone calls. Raye says he hopes “The Eleventh Commandment” (Continued on page 38)

Sugar Hill’s Hillman Revisits Roots

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—It didn’t start out that way for Earl Scruggs. In an interview with the adoring fans at the record release party for his new Sugar Hill solo album “Like A Hurricane” became somewhat of a stylistic career reutropesis.

The album is an emotional journey, but it covers every event from his start in bluegrass through rock ’n’ roll, country rock, and Desert Rose,” says Hillman. His singular recording career can be traced back to the early 60s with the Southern California bluegrass group the Hillmen, which also included Vern Gosdin. Later, of course, Hillman was a founding member of the legendary rock band the Byrds and pion- eered country rock in the Flying Burrito Brothers. He also held a leadership role in country’s Desert Rose Band.

After Desert Rose’s demise in 1993, Hillman re-teamed with long-time bandmate Herb Pederson on the acclaimed 1998 Sugar Hill album “Bakersfield Bound” and last year’s Rounder album “Out Of The Woodwork”, the latter also had brothers Tony and Larry Rice. All are survivors of the ’60s SoCal bluegrass scene.

The new album will be released June 30 and was produced by Ritchie Pederson and recorded and mixed by Bill Cooper (the pair reprised their roles on the self-titled mid-’70s Southern-Hillman-Furay Band album). Pederson and former Desert Rose founding member John Jorgenson each contributed tracks to the album, guests among the musicians are Desert Rose alumni Jay Dee Maness and Steve Duncan and another former Byrd, David Crosby, who sings on “I’m Still Alive” — which Hillman says was written about his friend’s successful battle with substance abuse.

Hillman also cites, for its “Byrds feel,” the album’s cover of the Searchers “When You Walk In The Room,” a Jackie DeShannon song that the Stuarts influence heavily by the Byrds, had a hit with in 1964. The rocker “Living On The Edge,” Hillman says, represents its late-’70s solo period, while “Angel’s Cry” shows his bluegrass roots.

“Sooner Or Later” and “Back Against The Wall” sound like early Desert Rose, says Hillman. He describes the latter track as semi-autobiographical and reflective of his feelings following a recent two-year hiatus from the music business, during which time, incidentally, he earned a black belt in karate.

“I had more fun making this album than any other,” says Hillman. “I was like making records in 1965 with the Byrds, having fun and trying out all kinds of ideas, as opposed to being pressured to conform to what radio wants—which we don’t have to do now. I’m a lucky guy in that I get to make records for Sugar Hill and Rounder and don’t have to live under the gun of what has to get played on radio. At my age (53), radio doesn’t want to know from here.”

But at Koch-distributed Sugar Hill, director of pickin’ and singin’ Rev Paul isn’t so sure. “We’re servicing roots formats, but we think there might even be a lot of interest at classic rock stations, too,” she says. (Continued on page 28)

Scruggs Get 50th Anniversary Fete; Johnny PayCheck Signs With Lucky Dog

PARTY LIGHTS: Legendary musician Earl Scruggs and his wife, Louise, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary May 3 with an over-flow party at the Gibbon Cafe on Lower Broadway. Guests included Tom T. Hall; Connie Smith; Waylon Jennings; Merle Haggard; Jessi Colter; Kitty Wells; Bashful Brother Oswald; and Patty Loveless and her husband, Emory Gordy Jr. Lower Broadway hasn’t seen so many stretch limousines since Tammy Wynette’s memorial service.

To night 39-year-old Knotty Pine, a memorable bluegrass jam, with Earl joining his sons Gary and Randy, the Del McCoury Band, Marty Stuart, Travis Tritt, Jimmy Martin, John Hartford, Josh Graves, Tut Taylor, Jessi McReynolds, the Whites, Tim O’Brien, and many others onstage.

Host Henry Juskie- wicz, Gibson Musical Instruments chairman CEO, drew laughter by telling Louise, “Earl has been with Gibson longer than he’s been with you.”

PEOPLE: Johnny PayCheck signs with Sony Music’s Lucky Dog Records. Blake Chancey will produce a PayCheck album for a summer release; he will be PayCheck’s first album of new material in 11 years. Jim Land- erdale and Bill Anderson are among the writers whose material will be on the album. PayCheck is also the subject of a TNN special to air 8 p.m. EDT on June 3.

Mike Whelan is promoted to director of creative services for the Dorgany Music Group. He had been creative manager at Atlantic Records Nashville, Greg Sas is named VP of national promotion. Sas had been serving as Atlantic’s Southwest promotion manager in Dallas, will relocate to Nashville.

GARTH WATCH: During Memorial Day weekend, May 22-25, all of Garth Brooks’ songs will be played in alphabetical order on the XM radio special “Garth A To Z.” Brook will do his own front-end announcing of each song... Also on the Garth front, author Bruce Feiler, in town to promote his new country music book, “Dreaming Out Loud” (Avon Books), says that Brooks has had no reaction to his book, although it provides a very frank look at the singer’s life and career. The book also centers on two other country artists—Wynonna and Wade Hayes—and Feiler says perhaps the warmest praise he’s had for the book has come from Hayes’ producer, Nashville veteran Don Cook. “Even though I wrote about some very rough spots in Wade’s career, Don said they can appreciate the truth when it’s fairly told,” says Feiler.

ON THE ROW: Belmont University students are learning the business the quick way by launching their own record label. Members of a record company operations class have started a label named after their classes — RCO Records — and signed and recorded two artists. They presented the two, Christi John and Wade Valla, at a May 5 showcase at Warner/Reprise Nashville. At the RCA Label Group, Brett Davis becomes manager of artist development for the BNA label. Aubrey Parker becomes production ad- ministrator for RLG, Tiffany Lauer becomes manager of product development for RLG sales, and Michelle Brown is manager of RLG media marketing.

Country.com, country music’s main online service, has launched an online bookstore in partnership with Barnes and Noble. Besides books on country music, the service will feature books on the country lifestyle. Country.com is already affiliated with N2K for its online music sales. The Academy of Country Music has scheduled its next charity golf classic for May 18 at the Tour 18 golf course and Circle R Ranch in Flower Mound, Texas, near Dallas. Charley Pride will host the affair and will be joined by more than a dozen leading country artists. The event benefits the Bill Boyd Memorial Fund, St. Phillips’ School and Community Center; and Chuck Norris’ kick Drugs Out of America campaign... Hoyt II Men were among the many acts who donated their time to benefit victims of the recent tornadoes in Nashville.

ON THE RECORD: Koch International is reissuing two landmark country albums. “Train Whistle Blues” by Jimmie Rodgers includes songs recorded by the country blues pioneer from 1928 until his death in 1935. “Flatt And Scruggs At Carnegie Hall,” featuring the legendary Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, was a landmark live country album when it was released in 1969; it had a large role in fueling the folk-country explosion in the 1960s. The reissue includes several tracks not available on the original Columbia Records issue.
RAYE COVERS WIDE GROUND ON EPIC SET
(Continued from page 36)

mandment” has a similar impact.

On “Rays,” Ranye continues to balance social commentary with ballads and uptempo tunes. He says that for "I’ll Never Love Again," the song was written in Paris while sitting in a taxi cab. He explains that he wrote it as a warning to his ex-girlfriend that he would never love her again.

Ranye says that he is currently working on a new album, which he hopes to release later this year. He is also considering working on a children’s book, which he plans to publish next year.

For more information on Ranye, please visit his website at www.rayenecapela.com. He can also be found on Twitter and Facebook.

SUGAR HILL'S HILLMAN REVISITS ROOTS
(Continued from page 36)

"We'll probably test with non-reporting country stations, since there's a lot of media attention right now on the song. We'll let them know how the song is going to do on top 40 and then we'll decide whether to move forward with it or not." - Hillman

Hillman is currently working on his new album, "The Sound of Music," scheduled for release in spring 2014. He is also planning to perform a series of concerts in the summer and fall to promote the album.

For more information on Hillman, please visit his website at www.sugarhill.com. He can also be found on Twitter and Facebook.
**Hot Country Singles & Tracks**

**COMPiled FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF AIRPLAY SUPPLY D BY BROADCAST DATA SYSTEMS' TRACK SERVICE. 162 COUNTRY STATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK. SONGS RANKED BY NUMBER OF DETECTIONS.**

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**Complied from a National Sample of Retail Store and Rack Sales Reports Collected, Compiled, and Provided by SoundScan, Inc.**

**Billboard**

**Top Country Singles Sales**

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MPGA Hosts Forum On Emerging DVD Audio, 5.1 Platforms

BY STEVE TRAUMAN

NEW YORK—Although members of the recording industry have championed the release of multichannel and stereo programs on a single disc when the DVD audio format is introduced, Warner Music Group senior VP Jordan Rost told a panel of insiders that initial DVD audio titles would likely appear in dual inventories.

"From a view angle, for the launch we’ll have a ‘deluxe’ DVD audio release in 5.1-channel surround sound and a companion, two-channel stereo CD for most buyers," Rost told an overflow crowd of top engineers, producers, and artist/composers at a seminar here titled 5.1 Multichannel Music Mixing. The daylong series of panels, workshops, and demonstrations was sponsored by the 7-month-old Music Producers Guild of the Americas (MPGA) in cooperation with Solid State Logic (SSL), Pro Sound News, and Quad Recording Studios, where demos were held.

Rost—who is also a key member of the recording industry’s Working Group 4, which is grappling with DVD audio standards—shared his views with more than 230 enthusiastic (and concerned) audio professionals who gathered to discuss updates on the current state of multichannel sound and standards for DVD audio.

The participants were treated to listening sessions at Quad for 5.1-channel encoded tracks from Alan Parsons, Nile Rodgers, the Eagles, Dave Grusin, and others. Those demos were sponsored by Digital Theater Systems (DTS), Dolby Laboratories, JBL, Sony Pro Audio, Studer U.S., and Warner Music Group.

“I haven’t had my socks blown off in some time so that you wanted to create a new sound,” Grammy-winning producer and MPGAs president Ed Cherney said while moderating the morning producer/engineer panel "State Of The Art And Personal Experience." “We’re entering a new age, and as a music maker, whether an engineer, producer, or composer, it’s a lot of fun to work with 5.1.”

Parsons, a producer/engineer/bandleader who has written material with Pink Floyd and the Alan Parsons Project, added, “While we all can recall some bad experiences with quad, it’s great to be back the last 18 months to having sound all around you in the studio.” Selections from his 5.1-channel, DTS-encoded "On Air" album got a rousing thumbs-up from the Quad audience.

“I grew up with ‘Frampton Comes Alive,’ and all my life I’ve wanted to hear ‘bands live,’" said artist/engineer Rodgers.

Veteran producer Phil Ramone, president of NEK Encoded Music, asked the panel and audience, "From any of us who worked in mono when stereo came in, do you see déjà vu with 5.1? If you’ve heard our Dave Grusin 5.1 version of ‘West Side Story,’ we actually did a 2-track stereo mix in sync with a 5.1 mix in its discrete format. We know we have to put out a regular CD plus a DVD, and the question is: Do we package both versions together, which retailers obviously will prefer, or do separate versions for a dual-inventory situation?

The listening audience is obviously ready for high-quality audio. Assuming standards are finalized, we’ll see some DVDs out by year-end."

At Quad, owner Lou Gonzalez, a veteran engineer who also designed the studio’s rooms, took attendees through the six-floor complex. Separate playback demos were offered by SSL, DTS, Dolby Labs, and Studer/JBL. Unfortunately, the Warner Music system was held up by U.S. Customs in Los Angeles.

The afternoon technical panel—"Multichannel Today, Multichannel Tomorrow And What To Do Now And In Between"—provided updates on current and proposed 5.1-channel and DVD audio systems. Panelists also addressed many attendees’ concerns on the problems related to the fold-down of the 5.1 channel surround-sound mix into a two-channel stereo mix in the current audio for DVD video production.

Moderated by George Massenburg, in addition to Warner’s Rost, that panel included Rolf Hartley of Sonic Solutions, Chris Jenkins of SSL, John Kellogg of Dolby, Andreas Koch of Sony Advanced Development Lab, Bob Ludwig of Gateway Mastering, David Smith of Sony Music Studios, and Paul Smith of DTS.

In the U.S., there is an installed base of more than 600,000 Dolby 5.1 consumer decoders, with 153 models from 62 companies, according to Kellogg. There are more than 550 Dolby 5.1 CD titles and 400-plus Dolby 5.1 DVD movie titles. For DTS Digital Surround, Smith reported 31 hardware models from 22 manufacturers, with 23 more firms slated to debut this year. There are about 50 DTS multichannel CDs and another 50-plus due by year’s end, added Smith.

All panelists and many of the audience members agreed that the MPGAs could and should take a leading role in bringing the industry together to educate the consumer on 5.1 and DVD audio and to promote the new format for an effective launch.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

BILLBOARD’S NO. 1 SINGLES (MAY 9, 1998)

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Hit Maker’s Formula:

Hit Maker’s Formula:

Top of the Charts:

Engineering Excellence

www.quantegy.com

Pro audio professionals gathered at Quad Studios in New York for a listening session on multichannel systems as part of the Music Producers Guild of the Americas (MPGA) 5.1 Multichannel Music Mixing forum. Shown in the back row, from left, are Solid State Logic product manager Sue McDonald, Quad owner Lou Gonzalez, producer/engineer/bandleader Alan Parsons, Solid State Logic U.S. president Rick Plushner, Windham Hill VP of A&R Larry Hamby, and MPGAs executive director Chris Stone. In front, from left, are award-winning producer/engineers Elliot Scheiner, Al Schmitt, and Ed Cherney, who is also MPGAs president.
**TOP CLASSICAL ALBUMS**

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**CLASSICAL KEEPING SCORE**

*by Bradley Bamberger*

**SWEET HOME, CHICAGO:** Last October, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) unveiled its new three-building, multi-use Symphony Center after three years of work and the applause for the $320 million. Worth of renovation, expansion, and acoustical enhancement was well-nigh universal. Since that grand opening, however, the CSO and its many guests have settled into the Symphony Center's two concert halls. And the Chicago—public—which has always had a special relationship to its world-class orchestra, enough to make it the nation's best-attended ensemble—has embraced the ambitious facility wholeheartedly. All the enthusiasm is warranted, as I saw on a recent visit to Chicago. Music director Daniel Barenboim was out of town, but principal guest conductor Pierre Boulez was in residence, working his magic with two programs spanning the 20th century. One fine recital Mahler's Symphony No. 1 and Elliott Carter's new Clarinet Concerto, another matched orchestral works by Ravel and Respighi, performed by Messiaen and György Ligeti. Superstar violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter and her recital partner, Lambert Orkis, also stopped in from their world tour playing the late Beethoven sonatas along with Arvo Pärt's "Fratres." The sound of the new space was clear and warm, whether the CSO was raising the roof or Mutter and Orkis were in subtle interplay.

The attractions of Chicago's Symphony Center go beyond the newly renovated Orchestra Hall, a landmark built in 1904 and home to such legendary music directors as Fritz Reiner and Sir Georg Solti (the latter passing away shortly before he was to inaugurate the new hall with his 1,600-track CD concert). With the Symphony Center's sizable artistic support and administrative/education wings, the entire complex is more inviting to the public as well as more accommodating to the artists. There is the intimate Bustard Hall, where preconcert lectures and chamber performances are held, as well as a permanent broadcast studio for WFMT Chicago and a new control room for recordings made in Orchestra Hall. There are also such aesthetically appealing yet practical features as a skybridge, that not only links the Center's various wings but also hosts art exhibitions and casual lunchtime performances. And on the premises is a new restaurant, Rhapsody, that puts other concert-hall eateries to shame.

One of the more forward-minded elements of the new Symphony Center is ECHO, an interactive "music learning space" for children and adults and a key part of the CSO's community outreach and education efforts. In the next year, the Center will also feature a new home for the CSO's archives that will include a listening/reading room, where the public can come over any day of the week and listen to audio recordings of the CSO as led by Reiner and Solti or Barenboim and Boulez.

Besides the concert performances of the Mahler First, Boulez's first work with the Chicago Symphony Orches- tra Hall, continuing its stimulating survey of the com- poser's symphonies for Deutsche Grammophon. (He just taped the Fourth with the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Ninth with Chicago is just out.) Boulez has a great love of performing with the CSO; among his many, lights are a tremendous Deutsche Grammophon disc of Bartók's "Wooden Prince" and "Capriola Prophets" that won four Grammy Awards in 1998. In that town, Boulez also gave a recital of the music in May to celebrate his 10th year conducting the Chicago Civic Orchestras during Symphony Center's opening celebrations, and he gave a typically thought-provoking talk at the local Arts Club on the topic of the Zoeplitz in music. (More on Boulez's U.S. jaunt in the next Keeping Score.)

Currently in London performing with Beethoven's Berliner Symphoniker, Barenboim will be back with the CSO in the fall; the schedule includes a recording ses- sion for a Richard Strauss album on Barenboim's ex- clusive outlet, Teldec. The next Barenboim/CSO release will be a De Falla disc in November, following up such fine recordings as spotlighting Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 from last year, an all Schoenberg set from 1998, and a disc teaming a premiere of Carter's great "Partita" with Toru Takemitsu's "Visions" and Luciano Berio's "Continuo" from '98. Barenboim per- forms with his chamber group, and he and Barenboim have a new two-disc 40th anniversary set from the Chicago Symphony Chorus, drawn from the CSO's broadcast archives and issued for sale in Symphony Store and as part of the anniversary fund-raising.

The CSO chief since '91, Barenboim just extended his contract to 2002-2003, and he says Chicago feels like home: "I didn't expect to see Symphony Center fulfill the corporate dream for excellence, but since the CSO's first rehearsal in the new space, the sound has been beyond my hopes. Even more remarkable, though, was the commitment from thousands of Chicagoans."

The CSO president Henry Fogel says Symphony Center is especially impressive when you consider that it went from initial discussions to opening night in just seven years, while the Philadelphia Orchestra has been maneuvering for a new home for nearly two decades. "It's a remarkable piece of commerce, but the fact that we have a new Symphony Center in thanks to the city of Chicago and its corporate community, led by John Bryan, CEO of Sara Lee. There are a lot of large companies here, but Chicago is still small enough that they still see it as their civic duty to give back to the city. And it's fitting that Chicagoans should be proud of their orchestra," Fogel adds. "Before Michael Jordan, the CSO was the first thing that took Al Capone off people's minds when you mentioned Chicago in Europe. And we'll be here long after Michael Jordan's gone."

GEFFEN'S PURE SUGAR WORKS ITS STARR POWER

(Continued from page 18)

The first move in transferring Pure Sugar into the pop arena will be in early June, when the set's second single, "Delicious," is serviced to top 40 and rhythm crossover radio. The festive, disco-tinged pop/rock ballad rows a healthy portion of "Boogie Oogie Oogie" by A Taste Of Honey— will ship to club DJs in mid-May. All of this activity suits Sjostedt just fine. "I'm loving every second of this," she says. "We've had too much of a conservative time of it in the world recently. We need to have someone who is willing to push against the grain and be ready to take that bullet. That's me."

Starr first connected with Vision and Lorimer in 1995 when they recorded "The Feeling" for the independent Aqua Boogie Records. The track, which appears on this album in an unreleased form, peaked at #5 on the Hot Dance Music/Club Play chart. After rising to the top of the club heap as the remixers of hits by Donna Summer, Crystal Waters, Ace Of Base, and No Mercy, and the duo, Vision and Lorimer decided it was time to elevate to the "next level." Enter Starr: a lifelong club kid raised in Hollywood, who's been train- ing to be star since she first started working dancefloors at age 13.

"I wanted to be a full-time professional diva and just be fabulous," she says. "But I quickly realized that I wanted to be somebody instead of somebody." To that end, she started studying dance and music at the American National Academy of Performing Arts in Los Angeles. The fruits of her labor can be heard throughout Pure Sugar's debut.

"This is the first step in my expression as an artist," she says. "I've got a million ideas—and I plan to share every one of them."

**Billboard**

MAY 16, 1998

**Artists & Music**
## Artists & Music

During that period, Vaughan served as producer and musical director for "A Tribute To Stevie Ray Vaughan," an all-star musical salute to his late brother, which Epic released as an album and home video in 1996.

For "Out There," Vaughan and his co-producer John Hampton (who engineered "Strange Pleasure," "Family Style," and "The Tribute"") enlisted such players as Dr. John, violinist Tony Lee Burks, and guitarist Denny Freeman to augment organist Bill Willis and drummer George Rains, the longtime mainstays of Vaughan's working band.

"Strange Pleasure" was in many respects a response to Stevie Ray's death in 1990, Vaughan says his new songs (published by R. Mode Music (BMI), administered by Bug Music) take up more down-to-earth subject matter.

"My first album, I was going through a lot of stuff, and it was kind of spiritual, sort of, for me," Vaughan says. "This one, I was just writing about things that people go through. It's not necessarily about me, but just about what it's like to be a human. I tried to say some of the stuff that guys don't want to say. Guys don't want to say that they like their girlfriend, or that she's got 'em screwed up. They don't want to say that. So I was just trying to be honest and play honest."

The record's smoky, after-hours sound was clearly inspired by some of the stylistic precursors.

Vaughan notes, "For instance, [with the new song] 'Positively Me.' It was like listening to Ivory Joe Hunter, and he was singing 'It's Me, I Met You Baby.' I thought, 'Man, that's a perfect song...' My anniversary's coming up, so I said, 'Man, I just want to sit down and try to do that.' And that's what this album is, as corny as it may be. It's a down-on-one knee song.'"

According to Epic (U.S.) senior director of marketing Chris Poppe, the first track off "Out There" will be "Like A King," a song penned for Vaughan and produced by Nile Rodgers. "We're going to go to triple-A and rock radio and any blues format, any formats that play that music. We're going to go into the stores in June," Poppe says.

Noting that guitar manufacturer Fender has created a signature Jimi Vaughan Tex-Mex model, Poppe says, "We're using some of them for radio and retail giveaway, and we're servicing some of Jimi's music to the Fender dealers, so that it sends the right people to the store to buy his gear."

She adds, "We're actually going to give [guitar shop] some CD singles and some full-length CDs. We're still working out the details, but it will be something along the lines of the first person to go in and test the Tex-Mex guitar will get a CD... Fender made some stand-ups for Jimi's guitars, so we're going to try to get 'em out of some of them and service them to music retail."

The musician, who is managed by Mark Proct of Mark One in Austin and booked by Monterrey International, will kick off a tour May 14 at a benefit for PBS KLPR, producer of the public TV series "Austin City Limits." He will do a live Internet broadcast, May 15 from the House of Blues in L.A.

The release of the album will be launched on Vaughan's home turf with an album release party June 16 at Austin's Lucky Lounge. An in-store is tentatively set for the city's premier record store, Waterloo Records.

Watercolor owner Jon Kunz says of Vaughan, "His influence has been felt going on about 25 years now, going back to the beginning with the Fabulous Thunderbirds. All the influence he had on Stevie Ray was phenomenal. The last record was huge for us..." and I expect the new one will be, too. I got an advance, and I think it's great."
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SONGWRITERS & PUBLISHERS

Q Also Makes Mark In Publishing

AT EAYS & MUSIC

BY IRY LIGHTMAN

NEW YORK—Forty years ago, Quincy Jones says, he got some good advice about music publishing and quickly followed up on it.

"My father was a dropper/producer and owner of multimedia companies has a solid, 1,300-song catalog that houses his own compositions as well as those of a wide swath of contemporary writers.

Back in the '50s, however, the concept of a composer/producer opening a music publishing firm was rare indeed.

"I credit two people with the idea to get into publishing," Jones says. "One was Charlie Graven, the publisher for whom I did stock jazz arrangements. The other was Dr. Billy Taylor [the jazz pianist/educator]. He said, 'Quincy, you're doing it all wrong. You're writing for [Count Basie] and everything. All the guys are taking your publishing. You've got to open your own company.'

If there is one other decision Jones made in publishing that has stood him in good stead, it was the decision in 1994 to appoint Judith Bright to run the company for him on a day-to-day basis, he says. In financial terms, Quincy Jones Music Publishing, which is administered by Warner/Chappell Music, has doubled its bottom line since then. The company does not break out its financial results.

Of Bright, Jones says, "She's an ace. And I've got aces in every department."

Says Bright, "I started with Quincy Jones Productions in 1992 as an assistant for the then president of the company." She had previously worked in TV and film production.

"In 1994, the president left, and Quincy asked me to get his publishing company up and running again, Bright says. "He literally pointed to a bunch of tapes that had been sitting in a corner, and that's how it started.

Bright continues, "We want to do much more packaging with our artists. We'll use Quincy's television and film company [Quincy Jones Entertainment] as well as his record label [Quest Music] as vehicles to drive the artists into any and all areas of the entertainment industries that a few standout songs. Today it seems that the producer, who is often the writer as well, is given a couple of tracks on a record before a song is even heard."

"Other company starters are creative director Jay Brown and creative coordinator Terri Lynn, along with support staffs Joa Crump, Kimani Calendar, and Milton Martin.

One longstanding creative member on the company's roster is Tom Buhler, a composer, arranger, and producer who has worked on many TV and film projects. He is also the writer of "She's Out Of My Life," which was recorded by Michael Jackson on his "Off The Wall" album.

Quincy Jones Music Publishing has had recent covers by Jackson, Tevin Campbell, George Benson, Ivan Lins, Donna Summer, Patti Austin, the Manhattan Transfer, Jones In Int, Barry White, and Ray Charles, and there are current chart turns by K-Ci & JoJo, SWC, Uncle Sam, and Mase, as well as "The Players Club" soundtrack and samples by Mase, Jodeci, Uncle Sam, and Tupac Shakur.

Quincy Jones Music Publishing writing/producer Rolly Bennett is riding high with "All My Life," K-Ci & JoJo's No. 1 hit, and has had songs placed with R&B acts Jermaine Dupri, Silk, the Braxtons, and Ce Ce Peniston.

The company has also produced a hip-hop sampler CD for record labels, "The Art of the Deal," that original cartoon character of the same name. It will be followed by another sampler for advertisers and agencies, "Cleo the AdMan."

Jones' most recent venture was an album and accompanying songbook, "Q's Jook Joint," while Brazilian songwriter/recording artist Gamy Cymrami recently completed scoring for the feature film "Bella Donna." Also, Juanita Wynn, a gospel artist, is writing with gospel group Take 6.

(Continued on page 62)

Words & Music

by Irving Lightman

'Words & Music' has entered into a worldwide administration publishing agreement with Green Linnet Records' publishing interests, Green Linnet Music and Red Linnet Music, which control more than 300 titles of Celtic music.

The 20-year-old label, under the creative direction of owner Wendy Newton, has an extensive roster of Celtic artists, including Alland and Touchstone (from the U.S.), Seamus McGuire and Deanna (from Ireland), Jerry Holland and Orelia (from Canada), and Tunnah Beavers and Fairport Convention (from the U.K.).
ELVIS LIVES: Every once in a while, someone claims to have seen Elvis Presley pop up somewhere in the U.S. and beyond. Well, there certainly was an Elvis sighting April 5 at Billboard’s ninth annual International Latin Music Conference in Miami. Only this Elvis was not from Memphis, but from Puerto Rico. And his surname was not Presley, but Crespo.

But the effect of both Elvisses was the same. As Elvis Crespo demonstrates, you can’t put April 5 on the calendar—when Elvis is on the scene—because Presley—like any charismatic performer who perplexed the ears of the always-tough industry crowd.

Now the handsome, hisure former lead vocalist of Sony Discos merengue act Grupo Mania finds himself at the top of the Hot Latin Tracks with the chugging, irresistible-shaker “Suavemente.”

The gruff-voiced singer, also signed to Sony, is the first merengue artist to create Hot Latin Tracks since Karen/PolyGram Latino’s Juan Luis Guerra 140 trundled the track more than five years ago with “El Coeto De La Vida.” Predictably, “Suavemente” tops the tropical/salsa chart for the second week in a row. “Suavemente” is the title track of Crespo’s fast-selling solo debut. The hit-laden album moves 5-3 with a bullet on The Billboard Latin 50, which is unpublished this issue. Sales were up 69% this week to 5,000 units.

One thing is certain. As his career continues to take flight, you can expect there will be more Elvis (Crespo) sightings in the future.

ALEJANDRO HITS 35: Alejandro Fernández sets a record for chart longevity on Hot Latin Tracks this issue as his runaway smash “Si Tú Supieras” (Sony Discos) notches its 35th week on the chart. “Si Tú Supieras” breaks the 34-week mark set last year by Juan Gabriel’s “Yo Sigo Amando” (Arion/LIMG). Both hits were soap-opera theme songs.

Sharing Fernández’s hot streak is Emilio Estefan Jr. and Kike Santander. Estefan produced Fernández’s No. 1 album “Extra Enamorado” with Santander. In addition, Santander penned all three of Fernández’s chart-topping hits: “Si Tú Supieras,” “En El Jardín” (with Gloria Estefan), and “No Sé Olvidar.”

This week marks the Hot Latin Tracks debut of El Puma Top Acafulco: PolyGram/Latino’s Grupo Limité and Sony Discos’ José Luis Rodríguez are among the big names headlining Festival Acafulco ’98, slated to be held May 17-24 in Acapulco, Mexico. Other standout performers include Sony’s Mercurio, Onda Vasilena, Tiranos Del Norte, and Myriam Hernández & BMG’s José Gandulape Esparza.

Televisa will air the event, which will be hosted by Jorge Ortiz de Pinedo, host of nighttime variety show “Al Ritmo De La Noche.” Ortiz de Pinedo replaces longtime MC Raúl Velasco, who has stepped down due to illness.

HAVAS DE ACAFULCO: And we are on the subject of Acafulco, EMI Latin’s always innovative marachi ensemble Sol De México and the Beach Boys have put out “Acafulco Girls,” a fine mariachi-laced pop cover of the Beach Boys’ classic “California Girls.”

Sol De México’s gifted director, José Hernández, turns in a spicy performance as lead vocalist on the title track of the just-released disc.

STATESIDE BRIEFS: “Dance With Me,” a romantic dance/musical film starring pop diva Vanessa Williams and Sony star Chayanne, is due July 31. Directed and produced by Randy Haines, the movie is being released by Columbia Pictures and Mandaly Entertainment.

WEA Latina’s pioneer rockers David Summers & Hombres G launched a 25-city Latin American tour May 2 at Estadio Benito Juárez in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Among the nine U.S. venues included on the trek are the House of Blues clubs in Los Angeles and New Orleans.

PolyGram Latino’s upstart pop bandleader Chris Durán is slated to appear Saturday (16) on Univision’s variety show “Sábado Gigante.” His appearance caps off a monthlong stateside promo tour in support of his eponymous label bow.

ARJONA THE ROMANTIC: Having pondered a variety of sociopolitical topics on his latest album “Si Norte Fuera El Sur,” Mexican-based troubador Ricardo Arjona is feeling in a more amorous mood with his upcoming album, “Sí Días A Ter- ceros,” due to drop May 24. Moreover, Sony Discos’ talented story weaver is sporting a new look to go with the love-driven muse: His shoulder-length locks have been shorn, and he is now sporting a sculpted physique.

CHART NOTES: Radio: Sony reasserted itself on Hot Latin Tracks this issue as the aforementioned Elvis Crespo hit, “Suavemente,” landed at the apex of the chart. Sony controls six of the top 10 slots with this issue, which helped “Suavemente” ease into the No. 1 slot.

Los Temerarios’ hit “Por Que Te Conozco” (PolyGram) enjoys the longest streak running on the radio charts, as the ballad smash chalks up its ninth successive week on the regional Mexican chart.

New to Hot Latin Tracks this issue is Italian singing star Nek, whose WEA Latina single “Laura No Está” already has been a hit in several Latin American countries and Spain. Nek is one of five new artists to hit Hot Latin Tracks this year. The others are chart-topping tropical acts Crespo and WEA Latina-Servando Y Flo- rentino; WEA Latina salsa diva Lisette Meléndez, another showcase performer at this year’s International Latin Music Conference; EMI Latin merengue group Nexo, and Sony Music/Epic’s Celine Dion.

CHART NOTES, RETAIL: After two weeks of decreasing sales, Sele- na’s No. 1 disc “Anthology” (EMI Latin) rebounds this issue with a 118% jump in sales to 9,000 units. “Anthology” which remains atop the regional Mexican chart for the fourth straight week, also leaps 150-133 with a bullet on The Billboard 200. Selena’s greatest-hits disc “Exitoes Y Recuer- dos” (EMI Latin) also moves 35-24 with a bullet this issue.

Ricky Martin’s album “Vuelve” (Sony Discos), currently No. 2 on The Billboard Latin 50, is the only other Spanish-language disc to appear on the Billboard 200 this issue, sliding 183-191 in its 10th week on that chart. “Vuelve” stays at No. 1 on the pop chart for the 11th week running.

Two artists made prominent chart debuts this issue on The Billboard Latin 50: merengue star Manny Manuel and Puerto Riqueño rock group Fiel A La Vega. Manuel’s latest hit “(Continued on next page)
than three decades by the U.S. trade embargo.

“The pioneering phase of bringing Cuban music to the world is over,” says Ned Sublette of the New York independent record label Downtown Music. “Just as the current Cuban music boom who since 1992 has been reissuing records made in Cuba on Qudras with his partner, Ben Socor.

So in the mid-1990s, to the embargo has allowed American companies to distribute Cuban productions, although they cannot directly contract or commission artists. Multinationals may sign Cubans to a non-American subsidiary or form distribution agreements with labels based in Cuba.

Carol Wright, VP of marketing for Universal Music Latin America, called her company’s distribution deal with Universal Music Latin America — a Spanish-owned label with offices in Havana, “a No. 1 priority in the world.”

Current projects include La Charanga Habanera, a frenetic dance band with a big horn section that will embark on a European tour in late spring, and the release of the first dozen titles in the “La Isla De La Musica” series, featuring recordings of diverse music from all over the island.

While U.S. labels must still circulate records work to Cuba, European companies, particularly Spanish, have made firm commitments to the production of Cuban music. Especially noticeable has been the music export of the Canary Islands-based company Manzana, showcased its artists on the opening night of Cubadisco at the Karl Marx Theater: Spanish flamenco rock group Ketama was a special guest at the concert, which featured acts ranging from Klimax, a popular young dance band, to traditional high-sounding by La Charanga Rubalcaba. The show was taped for broadcast on Spanish TV. The same night, jazz pianist Chucho Valdés — signed to Blue Note Canada — gave a concert at Havana’s National Theater with the latest incarnation of his seminal Cuban jazz group, Irakere.

Five-year-old Caribe Productions, a Panamanian company and records distributor of Spain and based in Havana, has the strongest roster of popular Cuban dance bands, including Los Van Van, NG La Banda, and Manolo V, “El Mequero de la Salsa.” In an agreement made last year, Caribe is distributed by EMI Spain and by Metro Blue in the U.S. Metro Blue’s London-based director of international A&R, Gerald Seligman, was in Havana, along with representatives from EMI Spain and New York-based Blue Note, to experience the Cuban music scene firsthand and discuss marketing strategies with Caribe executives.

Irie Productions, another Panamanian company whose product is licensed in the U.S. by the Ahi-Nama label, had a popular booth where videos of its latest releases were shown continuously on a monitor. Ahi-Nama president Jimmy Maslyn says that the videos have been effective in exposing the company’s artists to a wide audience. He adds that during the fair the label made several distribution agreements with companies based in Latin America and Europe.

T海湾. Bautista, executive president of SGAE, Spain’s society of authors and editors, which has an office in Havana and represents about 500 Cuban musicians and composers, gave a talk on music and the Internet. Bautista, who has taken an active role in efforts to strengthen the Cuban music industry over the Cuban government to help create the infrastructure necessary for the industry to prosper and to maintain international interest in Cuban music.

“We have to continue to develop our skills in learning how to do business,” acknowledges Benemeli, who cities as the vital issues marketing and distribution, copyright and royalties, and updating technology.

During Cubadisco, Estudios Abdala, a state-of-the-art recording studio was unveiled. Several years in the making, the studio was the brainchild of singer Silvio Rodriguez and was built under the auspices of state corporation CIMEX.

Cuban labels Egrem, Artex, and Bisco Music released numerous titles during the fair. Cuban Music Institute president Alicia Perez stressed that an important element of Cubadisco was the production of 500,000 cassettes for the national market, which were sold at stands at the Fair expo center and the Pabellon Cuba in Havana’s Vedado neighborhood, the two main venues for the fair, at a cost of 15 pesos (less than $1). The vast majority of the Cuban public do not have CD players and cannot afford CDs, which sell in Havana shops for $15, more than the average Cuban worker’s monthly salary.

Cubadisco wrapped up April 22, with the Premio Cubadisco Awards at the Karl Marx, Pianist Jose Maria Vitier, who won the Grand Premio Cubadisco Award for his “Misa Cubana” (Cuban Mass).

LATIN TRACKS A-Z

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<tr>
<td>&quot;Como Tiempo&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Y Tu Mundo&quot;</td>
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LATIN TRACKS A-Z

Hot Latin Tracks

Billboard

MAY 16, 1998

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LATIN TRACKS A-Z

LATIN TRACKS A-Z

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LATIN TRACKS A-Z

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MIDEM. It's the business forum for all the music from the Americas. And it's back in force in Miami Beach, USA, the music capital of Latin America.

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Spanish, Dutch Shed Light On Sales Gains

BY KAI R. LOFTUS

STOCKHOLM—Club disc jockeys in Sweden are to be given permission to copy vinyl configurations on to recordable CDs (CD-R) as long as the original recordings or copies are not disturbed further.

The Swedish affiliate of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), plus a number of disc jockeys and record company representatives, discussed the issue April 28, following a six-month-long dispute between IFPI and DJs.

The dispute was resolved during a seminar at Scandinavia’s annual Big Bang dance convention, a three-day event attended by more than 3,000 dance and mainstream industry personnel aboard Silja Line’s Symphony cruise ship as it sailed between Stockholm and Helsinki April 27-29.

The IFPI issued a letter to the DJs on Oct. 27, 1997, informing them that the practice is in conflict with the existing copyright law, a move that startled most members of club society.

According to the IFPI, DJs discovered CD-R a few years ago as a means of replacing large stacks of vinyl records and thus avoiding carrying heavy bags of records to each gig. The organization’s main concern is that the records, which usually are promotional copies, are exempt from copyright payments.

The letter, signed by IFPI Sweden legal adviser Magnus (Continued on page 52)
Soledad Takes Argentina By Storm

BY MARCELO FERNÁNDEZ BITAR

While Argentina is best-known musically for its tango-rooted sounds, there is now a strong possibility that the country’s folkloric strains will be gaining broader international notice, thanks to a 17-year-old singer named Soledad.

Barely 5 feet tall, this charming, down-to-earth singer with girl-next-door good looks and a booming mezzo-soprano voice is reinventing the Argentine record industry by storm in the past two years.

According to Sony Music Argentina, Soledad’s album “Amores” for the label, “Poncho Al Viento” (Poncho In The Wind) and “La Sole” (after her nickname) have surpassed 1 million units in sales, including one million in vinyl sales. 1996’s “Poncho Al Viento” has sold 540,000 units; 1997’s “La Soledad” has sold 360,000.

A true crossover artist in a country dominated by pop, rock and Euro-dance acts, Soledad has become a household name who not only has introduced folkloric classics like “Alma, Corazon, Y Vida” (Soul, Heart, And Life) and “Que Nadie Sepa Mi Sufrir” (That No One Knows My Suffering) to a new generation but has revived folk genres like chacarera and valses to heights of popularity not seen in 30 years.

Soledad’s mild demeanor offsets a striking contrast to her volcanic personality as a performer. As she lays into thunderous onstage takes of hits such as “A Don Ata” (To Don Ata) or “Amor De Mi Amores” (Love Of My Loves), Soledad stalks around her supporting musicians and stomps her feet—sometimes in a quick step with her sister Natalia, who supplies backing vocals.

Soledad’s patented show-stopping trick occurs when she graze a woolen blanket held overhead while the audience does likewise with sweaters, jackets, or T-shirts. The frenzied vibe of her shows smacks of a rock concert, yet she is followed with deep dedication by parents, children, and teenagers, who are treated to her singular interpretation of folkloric favorites.

Ordinary citizens from Argentina are not the only ones to have caught Soledad’s magic. On April 17 in Santiago, Chile, during the Summit of the Americas, heads of state from North and South America took in a rousing show by Soledad. Predictably, Soledad’s talents as a live performer and her overwhelming success in Argentina have not gone unnoticed by Sony Music Latin America.

Luana Pagani, the company’s VP of international marketing, says Sony affiliates in Latin America and elsewhere are arming to “La Soledad,” a compilation of tracks from Soledad’s first two discs, through-out the third week of May. The album’s leadoff single will be “A Don Ata.” A video will be shot for the Argentinian hit.

“What is impressive about Soledad is her strength as a performer,” says Pagani. “She is only 17 years old and yet she is so natural.”

Though Soledad already has performed well-received shows in Chile and Uruguay, Pagani notes that a concert tour of Latin America will not take place immediately. Instead, Soledad will begin preparing for an event that will tour with promotional stops in May and June in the U.S., Mexico, Colombia, and Spain.

Besides her own CD release, Soledad also has contributed a track to “Aliens Of Old Oly,” Ray’s just-released World Cup disc that is slated to drop the middle of this month in Argentina (Billboard, Apr. 25).

Soledad, who was born in Arequipa, first attracted attention in 1995 among an important folklore festival that takes place each year in the small town of Coquimbo. Sony Argentina VP Hugo Piombi recalls hearing about her performance, and the label immediately inked her to a deal.

Piombi says that the biggest buyer of “Poncho Al Viento” during the first few months after its release in 1996 was Soledad’s father, “who sold hundreds of copies of the album at Soledad’s concerts—a formula that proved successful a year earlier with an indie cassette.”

Soledad performed twice at the festival in Coquimbo, the first time any artist had played two times at the event.

Soledad employs a simple method for choosing material for new albums. “If the audience gives a positive response to the songs, they will be slated for recording,” says Soledad.

As Sony’s campaign to ship her compilation CD to Latin America takes root, Soledad already is contemplating her next album, which will be recorded by Emilio Estefan Jr. That disc, says Pagani, is tentatively due in February 1999.

“My third album is aimed at the Latin American market,” says Soledad, “but there does not mean that I will do pop or rock songs. My idea is not to abandon folkloric rhythms, because that would be a deception of the public. But I would like to include an Argentine touch to them.”

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by John Louisert.

U.K. Blues Advocates Launch Label

This story was prepared by Terry Heath, features editor of Music & Media.

LONDON—A surge of blues power is set to hit the U.K., as three of the genre’s leading advocates team up to launch a new label, Blueside, dedicated to “the very best newly recorded blues and soul music around today.”

Blueside is headed by Bob Fisher, managing director of the Westside subsidiary of Music Collection International (MCI). He is joined by the dozen of British blues producers Mike Vernon, whose Blue Horizon label recorded such legendary acts as Peter Green’s Fleetwood Mac, Chicken Shack, John Mayall, Eric Clapton, and Savoy Brown in the mid-’60s and brought U.K. greats such as Otis Rush, B.B. King, and Hubert Sumlin to a British audience.

The third member of the Blueside triumvirate, agent Alan Robin-son of management company A.R.M., has a track record of handling a roster of domestic and international blues artists in Europe.

Fisher’s ambition for the label is “to create a catalog which will put Blueside up with labels such as Alligator and Bullseye Blues.” It is, he says, a commercial project, but with “a different level of commerciality (from mainstream labels). The rhythms surely will be more Latin-American-oriented, but I would like to include an Argentine touch to them.”

Capitol Radio, the U.K. entertainment group, has agreed to buy a controlling stake in the London alternative station Xfm for 15.9 million pounds ($25.8 million). The deal is subject to approval by two regulatory bodies: the Radio Authority and the Office of Fair Trading. Chris Parry, managing director of both Xfm and the Cure’s label, Fiction Records, will retain the remaining stake. Xfm launched last September as an outlet for new indie music but has turned in poor audience figures.

FORMER X JAPAN LEAD GUITARIST Hide, 33, died the morning of May 2 in an apparent suicide. Hide, whose real name was Hideto Matsumoto, took his own life at his Tokyo apartment, which was rushed to a nearby hospital but died shortly after his arrival, according to police. Hide, like the other members of X Japan, had maintained an active solo career in the past few years, recently scoring a hit single, “Rocket Dive,” with his band Speed Beaver on the Universal Victor label. X Japan, the best-known of Japan’s visual-kei glam-rock bands, formally broke up after holding a farewell concert Dec. 31, 1997, at Tokyo Dome.

U.K. Reissues Label Music Collection International (MCI) has struck an exclusive open-ended third-party licensing deal with Los Angeles-based independent clearance agency Celebrity Licensing Inc. The deal covers a mixture of U.K. and European rights to more than 3,000 recordings from the 1960s to the 1970s, including hits by Paul Anka, Del Shannon, Black Uhuru, Wilson, David Soul, Silver Convention, K.C. & the Sunshine Band, and others. In a related move, MCI has appointed Paul Hatcher head of licensing, reporting to head of acquisitions Nick Cotton, effectively immediate. Hatcher joins from Universal Music U.K., where he held a similar post.

World ‘98, billed as the U.K.’s first all-night outdoor dance festival, has been postponed. It was to have taken place May 21-23 at Knebworth Park, north of London, but it’s rumored to have run into licensing problems. Among the scheduled to appear were Beck (in an Uncle 93.1 date), Tricky, Black Grape, Spiritualized, and Roni Size. Universe ‘98, run by the promotions company of the same name and Birmingham-based MCP Concerts, is the successor to the long-running Tribal Gathering event, which was axed following a recent legal dispute between co-organizers Universe and the Mean Fiddler Organization.
BELGIUM: One of the youngest acts in the booming Belgian blues scene is Fred & the Healers, a powerful trio from Brussels south of the country's capital. Their band was formed in 1994 by 16-year-old guitarist Frédéric Lani. Today the band's debut album, "First" (Kroko Records)—featuring eight original titles plus interpretations of standards by Jimmy Witherspoon and Junior Wells—has sold close to 5,000 units in the south of Belgium alone, figures similar to John Lee Hooker or John Mayall in that market. Lani's energetic guitar playing has boosted Fred & the Healers‘ live reputation, honed over four years of gigging in Benelux.

PolyGram Music Publishing has snapped up the young artists'songwriting, and Kroko Records is currently releasing album releases on France (on Mercury) and in Holland and Switzerland (on TBC). In July, the band will record an album as a quartet that will involve selected guest musicians.

UK: Brian Eno's seminal ambient composition "Music For Airports" received its first performance in the environment for which it was intended when the New York ensemble Bang On A Can played it live April 24 in the check-in hall of London's Stansted airport.

The work was first recorded by Eno in 1978. April's event marked the release of a new recording, "Music For Airports" (Point Records/Philips Classics), featuring new arrangements by Bang On A Can. Afterward, Eno declared that his original recording was "merely a demo awaiting this first proper performance."

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

AUSTRALIA/PUERTO RICO: Two of Sony Music's international stars—Australia's Tina Arena and Puerto Rico's Ricky Martin—have teamed with producer Jimmy Steinman to record the theme to the upcoming summer movie "The Mask Of Zorro." The song, "I Want To Spend The Rest Of My Life Loving You," was written by James Horner. The album with Jennings, artists of Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On." Horner has written the score for "The Mask Of Zorro," a Tristar movie. The soundtrack album on Sony Classical is due for release in the U.S. and internationally after the film opens in July. Both Arena and Martin have Sony albums due this year. The Australian singer is also on the forthcoming multi-artist album of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Whistle Down The Wind" musical, while the Puerto Rican performer has the "official" song of the 1998 World Cup, "La Copa De La Vida.

ADAM WHITE

THE PHILIPPINES/JAPAN: Wolfgang, one of the Philippines' top hard rock/metal bands, is seeing success in Japan. "Wurm," the band's second album on Sony Music Entertainment Philippines (SMEP) Epic label (Global Music Pulse, Billboard, Jan. 17), was released in March in Japan by Sony Music Japan. In support of the album's release, the band played dates in Osaka and Tokyo, including a showcase at the Tokyo venue On-Air West and an acoustic set at an autograph session at a Tower Records in Tokyo. The band's first Epic album, 1998's "Semelmin," was released in the U.S. in December. In Japan, "Semelmin" was partially altered, and two songs originally performed in the Tagalog language were recorded in English. (The original tracks are in English.) According to SMEP media manager Annie Alejo, there are plans to release the U.S. version of "Semelmin" in Japan as well.

DAVID GONZALEZ

U.K.: Watch out for a possible collaboration between new neighbors Liam Howlett of Prodigy and veteran artist Gary Numan. Both have moved into the same area of rural Sussex and agreed to hook up after Howlett completes Prodigy's dates in Beirut, Lebanon, and gets current projects out of the way. Numan—best known for his 79 hit "Cars"—is enjoying a revival in the wake of last year's "Random" covers tribute on his original label, Beggars Banquet. He is currently promoting his latest album, "Exile" (Eagle Records), with a U.S. tour that opened May 5 in Philadelphia. "I'm doing quite a lot at the moment, getting involved with little things with other people," says Numan, who reveals he's also been speaking to Tricky, the Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan, and George Clinton. Howlett says it's too early to talk of material, but he adds, "Gary represents this whole weird, abstract element of music. I wished I had thought about doing something with him on the last album."

SALLY STRATTON and DOMINIC PRIDE

GREECE: This month, prominent Greek singer George Daralas starts a European tour, his sixth since 1981, Daralas, who has already visited six German cities, will perform in Brussels, Helsinki, and Rotterdam, Holland. He'll also perform four dates in the U.K.: two in London and one each in Manchester and Newcastle. In sets that last 2 1/2 hours, Daralas presents his past hits as well as songs by Goran Bregovic (Global Music Pulse, Billboard, Feb. 24, 1996) that are featured on Daralas' latest release, "Thessalou—Yanna With Two Canvas Shoes." Daralas' current album "Two Songs" is being supported by the Tropical label's release of "George Daralas: Live And Unplugged," a show recorded at the old Frankfurt Opera, as well as "Portraits," released last year through EMI's "Hemisphere" world music series.

CORNEL DEVELEGA
Sony Australia, Dion Acknowledge Special Bond

Celine Dion's current Epic album, “Let's Talk About Love,” is already Sony Music Australia's fastest seller ever, according to the company, with more than 400,000 units sold. Dion, pictured here during a recent show at the Crown Entertainment Complex in Melbourne, is on course to hit 1.5 million units with the album, says Sony Music Australia, which claims a special relationship with the Canadian star.

According to Sony/Columbia chairman Denis Handlin, second from right, the album was double-platinum (140,000 units) out of the box. Her previous album, “Falling Into You,” sold more than 1 million units in Australia, making her one of only six acts to do so.

When “Falling Into You” was released in Australia in 1996, the 527 staffers of Sony Music Australia signed a petition asking the singer to inter- rupt her honeymoon in Fiji for a promotional tour here. Dion agreed; Aus- tralia, after all, was an early breakout market for her. When Dion arrived here earlier this year, she talked about “a very special relationship with Deni and with Sony Music Australia.” During her visit, the company presented her with a $10,000 necklace and a golf session with Charlie Earpe, coach to Greg Norman.

Handlin first saw Dion in 1989 at a retail show in the U.S. and invited her Down Under a year later on a promotional trip. “She was unknown here; she could hardly speak English and needed an interpreter at all times,” Handlin remembers. “To see how hot she's become, not just in this region but around the world, is fantastic.”

Recent initiatives around the star included a “Valentine's Version” of her worldwide hit “My Heart Will Go On.” Also pictured here were her manager/head and head of Good Feeling management, René Angèle, left, and Dave Platel, management associate at Good Feeling.

The broadcasters agree that the content increase won’t substantially alter the Canadian recordings that are aired. “There won’t suddenly be more slots for more artists,” says Paul Eastwood, director of national programming for Universal Music Canada. “There will simply be an increase in rotations of artists already being played, particularly in the current top 30.”

Mårtensson, said, “According to the copyright legislation, it is prohibited to make copies of recorded music with the intent to play the copy in a public place. Consequently, it is con- sidered a crime according to the copyright law to play a copied CD in front of a group of people in a club.”

The letter also noted that offenders could be facing with “up to two years” imprisonment, fines, and high liability claims.

The seminar was moderated by IFPI Sweden information officer Claes Olsen and panel members that included Mårtensson, DJ Pierre J., PolyGram Sweden product manager Jonas Lönnblad, and NNW Sweden label manager Patrik Larsson.

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Garry Barker, VP of Maritime Broadcasting System in Halifax, Nova Scotia, agrees. “With the increase of CanCon, what are broad- casters going to do?” he asks. “I would assume they will increase spins. They’re not going anywhere [adding new artists].”

Several broadcasters are upset that struggling “gold,” or oldies, AM stations, with a limited supply of Canadian recordings, aren’t exempt from the proposal.

“Most people are going to do play ‘Sweet City Woman’ by the Stampeders three more times a week. It’s been the same for the international 1971 hit.”

CRTC officials indicate that Can- Con could be boosted to 40% in its next review of radio in five years. This had been proposed by the Canadian Independent Record Production Assn. (CIRPA) and the performing rights organization SOCAN in the review hearings last December.

“It’s now up to us to make sure it gets to 40%, whether by lobbying or by production and promotion,” says Brian Robertson, president of CIRPA. However, Brian Robertson, president of the Canadian Recording Industry Assn., is skeptical of any further change to CanCon. “It’s taken the CRTC 27 years to move it 5%,” he says.
APQ-1

Two Days In May: “Reinventing The Future” Is Theme Of First Billboard/MTV Confab
BY ADAM WHITE

Reinventing the future is often a case of learning from the past. New technologies, artist development and piracy were the topics of the day as Asia’s movers and shakers gathered at The Regent Hotel. “The floodgates opened,” said one senior international executive of unsuccessful industry efforts to prevent a new soundcarrier being exploited by the pirates. “I don’t blame the inventors...technology cannot be stopped.”

That music-business leader wasn’t talking about DVD or the online delivery of music, but well he might.

Continued on page APQ-10

Far East Turbulence: How It’s Affecting The U.S. Music Biz
BY STEVE TRAIMAN

The economic conditions in the Asia Pacific area have had significant effects on how U.S.-based exporters and music publishers are doing business.

A sampling of American distributors, record labels and publishers with interests in the Far East turn up varying degrees of concern. Publishers with their own offices in key territories or operating through licensees are less affected than others who rely on local distributors or retailers. All agree that the recent economic downturn is cyclical and are enthusiastic about the region’s continuing role as a major music market.

One of the most affected is California-based distributor Valley Media Inc. “We’ve traditionally worked with the larger multinational chains and distribution channels over there,” says Ken Alterwitz.

Continued on page APQ-6

Insider APQ

PAGE APQ-2
SIX QUESTIONS WITH MTV’S FRANK BROWN

PAGE APQ-2
PIRATES PUMP UP THE VOLUME

PAGE APQ-4
JAPANESE, EUROPEANS STAY BULLISH

PAGE APQ-6
THE NEXT SOUNDS YOU’LL HEAR

PAGE APQ-6
AUSTRALIA MAKES OUT

HONG KONG — As the Asian economic crisis continues to smolder, businesses are suffering on a regular basis, small and large company budgets have been slashed, and consumer spending power has clearly shrunk.

The music industry, however, remains relatively bullish, and labels appear to be adopting smarter marketing strategies in order to maintain margins and profile.

“We haven’t made many changes in the way we market or promote during the current economic downturn,” says Tom Van Dell, regional VP marketing, Asia Pacific, for Universal Music. “We’ve always spent money effectively in areas that help us sell albums.”

“Being the newest kid on the block of all the majors in Asia Pacific, we do not have the luxury of supporting only our established acts,” says Van Dell. “Strategically, we will continue to remain dedicated to the process of breaking new hands and artists. We back artists whose music we feel suits the taste of audiences in the various countries throughout this region, irrespective of their success—or lack of success—in the U.S. or any other market. We emphasize placing marketing support on what sells locally.”

Van Dell says that regionwise marketing activities continue to have a limited effect at the local level, and, although it offers support, the work that leads to a successful release has to be done locally. “We have had regionwide success with acts like No Doubt and Aqua,” he explains, “but the localized approach has allowed us to weather the current crisis by creating hits from various artists in each of our markets.”

BRING THE ACTS OVER

Andy Yavasis, VP of marketing at Sony Music Asia, declares, “The best form of defense in this climate is attack.” Describing the success Sony recently has enjoyed in the region with the “Titanic” soundtrack. Yavasis says, “When you’ve built that kind of momentum, you have to keep it burning.” The label’s proactive marketing strategy involves continuing to bring artists into the region in spite of some of the problems that such activity can entail.

“We simply have to be smart,” he says. “There is nothing more impactful than artists touring, but this has become difficult due to the economic crisis. For example, Savage Garden will not tour in Thailand, Indonesia or the Philippines. We want to see as many tours as possible to keep generating further...”

Continued on page APQ-6

Artist Marketing ’98: Perils & Opportunities

Correspondent Ann Tsang surveys executives at key independent and multinational labels about how the past year’s economic turmoil has forced new approaches to exposing and promoting artists in the region.
Pirates Plunder New Territory in Post-Handover Blitz

The region—particularly Hong Kong—is becoming even more active as a counterfeit center. Can China's proposed Prevention of Copyright Bill stop piracy at its source and create a strict system for the protection of intellectual-property rights? By ANN TSANG

HONG KONG—Responding to a massive increase in CD-manufacturing capacity in Hong Kong since its return to Chinese sovereignty last July—and the potential that capacity creates for CD piracy—the government recently issued the first draft of a new Prevention of Copyright Bill. The measure, due to take effect soon, seeks to prevent and control copyright piracy by its source and create a strict system for the protection of intellectual-property rights in the former British colony.

The bill also calls for development of a registration and source-identification system for all CD plants. It will require compulsory licensing of optical-disc manufacturers and the mandatory use of "manufacturers' codes" on optical discs produced in Hong Kong.

This move in Asia is already lobbying for amendments on issues such as the system for determining manufacturers' codes and penalty levels. The organization also believes that equipment and CDs from plants manufacturing without proper registration should be liable to forfeiture.

NEW LAW VS. NO LAW

There is currently no registration requirement for businesses manufacturing optical discs in Hong Kong, and customs officers have difficulty locating CD plants and identifying the operators involved. The authorities do not have the legal power to make routine inspections of these plants, and the new bill is expected to help remedy these problems.

Julian Giouw, regional director in Asia for the IFPI, believes that pirate CDs found in Hong Kong today are no longer originating in the Mainland, as they were before the handover. This is because of drastic action taken in the past year by the Chinese authorities, resulting in a sharp decrease in overall CD production on the Mainland.

Between 43 and 50 CD presses were seized in 1997 alone, with imprisonment terms of two to 17 years imposed on illegal manufacturers. Consequently, China has become one of the most dangerous countries for pirate manufacturers. In a two-pronged approach, the government and customs authorities have simultaneously enforced strict controls on the entry of manufacturing equipment into China. The upshot of the action is that, by the second half of 1997, there were insufficient pirate CDs to supply the Chinese domestic market alone, without even taking Hong Kong into consideration.

However, the result of that crackdown on the mainland has been a dramatic increase in the number of CD factories in the special administrative region (SAR) of Hong Kong itself—hence the latest legislation proposed by the SAR government—and, even more significantly, an increase in manufacturing in neighboring Macau, the Portuguese-controlled territory about 35 miles from Hong Kong.

Giouw says that in Hong Kong the IFPI has pinpointed at least 35 factories, whereas prior to 1997, it was only aware of seven. However, in Macau, where prior to 1997 there were no CD plants, today there are at least 28 known plants, with up to 40 suspected. The IFPI states that these plants have been established mainly to supply China with both legitimate and pirate product.

REDUCTION IN LEGIT ORDERS

Given the recent boom in various forms of CD software, China cannot do without its own demand. At the end of 1997, the government decided to go to all legitimate order books and orders coming from China to Hong Kong for pressing have dropped drastically. Pirate CD product coming out of Hong Kong has increased because the legitimate orders have been reduced.

When China took its enforcement action last June, the supply of pirated CDs virtually dried up. Pirate operators sought new territories and began to focus on Southeast Asia, resulting in two or three plants opening in Singapore, 15 new locations in Malaysia and two or three in Indonesia, each catering to both legitimate and pirate product demands in its own market.

"The piracy problem exists in a number of territories but is currently most visible in Singapore and Malaysia because export is easier via common geographical borders," says Giouw. "When product was previously supplied from China, stock was based on product availability and what the Mainland factories decided to produce. In Singapore and Malaysia, anything that is released legitimately is then available in a pirated version within two to three days, and the choice is more specifically catering to local tastes, Southeast Asia is generally worse off than it was before. But governments across the region are looking at new ways of dealing with the problem," notes Giouw.

The record companies are also supporting the situation with their own anti-piracy measures.

"There is no one label that we can single out in terms of action being taken," says Giouw. "They are all doing what they can on the marketing side to prevent direct impact on their own profits as well as actually fighting the issue. Each record company has to start looking at its value of sales and how they can compete for the ever-decreasing consumer dollar. This is the key to label survival, particularly for the independent."

OUTLOOK: IMPROVEMENT BY CHRISTMAS

Giouw is not optimistic about a change in the current situation in the short-term. "I do not believe that 1998 is a year where we'll see much improvement, mainly due to the Asian economic crisis that has created an impetus for people to buy cheaper products," he says. Pirate CDs range in price from $2 to $5 U.S., whereas the legitimate product retails for between $8 and $12.

"Governments have only just started to look at the situation, and it will take some time for the implementation of legislation to actually happen and then for the relevant enforcement agencies to be effective," he continues. "However, I do hope to see some improvement just prior to Christmas of 1998."
Japan: Under-Affected And Still Promoting Aggressively To The Region

BY STEVE McCLURE

TOKYO—Asia's economic crisis so far hasn't had a major impact on the Japanese music business. Most of the interplay between the Asian and Japanese industries takes place at the artist level, where changing musical trends matter more than fluctuating exchange rates.

The consensus in Japan is that, while the Asian crisis is having little direct effect on the Japanese music market, any general economic downturn in Japan triggered by Asia's economic woes could lead to lower music sales here.

In Japan, the biggest single instance of fallout from the Asian crisis has been the decision by indie label Pony Canyon to restructure its Asian operations. Late last year, the label announced that it was closing four of the five Asian subsidiaries it had established earlier this decade during the region's economic boom. The only remaining Asian affiliate was wholly owned Pony Canyon Music Malaysia.

Kazuhiko Saito, GM of Pony Canyon's international business-affairs department, confirmed that the region's recent economic woes were the main reason for the closures. While sales for the five companies totaled between 2.5 billion and 3 billion yen ($18.5 million to $22.5 million) in both 1995 and 1996, he says the 1997 figure is expected to be significantly lower. Pony Canyon's Asian subsidiaries released both local and Japanese repertoire, with the Taiwanese operation having the highest local-content ratio at some 60%.

PONY GALLOPS BACK TO ASIA

In March, Pony Canyon made its re-entry into Asia by setting up a new wholly owned Hong Kong subsidiary, Pony Canyon Entertainment Pacific, which took over from the disbanded joint-venture Golden Pony Entertainment (HK) Ltd. And the shuttered South Korean joint-venture, Sampony Distribution, is set to be superseded this month or next by Pony Canyon Korea, which will be 16%-owned by a local partner.

Saito says that, instead of spending money on developing new local artists, Pony Canyon's Asian operations will concentrate on marketing Japanese and international repertoire.

PRODUCT FOR CHINA

Tokyo-based production agency HoriPro is still sanguine about the possibility of finding and developing musical talent in Asia. A HoriPro affiliate has maintained an office in Beijing for the past several years, but the focus is on product that will sell in China—the company's attempts to market Chinese artists in Japan through its SoundAsia label haven't been particularly successful, according to Kaz Hosokawa, HoriPro's VP of international affairs.

Echoing that comment is Hiroyuki "Holly" Otsuki, GM of Victor's international division, who notes the lack of

European Music Companies Rethink Asian Options, But Most Remain Bullish On Region

BY CHRIS FULLER

LONDON—The ongoing economic woes in much of Asia have forced Western European distributors and promoters to drastically rethink their strategies in the region.

While most European music companies with global ambitions have come to prioritize Asia in recent years, most are now having to come to terms with riding out what could be a lengthy pan-regional recession.

Among those active in the region, however, many are also taking a bullish tack. Stuart Watson, chairman of SWAT Enterprises, with offices in Britain and Singapore, sees Asia's current problems, exacerbated in several instances by political instability, "as an inevitable consequence of a market growing up. Of course, there are problems, but no more so than we saw in Central and Latin America in the 1980s. There are still Top 20s—a hit is still a hit...and where there's pain there's gain.

"We are remaining flexible and constantly assessing the situation on a territory-by-territory basis," says Watson. "We have a range of promotional campaigns lined up for various pop artists. In fact, if anything, we are stepping up rather than cutting back!"

SWAT, which finds licensees and promotes artists across the region for independents such as Zomba, Jive, edel, Telstar, Reader's Digest and Big Life and Terry Ellis' new venture, Tiger Star, "is determined not to be dragged down among the doom-and-gloom merchants and write off Asia," adds Watson, noting that "for us, it's about 10 different countries and 10 different currency-exchange rates requiring 10 different strategies." On a sliding scale, Watson considers that in Indonesia, such factors as the Suharto regime, rampant inflation and spiraling import costs make the territory "very difficult, the worst of the lot." And Korea, he notes, has witnessed a number of wholesaler bankruptcies, "and the bad debt has spread across the music industry." The picture improves markedly in Thailand, however, "where, in six months, they have managed to recover about half of the original half-devaluation," says Watson. And, at the top end, Taiwan has been relatively unaffected, as has the Philippines, where SWAT reports Aaron Carter (edel) has gone gold and Damage (Big Life) has sold 50,000 units.

VIRTUES OF EDEL

At Germany's edel, which, under the leadership of CEO Michael Haentjes, has become one of the world's largest independent record companies, director of international Annaika Meyer-Willkomm echoes Watson in her use of the term "flexibility," but also cites the need for tolerance, patience and remaining supportive of our local partners.

The company, which has label deals with Form Records in Malaysia and Singapore, CMM in Indonesia, What's Music? in Taiwan and Hong Kong, Fever in Thailand and Alpha in the Philippines, "has moved to renegotiate certain parts of our agreements within some territories," says Meyer-Willkomm. "Due to inflation, it's a sad truth that some of our partners have found they simply cannot afford to pay the agreed-upon advances.

Sales in Japan, the world's second-largest market, which are expected to remain stagnant for at least the rest of the year, "are obviously of great concern to us," says Meyer-Willkomm. "We have signed a couple of label deals there and are remaining optimistic. Aaron Carter for example, will have his album released in June on Toshiba/EMI. Across the region, edel is grooming boy group Take 5 and vocalist Trey D for long-term success.

Continued on page APQ-14

From left: edel's Aaron Carter has gone gold. Edel is grooming both Take 5 and Trey D for Asian audiences.
Welcome Leon.

Sony Music Asia welcomes Leon Lai, one of Asia’s greatest superstars, into our family.

Sony Music Asia
Sony Music International
New Asian Talent

SOUTH KOREA
Artist: S.E.S.
Album: "S.E.S."
Label: King

Among South Korea's devastating economic crisis, which has hit the music industry hard, one artist-management company has come up with an innovative promotion strategy: a female group whose members can actually sing, besides looking good. The group in question is trio S.E.S., and its management, S.M. Entertainment, has carefully honed the trio's image to make it stand out from the rest of the pop pack.

"S.E.S. have appeared on almost every TV music show but only on music shows," stresses S.M. Entertainment president Jeong Ha-ek. "We wanted to make sure they are perceived as singers working together, not actresses working individually. So far, our strategy has been working.

Apparently so. S.E.S.' eponymous debut album, licensed to King Records and released late last December, has sold more than 600,000 copies, despite Korea's economic downturn.

Media: Their first music video, "I'm Your Girl," stayed on the 10-most-requested list of cable-music station m.net for 13 weeks and 14 weeks on KMV, another music channel. S.E.S.' second video, "Oh! My Love," which was released in March, is still high in the charts. "Most music videos tend to focus on the female singer's sexiness, but S.E.S.' videos are different," says Park Hee-Young, producer of m.net's "Korean Pop Best 27" program. "S.E.S. are instead portrayed as straightforward singers, which appeals to fans. People are sick of artificial artists and entertainers who can't sing.

Retail: The group's album has been a steady seller since its release, reflecting S.M.'s strategy of building up S.E.S. slowly. "The album is not the kind of mega-slam album where we run out of stock, but its sales are still pretty good considering they're new and the economy is so bad," says Kim Im-Soon, a buyer at Tower Records' Korean operation who handles domestic repertoire.

Four months after its Korean debut, S.E.S. made its Japanese debut, appearing on NHK TV, as well as shows on many other stations in Japan. S.M. has signed a deal with Japanese production company Sky Planning, which will oversee the group's debut in Japan in September on a label to be confirmed. "Our deal [with Sky Planning] establishes a model of how Korean entertainers can expand their activities abroad," says Hae-ek. "It all goes well in Japan, we hope to take the group to Hong Kong, Taiwan and the rest of Asia."

—CHO HYUN-JIN

INDONESIA
Artist: ir/i
Label: Sony Music Indonesia
Album: "Radja"

SMI Marketing assistant Rudy Ramayu.

SMI discovered Indonesia (SMI) "discovered" the pop-rock alternative band ir/i in the university town of Bandung, West Java. Since forming in 1992, the band has built a strong following with live performances on the crowded

MARKETING '98: PERILS & OPPORTUNITIES

exposure, but, in order to maximize impact, you need at least three days in each of nine different markets—at an extensive length of time to ask an artist to be in Asia.

ID'S AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

Sony is circumventing these obstacles with certain artists by bringing them to Singapore where it partners with MTV Asia to undertake a heavy schedule of promotional activities that will provide regional exposure. Examples of this are Tira Arena's five-track acoustic set and Savage Garden's "Live And Loud" recording. "We may only have time to cover one country, but from there we record ID's for all our other countries and arrange media video-conferencing, which saves a lot of time but still allows us to cover all bases," says Yavasis.

Stuart Rubin, VP of marketing, Asia Pacific, at BMG, says that his company has always had a strategy of focusing on fewer non-Asian artists in the region—otherwise, "You just end up pouring international music down a funnel."

TORN UP DOWN UNDER

"During the downturn, we're focusing even more on fewer acts," says Rubin. "We need to make the artists and the albums that we work on last a lot longer." Rubin says that there are a surprising number of releases available, whether import or local, and that focus is extremely important. "We're choosing the right artist, we have to listen to our local countries and be less top-down in terms of what we tell them to release," he says. In terms of current international acts, BMG is placing heavy resources behind Asia's Pacific:

Cover article

Australia Makes The Best Of It

A regional trade fair and a push for Sydney mark Oz biz's determination to take advantage of a difficult situation. BY CHRISTIE ELIEZER

Melbourne—Australian music executives could certainly lament the impact of the Asian economic crisis—the last markets, the fall of export prices. But sticking its neck out, the company is prepared to make it stand out from the rest of the pop pack.

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MARKETING '98: PERILS & OPPORTUNITIES

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THANKS FOR BEING THERE. AND IF YOU WEREN'T, GUESS YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO READ ABOUT IT.
MARKETING ‘98: PERILS & OPPORTUNITIES

Continued from page 1402-6

Natalie Imbruglia, the former Australian soap-opera star who has broken through in Europe and the U.S. with the hit single “Torn.”

Sanya Dhuan, the president of Taiwan-based Rock Records, says that the Pan-China market has not been affected so dramatically by the Asian crisis to date, but that his independent label may need to prepare for problems.

“In general, we will have to spend more money on artists and production,” Dhuan says. “The winner-takes-all situation will become more and more relevant. New artists and new music have a better chance in this type of climate; new things will give people hope as well as excite and motivate them.”

RICKY MARTIN’S HOT SEAT

Sono is also looking toward breaking new international artists such as Latin act Ricky Martin in the region, through cooperation with MTV’s. “We are committed to ‘breaking’ this artist in Asia,” says Yavasis. “We were helped by MTV’s selecting him as the first subject of its ‘Hot Seat’ and are confident that it will help us break him in the region.”

KEEPING THE PRODUCT ON THE ROAD

A sample of the leading companies in the region contacted for this report emphatically shows that they are not releasing fewer albums by either international or domestic artists.

Universal’s Van Dell says that necessary changes in product sourcing and manufacturing allow the label to continue releasing the majority of its front-line titles in addition to properly servicing its accounts and music buyers with back catalog.

“In any economic crunch, the back catalog suffers most,” says Van Dell. “The key is to continue offering as many titles as possible—via normal selling- and promo campaigns—so that we can maintain a relatively stable base.”

In Singapore, Warner says that its focus remains heavily on international artists, and, although it is releasing the same number of albums, the label finds that it has become necessary to move its inventory levels in a smarter way. As for Rock, the company has undergone major structural changes whereby it has created more labels—which it hopes will be more efficient and lead to increased output.

SONY LOOKS HOMEWORD

Sony’s regional headquarters looks heavily toward its domestic repertoire to maintain growth. “We need strong rosters of local artists,” remarks Yavasis. “Our strategy is to develop an organic growth from domestic repertoire.” Sony’s most recent examples of this are in Taiwan, where it successfully broke Mandarin act CoCo and resurrected idol Harlem Yu’s flagging popularity. In Hong Kong, the label recently signed Leon Lai from PolyGram for $1.3 million (U.S.). “We are aggressively seeking to develop our A&R roster in Hong Kong,” says Van Dell. “Last year, we had success in the notoriously difficult market of Korea. Thailand is aggressive, and we will see the fruits of our activity in Malaysia in the next three to four months.”

In the Philippines, Sony recently signed rock band Wolfgang, dance act Kulay, whose single “Delicious” will also be released in Europe, and another new act, Hungry Young Poets. It is clearly prepared to spend in this area. Even in Indonesia, where the economic crisis is probably having the worst effect, Sony has signed new artists since early this year. Says Yavasis, “We have to keep moving forward, and the best is yet to come.”

Rock also acknowledges that its local artists are key to its continued success. Emil Chou and Wu Bai are examples of Mandarin acts which are an example of Universal’s marketing strategy that appears to have paid off. “We honed in on the band prior to any other market outside of Scandinavia, which allowed us to secure a guarantee of three presales.”

LESS MONEY FOR MORE MUSIC

With restricted budgets, it seems inevitable that the Asian labels would find themselves with fewer ad dollars to spend.

Warner Music Singapore managing director Kathleen Tan says that her company needs to be more focused and restrict itself to fewer campaigns—but ones that offer the same amount of penetration. “We simply need to be more single-minded,” she says.

Sono’s Yavasis states that his label is definitely not spending less marketing cash. “We are bullish in markets like Singapore, particularly with acts such as Savage Garden, which we are supporting with major TV, radio and print campaigns. Basically, if the music is great, people will want it.”

Rubin explains that BMG has a set advertising budget, which is essentially a percentage of its turnover. “If we see the artist is going to sell, then we’ll spend money accordingly,” he says. “And it’s up to the individual countries to select what they believe will sell. It’s not just about spending lots of money; it’s about breaking acts at the bottom end and building them up from the street level.”

COMPETITION WITH COMPILATIONS

Compilation albums are a product that can be strategically marketed to the consumer looking to receive value for money, particularly in developing markets—where the per-capita expenditure on music is already low—and also in the more developed markets where spending power is down.

Another area of marketing focus is the creation of distinctive packaging, inclusion of bonus tracks and bonus video discs and premiums to drive the consumer to retail, help build product preference and circumvent piracy.

“Someone has to be responsible for creating the vibe in the marketplace,” declares Warner’s Tan. With its big Madonna release, “Ray Of Light,” Warner in Singapore split its marketing and promotion campaign into two phases. The first involved massive in-store exposure together with heavy radio and print promotion and consumer contests. The second featured a heavy TV campaign, which the label believes offers the retail sector added confidence. With 80 spots on a combination of Singapore’s Channels 5 and 8, supported by heavy rotation music-video airplay, the album went platinum (15,000 units) after the first phase. Warner hoped to double sales through the use of TV advertising, in addition to creating a strong upswing in sales of the popular Madonna catalog. Approximately 60% of Warner’s $9.88 million marketing budget has been allocated to TV advertising, 15% to in-store promotions and the remainder to radio and print. “Print is very secondary, as it tends to be too fragmented,” says Tan. “For us, TV is still the prime medium, and it can also measure sales response more directly.”

“Creativity is our main criteria for marketing records,” says Universal’s Van Dell. “The most successful TV campaign so far is one that reaches the most people and sells the most records with just the right spending. In order to achieve this, lateral thinking and below-the-line promotions are key. Editorial, press, contests, club promotions, radio airplay, regional video-channel support and prime retail presence go a long way toward creating demand for the right artists and the right records.”

Continued on page APQ-14
The UK's fastest growing pop sensation. Blowing up on all continents.

The most celebrated new arrival on the UK indie scene. Gold in the UK & sparkling Worldwide.


Dance / rock innovators sweeping the Asia Pacific region. 100,000 sold in Indonesia alone.

Hong Kong's not the only great thing Britain's given away recently.
Continued by national's developing music executing work if more ensure people Conference's 18 in those. NESUHI APQ-1

Today, finding substantial movie Two-Minute will been. when and those Nesuhi Ertegun, Asian Future." Ertegun, which died in 1980, cannot be there, but his deep-rooted belief in the value of developing local talent and his equally deep outrage at music piracy will be just as relevant.

So will the need to debate the most pressing issues of the day given that music-business professionals, whether they work for themselves, for independent companies or for the multinationals—have a common interest in identifying and executing strategies to counter the region's current economic troubles. In difficult seas, good ideas—shared in an open forum—can lift every boat.

The Asian success of the "Titanic" soundtrack (with more than a million albums sold in the region) proves that, if a movie and its music make an emotional connection, people will find the money to buy it, no matter what their circumstances.

Finding that emotional connection—the heart of music and culture—is what the Asia/Pacific industry must do to ensure its health and prosperity. Discovering and sustaining new artists will be the topic of one of the Asian Music Conference's most important sessions, "Today's Talent And The Two-Minute (That Long?) Career."

Moreover, the value of local artists as national assets, as cultural standard-bearers, is likely to be reflected during the AMC discussions. "We can produce foreign income for those artists and their home countries. Records are an export commodity, ambassadors of culture which can bring in substantial foreign earnings," the speaker, the late Nesuhi Ertegun, again, talking in Kuala Lumpur in 1979. Today, an artist such as Jacky Cheung is proudly pro-

claimed by PolyGram as one of its global assets. "Our achievements in national repertoire demonstrate how major stars can emerge anywhere in the world," said PolyGram president Alain Levy recently, "and that the trend towards multicultural music...is now firmly established." (Continued on page APQ-15)

Asian Music Conference Schedule
May 17-18, The Regent Hotel, Hong Kong

** May 17 Welcoming Reception
** May 18 Conference Agenda (program subject to change)
- Registration
- Welcome Address
- "The 900-Pound Gorilla"
  Panels include S.P. Dick (EMI), Sam Dunn (Rock), Tom Yoda (Avex), Lachlan Rutherford (Warner Music)
- Keynote Address
- Lunch
- "Today's Talent And The Two-Minute (That Long?) Career"
  Panels include Florence Chan (Pan Music), Michael Gudinski (Mushroom), Michael Hocking (Midas Promotions), "Anti-piracy: What Have You Done For Us Lately?"
  Panels include Chris Britton (RPS Retail), J.C. Glenn (FFR), John McKellan (Haddanes), Julio Ribeiro (IDM)
- Keynote Address
- Q&A
- Closing Party

U.S. BUSINESS
Continued from page APQ-1

senior VP, sales and marketing, "We supply them with product not available in their local markets—and, following that sales mentality, we have not been affected as much as those exporters who have developed a parallel business."

In specific territories, he points to Singapore, "where we owned the island eight months ago and are now down to one HMV outlet. In Korea, where both the currency was hard hit and government regulations are very stringent on what can be imported, our volume has been cut so substantially—by over 90%—that it can't support the dealer infrastructure. In Japan, we're still doing significant business with HMV and local chains Sei-densha and Shinsiedo, which specialize in deep catalog. With the yen up to 130+ against the U.S. dollar, our customers have reexamined how they're marketing and cut back on their depth of titles, so our business is off about 30%. In all the markets, we are working with all our key accounts to develop special-order programs as an alternative to going out of business."

PULLING IN THEIR HORNS
Nicholas Firth, president of BMG Music Publishing, had just returned from Hong Kong before this interview. BMG has wholly owned companies in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and Japan, and opened an office in Beijing last December as the first major with a presence on Mainland China.

"The market overall has fallen significantly," Firth observes, "and, based on recent information and first-hand contacts, it hasn't bottomed out yet. We see at least another year of concern, but this time we won't be blindsided. Consumer purchasing of music is down, and as a music publisher, my perception is that the record compa-

Continued on page APQ-15
AARON CARTER
LITTLE MR. BIG CONQUERS THE WORLD:

AARON CARTER (ALBUM) GOLD IN SPAIN (50,000), NORWAY (25,000), CANADA (50,000), DENMARK (25,000), PHILIPPINES (20,000), TAIWAN (25,000), SWEDEN (40,000), GERMANY (250,000)

CRAZY LITTLE PARTY GIRL GOLD IN NORWAY (10,000), SWEDEN (15,000)

CRUSH ON YOU GOLD IN GERMANY (250,000 UNITS), NORWAY (10,000)

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POLICE RAIDS IN LION CITY

It has been reported that $17.3 million (U.S.) was lost through music piracy in Singapore last year while a total of 135,000 pirated CDs were seized in 103 raids—at least two-thirds the volume taken in 1996. The International Intellectual Property Alliance has subsequently demanded that Singapore be placed on the U.S. government’s Priority Watch List.

Chee Shin Wei, CEO of the Singapore Phonogram and Videogram Association (SPVA), acknowledges the serious nature of the situation in the country. “It’s pretty grave,” he says. “Piracy rates have almost doubled—from 16% in 1996 to 30% last year. We are trying to approach the problem on several fronts by lobbying the government for stricter laws related to CD production and requesting more authorized police raids and the prevention of CD vendors setting up in public areas.”

Chee says that progress to date has been slow, and, in spite of the new copyright legislation passed in Parliament in February, it is still too early to gauge the impact. The regulation of CD factories in Singapore is expected to be announced later this spring. In the meantime, Chee says, “The retail community is hurting, and it is not helped by the monetary crisis or the encouragement of parallel imports.”

However, it is not all bad news. “A positive thing to come out of the rise in piracy is the realization that existing copyright laws are not adequate and recognition of the need to introduce new measures, particularly in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Thailand and Indonesia,” says Giono. He notes the fact that China may also be gradually opening up with its recent change of government and will be looking more toward an open economy.

This is important for the record industry, as it may allow the labels to open offices in China and thus be able to exert a higher degree of control. Giono also cites new markets, such as those of Indo-China—Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia—that have high growth potential but are also potential hunting grounds for the pirates.

“...They will probably find new locations as soon as any local government catches up with them, as was the case in China,” says Giono. “It’s a long battle. The situation in Macau is particularly alarming because it is difficult for any normal legal process to take its course due to the high level of Triad [organized crime] infiltration. It is a territory of less than half a million people, where everybody knows one other. Any effective combative operations are difficult unless the government is strong.”

BLACK HOLE OF MACAU

The future in Macau appears unclear. “In the next 18 months, the political situation will be difficult; therefore, nobody will be doing very much about issues such as this,” says Giono. “It’s a black hole.”

The industry estimates that, by the end of this year, Macau may have the capacity to produce up to half a billion CDs, against a local consumption of less than 1 million. Audio consumption alone for the Asian region—not including Japan—is 300 million to 400 million CDs. Most major software companies have stated that they have not ordered pressing in Macau, which means that all product coming out of the Portuguese enclave is either pirated or unauthorized.

PIRATES PLUNDER

Continued from page APQ-2

director of BMG Music Publishing in Asia, has long been frustrated by the piracy situation. He sees the current Singapore situation as "dire."

"The obvious problem for us," Loiterton says, "is that piracy just eats away from legitimate sales and the publishers don't get paid." He says the combination of a 5%-to-10% downturn in the market, coupled with a 10%-to-15% piracy rate, will certainly affect BMG's revenues in the market.

"As publishers, we should be involved in action as much as we can, not only against piracy, but also the recording and sale of illegal cover versions," says Loiterton. "What bothers me the most is not simply the effect on revenue, but that this type of problem sets the standards of the industry back five to 10 years."

"In Thailand, the rate of piracy used to be 95%, and the IFPI got it down to 15%. It is now back to 50%; as we take one step forward, we take two steps back. When piracy becomes so widespread, you know you've got a serious problem, and if it continues to deteriorate, the entire Asian market will revert back to what it was 10 years ago."

SIX QUESTIONS

Continued from page APQ-2

To what degree is MTV working to create joint ventures with the labels and the retailers to maintain market presence?

The network has created a new tertiary revenue stream through various forms of merchandising, including the creation of compilation albums with labels like Universal Music and PolyGram to create marketing and revenue benefits for both parties. "MTV Alternative Nation" [distributed through Universal Music and backed by Levis] and "MTV Most Wanted—Boys" [PolyGram Records] are doing great business all over the region through such retail outlets as HMV, Tower Records, and Borders, and retail sales figures are estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. In India, MTV has worked with Magnason on "Unplugged Colonial Cousins" and PolyGram on a Hindi remix called "MTV’s Laila." In Taiwan, we released a Mandarin version of the "Macarena" single with the independent label What’s Music! We will certainly continue to work with the record companies to produce similar product.

Across your network’s Asian feeds, what is the current domestic-vs-international airplay schedule?

It differs according to the territories we broadcast into. In India, we play 70% Indian and Hindi soundtrack product and 30% international product. The same mix exists in Taiwan, where it’s 70% Mandarin vs. 30% international. These are the mixes that our audiences want. In Southeast Asia, it is market-dependent. For example, in the Philippines it is not so necessary to localize because there is more demand for international music. For every major market, the music mix is driven by the local consumers, with additional input from the labels. To ensure we have the right balance, we have our own TAR (Talent & Artist Relations) people on the ground in the various markets helping us decide what we should be playing.

—Ann Tsang

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Global delivery & global protection. That is NMPA’s goal.
success Victor has had promoting Chinese rock band Hei Bao in Japan. On the other hand, the label has been very successful over the past few years in promoting Japanese female idol star Noriko Sakai in Taiwan. This fall, Sakai will play live dates in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai as March ties to bolster popularity in Asian territories beyond Taiwan.

Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) is aggressively promoting Japanese acts it thinks will appeal to Asian audiences. Last month, the label sponsored a promotional tour by Japanese techno star Ken Ishii that took in Taipei, Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Manila in support of the Southeast Asian release of Ishii's two most recent albums, "Jelly Tones" and "Metal Blue America."

PROMOTING PUFFY

Other SMEJ acts the label is pushing in Southeast Asia include the female pop duo Puffy, whose eponymous debut album "Worm" was released on Sony Records March 21, the label released a compilation titled "Asian Beats," comprising tracks by a wide variety of artists from the region, including Coco Lee, Harlem Yu, Anggun and Ai Jing. The Japanese pop duo Puffy, who produced those acts, also held a highly successful "TK Family" tour in the region in summer 1997, followed by dates in China and Hong Kong with Amuro and his new band, Museum, in November.

But Komuro's efforts to find new single artists by means of TK News, his joint venture with News Corp., seem to be on hold, with the venture having done next to nothing since being set up in late 1996. That inactivity had more to do with behind-the-scenes maneuvering in the Japanese music business, though, so it's too early to discount Komuro as a player in the broader Asian music industry.

Sony's Mori speaks for many in the Japanese industry when he says the Asian economic crisis doesn't mean Japanese music companies will halt all their activities in the region. "We're not going to do nothing just because the market is slow," he emphasizes. "If we have something we can sell, we'll sell it. But rather than launching large-scale campaigns, we want to carry out each project one at a time."

MARKETING '98: PERILS & OPPORTUNITIES

In Sweden, MNW Records has—prior to the economic crash in Asia—forged strong inroads into Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, and, unusually for an independent, into mainland China. MNW's director for Asia, Jean Hsiao Wernheim, is confident that the downturn will, in fact, have long-term benefits.

"There's been a shakeout, for sure, but from my viewpoint the only real change is that the markets have become more competitive and hence more selective in their choice of material," she says. "In countries where its particularly tough, like Korea, the disappearance of some wholesalers is not necessarily bad from our point of view. Those that remain are the strongest and better for us to work with anyway. As with any kind of crisis, the fittest will survive. And the smarter Asian companies have already moved to restructure and adapt to the changed market conditions."

Japan, again, is an MNW priority; the Swedish company has high hopes there for the rap-rock act Clawfinger and the pop-jazz act Yogos, whose TriStar/Sony album has already sold 18,000 units, according to the label. But it's also proving important both as a market in its own right, especially for MNW indie-pop act Cinnamon and girls vocalist Cam, and as a musical bridge to China. Though, as Hsiao Wernheim notes, "China also has its own distinct tastes, and as the infrastructure there is virtually nonexistent, it represents a very different place in which to do business. We toured [dance-rap act] Look Twice there last year, and the reaction was excellent."

DANES ROCK ASIA

In Copenhagen, EMI-Medley international director Thomas Hjorne stresses the need to "support our colleagues in Southeast Asia during what is undeniably a difficult time." But despite the slump, for Hjorne it's largely "business as usual. In fact, business is good! Across the region, we have sold approximately 800,000 units of the new Michael Learns To Rock album 'Nothing To Lose,' while the 'Paint My Love: Greatest Hits' album by the group continues to move well and has now topped 3.1 million units."

A firm believer in the notion that, in times of crisis, "People need to listen to good music, to escape their daily problems for a little while," Hjorne is fine-tuning the company's promotional campaigns in line with the "widely varying market conditions. EMI-Medley is now realizing a broad pan-regional push, for example, for the male duo Breeze, whose first single, 'Just A Feeling,' received radio promotion early this spring.

"As is [the] usual procedure with our acts," says Hjorne, "we are planning a promo visit with Breeze to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, beginning mid-May, just after the album release, until the beginning of June. During a second leg, we will tie up the countries we missed first time around." Later in the year, a similar campaign will be put into place for former Cut'n'Move lead singer Zindy.

FEARS FOR JAPAN

Virtually across the board, the multinational majors have issued profits warnings because of weaknesses in the Far East markets, though PolyGram has reported it can shrug off the worst of the crisis thanks to its strong local repertoire. Sony, meanwhile, which reports profits in Japanese yen, says it will weather the worst of the storm thanks largely to the powerful sales of the "Titanic" soundtrack.

Among U.K.-based exporters, Graham Lambdon, managing director of Lighting Export, voices fears that the malaise, particularly affecting Thailand, Korea and Indonesia, will spill over into the company's primary foreign market, Japan.

"It's certainly affected us," says Lambdon, who has built a
strong business in Asia for dance, indie, mid-price and budget material. "Not only are the Asian currencies weak, but the U.K. currency is very strong. In effect, it's a double-whammy, exacerbated by strong sales of local artists."

In a business that "does not enjoy huge margins," says Lambdon, "we must look to find products at attractive prices which may not be available locally and where we can look to make a reasonable profit. You simply cannot work on margins of 2% or 3%.

In Hong Kong, another blight for Lightning was the new copyright law designed to stem parallel imports and battle piracy, approved shortly before the handover from Britain last year. "The law has had the effect of also keeping out a lot of legitimate product, and this has certainly hit us hard," says Lambdon. "I think it has deprived the Hong Kong consumer of choice and could actually be encouraging piracy. Local criminal elements are likely to move to take advantage of the situation by putting illegal compilations on the market."

Jonathan Gilbride, until recently managing director at another prominent U.K. exporter, Caroline International, also bemoans the new Hong Kong copyright law ("a very damaging piece of legislation, which wiped out our most important Asian market virtually overnight") and cites it as part of "a combination of negatives in Asia."

The relatively high price of CDs in the U.K., due to the strength of the British pound, also has prompted Asian buyers to obtain their product elsewhere within the European Union. "Given that retail CD prices are 25% to 30% higher in the U.K. than Belgium, for example," says Gilbride, "if you were an Asian buyer, who would you buy from?" While stressing that "We will get through the Asian downturn as we have got through other crises," Gilbride notes too. "It's certainly not easy... It's a matter of day-by-day monitoring and keeping faith with our customers."

***

In 1979, music consumers in Asia saw a British or American act—and then saw one of their local artists. The difference, in style if not in substance, was often so great that it was the international names who earned the consumer's money. Today, everyone has the same tools to offer their artistry in the best possible way, to reach the largest audience, at home and abroad. And so for Asian artists and music, as for Asian music-industry professionals, the future is ripe for reinvention.

Adam White, Billboard's international editor-in-chief, was in Kuala Lumpur for the first Billboard Asia/Pacific Music Industry Conference, and plans to be in Hong Kong for the latest edition.

***

U.S. BUSINESS

continues from page APQ-10

Nies are pulling their horns in. We act as our own sub-publisher, and we're not rethinking in terms of cutting back on our presence. At the same time, we're not expanding as we had been the last few years. We continue to be active in representing other companies, but we're more careful on advances, with some of the Asian markets down 30% to 50% or more.

For Rhino Records, Peter Pasternak, senior director, international sales and marketing, says, "There's definitely a slowdown in territories where companies tend to import product, like Korea and Indonesia. In our priority area of deep catalog sales—where we're dealing in hundreds of units rather than thousands—unless there's a policy in place for local manufacturing, the product just isn't getting there."

To cope with the situation, he points to the creative approach of Calvin Wong, Warner's Southeast Asia VP of marketing. "He's kicking around regional compilations of both our artists and genres and making catalog sales more of a priority," Pasternak says. "One example is our 'Everybody Dance' two-CD mid-priced package [$19.98 U.S.] with classic Atlantic and Sugar Hill Rhino-controlled titles and mixes by top American people. We're trying to hit the younger buyers over there and get their attention to our full catalog. Our 'Titanic' package, 'Songs As Heard On The Fateful Voyage,' has done extremely well since last June, particularly in Japan."

NOVEMBER REBOUND

The situation is even better for Rykodisc, according to John Teller, international director. "All our deals are with licensees," he says, "with Videoeast in Japan and the Rock Record group in Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong. While business started to dip last November, we have rebounded nicely, and sales are up a bit. We are less hit-driven and have encouraged our licensees to do their own compilations from the Rykodisc catalog. We want them to offer low-priced compilations as loss leaders and use them to introduce new artists for future sales. These are typically upper-midline-priced at about $11.98 U.S. Another bright spot was the mid-February 10-day Taiwan concert tour of Marta Sebestyen and Muzisikas from Hungary, which is expected to produce 50,000 album sales from their catalog."

Continued on page APQ-16
THAILAND
Artist: Peter Corp Dyrd燚al
Album: "Hinpa Ga Darb"
Label: Grammy Grand
Peter Corp Dyrd燚al—part Danish, part Thai—is the latest success among Thai musicians who have used language to describe those of mixed Western and Thai descent. At 22, Dyrd燚al has captivated teenagers and young adults not only with his gorgeous looks but also his unique deep-toned voice, which distinguishes him from other teen-pop singers on the market here. The multilingual singer—he speaks Thai, Danish, English and German—grew up in Denmark. Traveling back and forth to Thailand, he spent his career in TV commercials and as a model before signing a record deal with Grammy Grand, an affiliate of the media conglomerate Grammy Entertainment. "It has been a dream to release a CD in my own language," says Peter Corp Dyrd燚al, who released his second album "Chao Tui Yu Nai (Where's The Buffalo?)" which popularized him overnight.

Media: "The feedback [from the single] was overwhelmingly positive; Peter has become a huge hit in no time," says Witchit Kawangsuay, the executive producer of Hot Wave 91.5 FM and Green Wave 106.5 FM, the major radio stations in A-Time Media, another company affiliated with Grammy Entertainment. "His singles topped the chart of Hot Wave." Frequent exposure in several television and magazine shows also helped. And undoubtedly it helps that Grammy Grand owns numerous radio and TV outlets to feature its star.

Retail: It was the release of a melodic ballad, "Chai Khuay," which "Yellow Sun" recorded, that "hit the ground running," says Peter Corp Dyrd燚al, who went on to release his debut album "Hinpa Ga Darb," which was released last October and features the upbeat single "Chao Tui Yu Nai (Where's The Buffalo?)", which popularized him overnight.

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Online Retailers Slash DVD Prices

Competition Over New Format Heats Up In Cyberspace

BY CATHERINE APPLEFELD OLSON
WASHINGTON, D.C.—DVD is still largely attracting the classic early technology adopter, and a growing number of retailers are targeting those customers in what has become one of their natural habitats—cyberspace.

The competition among online DVD merchants to get an early foothold with the fledgling format already has sparked a pricing war as fierce as any on the music front.

Currently, the landscape of Internet DVD retailers reveals a combination of specialty sites that sell only DVD titles (or DVD and laserdisc product) and larger multi-category merchants that have added DVD to the mix during the past year.

The former category is represented by aggressive newcomers such as DVD Express (www.dvDEXpress.com) and Mega DVD (www.megadvd.com), and the latter by Reel.com, Videoserve.com, and Amazon.com.

The success of DVD has been particularly noticeable to the larger stores, many of which report greater per-unit orders for DVD than for any other product they sell.

"DVD is holding as the product that people buy the most of per visit," says Michael Mason, principal and co-founder of Videoserve.com.

"The purchase rate [for video] is around two pieces of product, but with DVD we are looking at a little over three per visit. This is a very purchasable product. A lot of people are building libraries."

The early crowd of DVD sites has sparked a recent domino effect: price-slashing. For now, it seems to have bottomed out at 30% off the suggested list price. Reel.com reduced its prices 30% in March, as did Amazon.com on selected titles. And in response to the increased competition, DVD Express recently told Billboard it will drop prices to 20% off for all new releases and best sellers. All sites charge various additional shipping fees.

"There is no authoritative source for DVD yet, so we felt we had to be more aggressive on our pricing," says David Risher, Amazon.com's senior VP of product development. "Also, because the technology is still so new, it is kind of a chicken-and-egg scenario with getting people to buy the hardware. This kind of pricing will give them an added incentive and motivate more people to try it."

Mike Dubelko, president of DVD Express, says that although the price reduction makes doing business a bit trickier, it is a positive sign for the format. "People are trying to get market share real quickly, so we are all fighting to have the best pricing," he says.

DVD Express stocks all of its own product and does not ship through a third-party distributor. Dubelko points out that companies such as Reel.com and Amazon.com, which do use outside distributors, could be

(Continued on page 57)

Clothes And Home Goods Give
Music A Run For The Money

TIME AND MONEY—who has enough of either? Two weeks ago, this column dealt with activities that compete with music for people's time. This article is about pursuits that vie for consumers' dollars.

Strategic Record Research compiled a list of pastimes and polled people over the phone to find if they were spending more, less, or the same amount on activities than in the previous year. Responses from 8,609 subjects were tallied.

Of the total, 3,312 people, or 38.4%, said they were spending more money on music than a year earlier. In that respect, music was topped by only two other categories—clothes (3,946, or 46.8%) and home and family needs (4,798, or 55.7%). Consumers said they were coughing up more on music than on videos, sports equipment, dating and going out, video games, and software and CD-ROMs.

How do results break out demographically? Four age and gender groups were virtually tied for the largest percentage of consumers who increased their music spending. Males between 12 and 17 years old accounted for 11.5%, males aged 18-24 accounted for 11.6%, females aged 12-17 accounted for 11.8%, and females aged 18-24 equalled 11.6%. What's significant about the first three groups is that they represented only 7.3%, 8.5%, (Continued on page 55)

CCM Contributes To Gentrification Of Mail Order

BY BILL HOLLAND
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Collectors' Choice Music (CCM) is a mail-order catalog label with a difference—actually, with several differences—that make it particularly attractive to customers and special in this somewhat arcane part of the record business.

Initially, mail-order music offered passive customers the chance of label vault offerings—at best, presenting predictable and often shoddy best-of releases slapped together by labels' special-market units; at worst, filling up the pages of cheaply produced catalogues with releases not many music-driven people wanted to hear.

But in recent years, all that has changed. In the CD era, companies are dealing with stay-at-home customers, many of them baby boomers, who are much more music-wise. Mail-order catalogues have improved, with better paper, superior design, more informed copy, and, most important, product that customers often couldn't find in record stores. That's where CCM scores big.

Located in Itasca, Ill., on the outskirts of Chicago, CCM was formed in 1993 out of the ashes of music catalog granddaddy Publisher's Central Bureau (PCB), which in its last days, despite a disastrous management shift to Random House, had begun to emphasize collectors-oriented releases.

CCM is part of the mail-order-empire of Playboy Enterprises, which

at the label's founding already operated the successful Critics' Choice Video, one of the largest sell-through video firms in the country.

CCM had a leg up by acquiring PCB's mail-order customer list, but it also got the merchandising, music, and graphics talents of former PCB staffer Gordon Anderson, now its director of merchandising.

Executives say CCM has been a success since its first mailing in October 1993 (with Joan Baez on the cover).

"These people were hungry," says Anderson. "They had not had a mailing in quite a while, and when they got one, they fed themselves."

Anderson says he patterned his music-collector roster approach on

(Continued on next page)
Viacom reports that first-quarter earnings from Blockbuster Video stores rose 5.5% to $198.2 million from $187.3 million in the same period last year, on a 13% increase in revenue to $390.4 million from $353.9 million. There were 6,018 video stores at the quarter’s end, 599 more than a year ago. For Blockbuster Music, Viacom reports a $4.6 million loss, compared with earnings of $400,000 a year ago. The music stores’ revenue fell 6.8% to $133.3 million from $143.1 million because the store count dropped from 393 to 470.

Viacom’s Paramount Pictures unit posted gains of 20.4% in cash flow to $136.2 million and 1.6% in revenue to $791.5 million, with earnings driven by the success of the film “Titanic.”

Allied Digital Technologies, a republisher of CDs and tapes for record companies, announces that “certain members” of management and a subsidiary of Citicorp (Citicorp Capital Venture Ltd.) are taking the company private in a leveraged buyout at $5 a share, or $88.3 million. The investor group is called 999 Venture Partners. The merger is expected to be completed by August. Allied said April 21 that it had received a $5 share bid but declined to say who had made it.

Rentrak, the revenue-sharing video distributor, says it has entered into a distribution deal with Major Video Concepts, its first with a traditional video distributor. Under the deal, Major Video will market and promote Rentrak’s pay-per-view system to its account base of 6,000 video stores, supermarkets, and other retailers. Portland, Ore.-based Rentrak also says it began operations in the U.K. on May 1, with a joint venture, Rentrak UK Ltd., of which Rentrak Corp. owns 25%, Columbus Group plc owns 66.7%, and Rentrak Japan owns 8.3%.

Conow, the online music retailer, reports that first-quarter revenue jumped 28% to $10 million from $7.6 million in the same period a year ago. The net loss for the three months that ended March 31 widened to $9.2 million from $544,000 a year ago. Jenkintown, Pa.-based CDNow says it added 135,000 new customers in the quarter for a total of 432,000 who have purchased recordings from its World Wide Web site.

Amazon.com, the online bookseller that is entering the music business, has filed for a $275 million junk bond offering and will use proceeds to retire existing debt and fund possible acquisitions. The bond sale will be made through Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. The Seattle-based company also reports a first-quarter net loss of $92.9 million on $87.3 million in sales, compared with a loss of $3.04 million on $16 million in sales in the same period a year ago.

Liquid Audio, developer of online music delivery systems, will provide technology for online music-streaming firm RealNetworks’ newest platform, RealNetworks RealPlayer G2.

The 30’s-era Murray Hill label, run by his former boss, Bob Hyde. He says he’s “very quickly that licensing is the one thing you have to get right to have some sort of control over what you need, as opposed to buying finished goods from labels.”

He was also smart enough to start a search service, one that gives him a much more focused idea of what his customers are looking for and can’t find elsewhere. And on top of that, being an avid birder, the idea of adding the to his dead end, he decided to inaugurate a custom CCM label to put out its own reissues. “CCM is really a much more profitable label,” he says. “It’s not our primary taste reflected in the label, but the taste of our customers. If people write in and request a release that they haven’t been able to find anywhere else, and we go out and license the material and bring back exactly what they want, I think that’s powerful. So that’s our modus operandi.”

It also helps that, unlike in the past days of mail order, customers can count on a quality release—the right tunes, the correct master with good sound, and knowledgeable liner notes or booklets.

If just for those reasons, for hundreds of thousands of customers, mostly over the age of 45, CCM’s name is self-fulfilling. “I think we’re quite unique and different,” Anderson said. “The people that enjoy CCM are not just typical old-fashioned religious people and the collectors. And we offer a wider breadth of musical styles than anybody else. Certain other catalogs only do a certain genre or style.”

Some competitors, like Time Life, specialize in offering customers top-quality, in-house series; others, like the recent satellite channel created from Daedalus, the literary remainder book catalog, offer new, front-line or reissued, critically acclaimed jazz, classical, and world music. CCM has something for everyone.

CCM offers it all, from new classical rock compilations (the Who, the Doors, Procol Harum) to the exclusive offerings of artists as disparate as popular ‘40s vocalist Tony Martin and surf/rock group Astronauts.

COMMERCE CONTRIBUTES TO GENTRIFICATION OF MAIL ORDER

(Continued from preceding page)

Coming soon are 20 new albums, including one by crooner Perry Como. For competitive reasons, Anderson says that his import offers are cheaper than at other outlets, mark- downs are common, and 15 pages in every catalog feature deeply discounted CDs for around $8.

The offerings include a boxed set of rare Atlantic Records doo-wop groups that Rhino didn’t think would sell in the numbers it needed on its own label, as well as imported, complete sets of rare World War II-era V-Due collections produced for soldiers and featuring artists like Louis Jordan and Duke Ellington.

Anderson says, “The front of the catalog is for the post-Ellis generation; the back is for the pre-Ellis listener.”

Hence, the company’s own compilation of the Levon’ Spoonful’s original soundtracks to “What’s Up, Tiger Lily?” and “You’re A Big Boy Now” is up front, while a best-of the Dorsey Brothers is in the back.

The catalog is not only deep—about 1,000 artists—but contains many items that are otherwise hard or impossible to find. In fact, about half of the offerings—unless you happen to live in the U.K., Germany, or Japan—are nearly impossible to find in even a very deep catalog store. Can’t find cool jazz singer Jeri Southern’s Decca discs once devoured by moon- struck ’50s collegians? Collectors’ Choice has a twofler from the U.K. about Hall & Oates’ greatest hits.

The catalog is especially noted that Anderson says is 15 to 20. “The dollars are diff- used across a lot more items. Mov- ing the number of units you need to make guarantees is something I always worry about," Anderson says.

Andrew’s track record—CCM has turned a profit every year it’s been in business—indicates that his cautious strategy has paid off. Annual revenue is $15 million-$20 million.

How about the future—a new audience to replace aging boomers? “Younger folks are glooming onto older artists and styles,” he says. “When I was growing up, it was rock or I wasn’t interested, you know? Those kids are exposed to a lot more, and they’re less monolithic in their approach to music.”

He adds, “From looking at our stats, we have some young customers, but they’re not one percent of the people like to go to record stores. I sure did. And typically, people under 30 don’t buy much from direct-mail— they just don’t. They’re kids and they’re not sure to find in the direct-mail world. That’s why it’s so important to find new customers who are not on lists.”

“it’s crucial, live or die,” Anderson says. “If a company doesn’t keep a well-maintained list, it’s not going to make it.”

John M. Murray
and 6.8% of the overall sample, respectively. This means they were increasing their music purchasing at a higher rate than their numbers in the population.

And it’s not just music that the youngest males said they were shelling out more for. Of those who increased their spending on video games, 15.6% were males aged 12-17, who equaled only 7.3% of the sample.

The survey says the groups with the largest relative increases in music buying were males aged 35-44 (12.4% of the population and 9.9% of those who spent more on music) and males aged 45-54 (8.2% of the total but only 5.0% of those who bought more music).

Video purchasing was also part of the study. The most significant increase in video buying and renting was among males aged 25-34. Females aged 35-44 represented 12.5% of the survey and 14.9% of those who spent more on video (including pay-per-view TV) than a year earlier. Females aged 45-54 equaled 13.4% of the sample and 15.2% of those who purchased more videos.

The research also shows the degree to which people were spending more or less money on music and other interests.

For instance, take males between 12 and 17. Of that group, 45.6% said they were spending "more" on music than in the previous year; 17.4% were spending "a lot more," and 11.7% were buying about the same. That means nearly three of every four young males in that age group were increasing—or at least maintaining—their level of music acquisition.

When you look at the breakout according to race, it’s evident that black people are spending more on music than whites are. Among white males pols aged 25-34 were spending "a lot more," and 29.4% were spending "more." For black males, 42.2% were spending "a lot more" on music, and 35% were spending "more." The results are even more striking for women. Of white females, 30.8% were spending "a lot more" on music, while 14.2% of black female were doing so. Purely of white females and 34.6% of black females were spending "more." What activities get a larger share of increased spending? For white males, 7.7% said they were spending more on home/family needs than they were a year earlier. Black males were spending more on clothes (14.9%), dating or going out (12.7%), and home/family needs (9.1%). For white females, it was home/family needs (9.9%) and clothes (7.9%); for black females, it was clothes (18.9%) and home/family needs (15%).

The regions of the country in which consumers appeared to be making the biggest increases in music spending were the South Central and South West.

What radio formats do the bigger... as well as stinger — spenders listen to? In a finding that squares with the results based on race, 14.9% of those who said they most often listen to R&B were spending "a lot more" on music, and 36.6% of those who were spending "more." The music format with the smallest amount of big spenders among its listeners was country; only 5.8% said they were spending "a lot more," while 7.1% said they were spending "a lot less."
Majors Ready To Deal With New Wiz Owner

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: Nobody Beats the Wiz continues to navigate back to normal operations after being saved from its Dec. 16 Chapter 11 filing when Cablevision Systems acquired the chain on Feb. 10. Since then, the new Wiz management team has been negotiating with the majors in an attempt to get back to normal buying terms. Prior to and during the Chapter 11 process, the chain was buying almost exclusively from the Valley Media one-stop operation. Over the last month, five of the six majors, with the exception of Polygram Group Distribution, have begun to ship the Carteret, N.J.-based chain on a c.o.d. basis, and now, one of them, BMG Distribution, last week upgraded to normal terms, according to sources.

In buying the Wiz, Cablevision paid approximately $100 million, of which $50 million was in the form of an equity contribution, while the remainder was drawn down from the Wiz's new revolving credit facility. Of the total paid, $8 million was given to the Wiz prior to Cablevision taking over the retailer in order to fund its ongoing operation; $82 million was paid, presumably, to Congress Financial, which provided a secured revolving credit facility to the chain; and $10 million was put in an escrow account, so that the bankruptcy court could figure out if any of the other creditors are entitled to reclaiming some of the money owed them. Of the $10 million that was paid, the Wiz's Chapter 11 filing presented the majors with an unusual situation; since music represents only 15% of the Wiz's sales, music manufacturers were far down in the pecking order of creditors—after Congress Financial, whose loan to the Wiz was secured by the chain's inventory, and the consumer electronics manufacturers, which supply product for 55% of the Wiz's business. When all is said and done in this Chapter 11 scenario, music manufacturers are probably going to get zip back from the Wiz estate.

From the beginning of time, when a company filed Chapter 11, the majors never again would sell to that company. However, in the last few years, thanks to the introduction of 546-G agreements, the majors have resumed normal terms with companies emerging from Chapter 11 in which ownership changes hands—i.e., Wherehouse Entertainment and Camelot Music.

But in this brave new world, the Wiz represents a first for the majors. This will be the first time in which there is a new owner, but the manufacturers won't get one red cent in reclamation from the Chapter 11 process. And yet, the majors are still willing to do business with the Wiz because of its dominance in selling R&B music in the New York metropolitan area, provided that the new owner is willing to meet some conditions set forth by the majors.

Although Cablevision is a publicly traded cable company that also owns well-known trophy properties like Madison Square Garden and the two professional sports teams that play there, the Knicks and the Rangers, there is some concern among the majors about the company's financial strength. In its most-recent fiscal year, Cablevision posted a net income of...

(Continued on page 58)
tasting a financial hit to state their DVD case.

"When they sell at 30% off, they are selling at break-even or a loss," he says. "But what this says to me is that people are finally deciding to believe that DVD is a real thing."

Dubelko notes that although pricing is a critical element to consumers, there are other factors as well, such as "having accurate information about a title so when they buy a title they understand the nature of the disc, what the audio format is, etc. This format is unlike videocassette, which comes only one way, so the information is extremely important."

He also notes consumers' desire to get the merchandise quickly. "When a DVD title is first released, they want to be the first one to see it. It's the same mentality as with a movie," he says.

DVD Express also offers a significant portion of editorial material about the DVD industry, which Dubelko says will be stepped up in the coming months.

Still, some companies are not willing to get into a battle of the backs. Videoserve.com, which was launched last October as a hub for self-serve video and DVD titles, sells DVDs at 20% off list and has no plans to change that pricing structure.

"People want to go to a place where they know they can reliably get the product," says Videoserve.com's Mason. "If you stand for price, the consumer figures it out real quickly."

One thing Internet retailers of DVD are figuring out quickly is that DVD customers seem to prefer to shop in a boutique environment.

Dubelko says DVD Express has more than 20,000 "regular" customers who are logged into the company's database and visit the site with some frequency. He says the site adds 1,000 new customers per week. Its customers are 10% male, he adds, and primarily buy titles in the action, science fiction, and comedy genres. To help raise awareness of the site, the company displays point-of-sale materials in 1,000 home-theater hardware stores around the country.

To help provide their DVD customers with a cozier shopping experience, several of the larger sites have placed their DVD product in separate sections from the video area. In January, Videoserve.com launched a specific Access DVD area. Amazon.com made a similar move in March.

"We broke out the department because enough customers were asking us for it," says Risher. "Initially, it is just a spare part of our site, but over the coming weeks you will see something that looks a lot more fleshed out."

Videoserve.com's Mason says the decision to designate a specific DVD area was spurred by a "surge" in business during the first quarter. Since it opened its specific Access DVD area, Mason says, DVD sales have blossomed to account for 11% of Videoserve's business, from about 4% before the launch. The company also sells Toshiba DVD players, and Mason says those sales outpaced those for its other hardware products—VCRs, camcorders, and TV sets.

Videoserve.com is touting itself as an information source as well. "We've noticed that a lot of the newsgroups are using the Access DVD area to get updated information and title-release information," Mason says. The site is developing a list of customers who want to receive the latest information about the DVD format and releases (as it does with video) and will begin offering that service shortly, he says.

Mirroring the activity of several bricks-and-mortar retailers, including Blockbuster, a DVD rental market is taking shape on the World Wide Web as well.

Internet retailer NetFlix bowed in April and offers customers the ability to rent 925 titles for $5 per single unit. NetFlix also sells DVDs, some at discount prices. Reel.com, which currently rents VHS titles, has no plans to rent DVD, according to buyer Douglas Butdorff. But DVD Express will launch a rental program this summer, according to Dubelko.

"We've had the idea of renting on the drawing board since we started," says Dubelko, "but we haven't done it yet because we felt the early adopters were collectors, so it wasn't terribly important to have a rental title on day one. We also felt we needed to have a large enough installed customer base to have a program."

Although DVD Express is going to make a run for it with rental, Dubelko says he doubts that the business model makes sense in cyberspace for the near term.

"I don't know if renting is a good, profitable business for the Internet," he says. "There are some problems from a merchant standpoint."

Say you have a new title, 'Tomorrow Never Dies,' and there are 1,000 people wanting to rent it. By the time they get it and send it back, it's 10 days later. You don't have the chance to turn that many times while the title's still hot, and then you end up with 1,000 pieces of used merchandise rented two to three times."

To avoid that situation, Dubelko says, DVD Express is considering designating a blackout period in the neighborhood of 20 days, during which new titles would be available only for purchase. "If you want to rent, you would have to wait," he says.

**ONLINE RETAILERS SLASH DVD PRICES**

(Continued from page 54)
Coalition For Independent Retailers: Don Jeffrey reports on the activities and growth of the Coalition For Independent Retailers, including the formation of specialty branches. Indies At Radio: Doug Reece examines how indies get airplay, surveying promo people as well as program directors in a variety of genres. Rock-Niche Distributors: Chris Morris provides an overview and reports on the business status of the many indie distributors specializing in rock music. British Indies: Paul Sexton examines the evolution of the indie scene in the U.K. Ska: Carrie Bell reports on the ongoing strength of indie labels in the ska genre. The Charts: Loads of charts list the top indies and cover all genres: pop, R&B, rap, dance, jazz, classical, new age, world music, reggae, contemporary Christian, gospel, catalog, blues, kids and Latin.
A single store may be a hit with customers but lacks clout with labels. However, 60 stores banded together add up to a formidable force in music retailing.

That is the concept behind the formation of coalitions of independent stores around the country. Besides giving them a bigger say with labels, the groups help retailers run their businesses better through an exchange of information with like-minded merchants who aren’t direct competitors. For labels, the coalitions have been a boon because they help break artists.

The biggest of the national groups is the Coalition of Independent Music Stores (CIMS), which boasts 66 stores and a full-time managing director in Don VanCleave, owner of Magic Platter in Birmingham, Ala.

Terry Currier, owner of Music Millennium in Portland, Ore., and chairman of CIMS, explains that in the ‘70s, when there were many more indie retailers than today, it was more common for records to break out regionally. “In Portland, you’d have 25 to 30 indies. A label could coordinate everyone in the market,” he says. “There’s not a lot of good independent retail concentrated in one place now, so you can’t do these programs.”

WILL IT BEGIN
The seed for CIMS was planted at the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) convention in San Diego in 1995, when Currier met with Geffen executives. “They wanted me to pick out 25 to 30 retailers and have a featured album of the month,” Currier recalls. At the same time, other labels were having similar meetings with indie merchants. “There were a whole bunch of people on the same wavelength,” says Currier.

At the NARM convention in San Francisco that year, Mark Cope and Yvette Ziraldo, then with Album Network, gathered about 20 indie retailers in a room for several hours. “The whole thing spawned from the coalition’s original program—Adopt A Band—is still going strong and has been credited by labels with breaking bands. For Adopt A Band, coalition members vote for the act that each store will feature every month. VanCleave says he seeks 90% agreement on the acts selected. “A lot of bands aren’t accepted,” he says.

Some of the acts that have benefited by the promotion are Radiohead, Pavement, Ben Folds Five, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Buena Vista Social Club, Cake, the Cardigans, the Wallflowers and the Chemical Brothers.

“Then we agreed to work with the Wallflowers, they were scanning a cou-
A just number, distribution, wholesaling says, "While we are semi-exclusive, it's been going up, and there are still a lot of different labels that people can buy from them. That was when we started getting a little more popular. In the last few years, we've seen a dramatic increase in the amount of dance product that rock stores have to offer. It's almost to the point where the lines have blurred so much that, when you start thinking of the kind of record shops, you can buy records from all of them. That was when we started getting a little more popular.

Van den Heuvel says, "We've seen in the last few years a real dramatic increase in the amount of dance product that rock stores have to offer. It's almost to the point where the lines have blurred so much that, when you start thinking of the kind of record shops, you can buy records from all of them. That was when we started getting a little more popular.

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Indie distributors, being selective and staying underground, distributors stay true to rock roots while adapting to natural evolution.

By Chris Morris
the rest of the world outside North America. In the latter market, Echo prefers to license each of its artists individually.

"It's a question of finding the right company for each artist," explains Echo managing director Steve Lewis. "It's important to me, and it's important to the artists. It means I can say to them, "We're going to sign you for the world, we're going to make a great record, and, when we've made that great record, we're going to find a U.S. licensee that is committed to you.""

There can also be life after the majors. 2/10's partnership with WEA recently turned its vice president of independent status with a revamped executive lineup and a U.K. distribution deal with Warner Music Group. Cutting-edge creators in dance music, a genre that has ushered in the new mainstream scene in recent years, have no qualms about getting into bed with a major—as long as the big boys know what to do when they get there. British dance producer/artist trio Apollo Four were quickly started out in the decade as a techno marvel, with its own independent Stealth Sonic Recordings label. Group member Noko has no doubt that the group is immeasurably stronger since signing its label to Epic in the U.S., and the notion of "selling out" does not apply.

"We spent the first couple of years of our existence with our own label, putting out our own club mixes," says Noko. "In dance music, it's very easy to survive like that; it kind of suits the culture. But a point came where the headache of having other artists on your label and arguing about whether it was worth spending 10 pounds to send a bike across London or whether you put it at the kind of wanted out. They divorced us away from what we were trying to do, the way we were trying to do it, that's what's happening to me."

Continues Noko, "In Marshall McLuhan's global village, there's no excuse for not wanting to make the biggest gesture possible and get to as many people as possible. We just figured the only way we could do that was to some decent promotional might. Sony just happened to come along one day. We were doing some remixes for Epic, and they said, 'So, you guys got any'..."

Continued on page 77
What Makes An Indie An Indie

BY GEOFF MAYFIELD

Upon further review, we misstated last year when we stopped tracking Priority as an independent entity after EMI took an equity position in the label.

Prior to the late-1997 deal, EMI Music Distribution (EMD), formerly CMW, had long shipped Priority's product. But after EMI bought into Priority, as in the days before the deal, the label's titles continued to be shipped via a pick-and-pack arrangement.

As before, Priority continues to handle its own sales. If an account wants to order an album or single from the company, be it on an initial order or a re-order, that order must be placed with Priority rather than EMD, identical to the pick-and-pack arrangement that Sony-owned indie distributor RED holds with Sony Music Distribution.

Following the deal in which EMD landed Priority's equity, announcement of the deal made it clear that Priority still handles its own sales (Billboard, April 11). So, although SoundScan tracks Priority sales within EMD's market share, we have elected to, as before, include Priority and its distributed imprints in our Independent Label chart recaps.

Aside from weighing the Priority issue, sorting the hybrid indices from the majors is easier now than it was a few years ago, when a company like Warner-owned Tommy Boy might decide to run some of its titles through an affiliated major. However, since then, such companies—termed "staturful indices" by one attendee at last year's NARAS (now AFIM) conference—tend to stay on the indie side of the fence.

Only titles that are sold through independent distribution are included in these recaps. In the case of labels that changed distribution from an independent to a major during the course of the year, as was the case with Higher Octave (which moved to Virgin through EMD) and some Mammoth titles (which got picked up by Buena Vista Music Group through PolyGram Group Distribution), only points accumulated during the time period was sold through independent distribution are used to determine the recaps.

Ownership ties to a major conglomerate do not eliminate a label from independent consideration nor does promotional assistance. The sole qualification is whether the title is sold independently or not. And, if even one configuration is sold through a major, that title's points are excluded from these, imprint and label rankings.

The recaps in this spotlight are compiled from a 52-week period starting with the April 26, 1997, issue of Billboard and ending with this year's April 18 issue. Most of the recaps in this spotlight are based on sales charts.

Because the methodology for Hot Latin Tracks changed from detections to audience impressions during the 12-month period for each week it spent on the corresponding weekly chart.

Recaps for the Hot 100 and Hot R&B Singles also reflect accumulated weekly chart points, derived from a combination of audience impressions calculated by Broadcast Data Systems (BDS), SoundScan sales points and playlist points submitted by smaller-market radio stations.

Indies

As in years past, the categorical class is based on the in-house Billboard Classical 50, which combines titles from each of our published classical lists: Top Classical Albums, Top Classical Crossovers, Top Mid-Price Classical and Top Budget Classical. In the case of all 6-weekly sales charts—classical, jazz, new age, world music, reggae, blues, kid audio and Latin albums—the recaps include sales registered during the unpublished weeks.

The country, rock and adult charts are not included here, because only a handful of independently distributed titles charted in those categories during the past year.

In preparing this article was provided by Anthony Colombo. The recaps were prepared by Colombo and Michael Cusson with assistance from Geoff Mayfield, Alex Voulkos, Keith Caufield and chart managers Ricardo Campanoni, Datu Pasion, Steve Graybow, Wade Jensen, Thea Sandford-Waller and Marc Zubaerin.

INDIES CHARTS

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In stores June 23rd
The first single “Morrison” at radio May 19

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5/8 Galaxy Concert Theatre Santa Ana, CA
5/9 Palookaville Santa Cruz, CA
5/13 The Fillmore San Francisco, CA
5/16 The Fenix Seattle, WA
5/17 Roseland Theatre Portland, OR
5/22 Lobero Theatre Santa Barbara, CA
5/23 Fox Theatre Bakersfield, CA
5/24 The Joint Las Vegas, NV
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TOP INDIE R&B ALBUMS
Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 Ghetto D—Master P—No Limit/Priority
2 I'M BOUT IT—Soundtrack—No Limit/Priority
3 The Art of War—Bone Thugs-N-Harmony—Ruthless/Relativity
4 Charge It 2 Da Game—Silk The Shocka, No Limit/Priority
5 Gang Related—The Soundtrack—Death Row/Priority
6 Tru 2 Da Game—Tru—No Limit/Priority
7 Unlady Like—Mia X—No Limit/Priority
8 All I Have in This World, Are My Balls and My Word—Young Bleed—No Limit/Priority
9 Life Or Death—C-Murder—No Limit/Priority
10 In That Beginning...There Was Rap—Various Artists—Priority
11 Ice Cream Man—Master P—No Limit/Priority
12 Based on a True Story—Mack 10—Priority
13 The War Report—Cappone-N-Noreaga—Penalty/Tommy Boy
14 Life Insurance—Mr. Serv-On—No Limit/Priority
15 Nothing to Lose—Soundtrack—Tommy Boy
16 Big Thangs—Ant Banks—Priority
17 For The People—Boot Camp Clik—Duck Down/Priority
18 Ladies Edition—M.T.—Relativity
19 Suave House—Various Artists—Suave House/Priority
20 ChiPT: The World Domination—Three 6 Mafia—Relativity
21 Help Yourself—Poppa Scott—Adams—Miss Butch/Mardi Gras
22 Pre-Meditated Drama—Steady Mobbin'—No Limit/Priority
23 Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars—Killa & Ming—Priority
24 One Day It'll All Make Sense—Common—Relativity
25 Piece of Mind—Tal-A—Suave House/Priority
26 Bow Down—Westside Connection—Lench Mob/Priority
27 Conflicts of Confusion—Crime Boss Featuring The Feds—Suave House/Priority
28 Loaded—Brotha Lynch Hung—Black Market/Priority
29 Ride—Soundtrack—Tommy Boy
30 Retaliation, Revenge and Get Back—Oz Dillinger—Death Row/Priority

TOP INDIE R&B ALBUM IMPRINTS
Pos. IMPRINT (No. Of Charted Albums)
1 No Limit (18)
2 Priority (9)

PRIORITY RECORDS

TOP INDIE R&B ALBUM LABELS
Pos. LABEL (No. Of Charted Albums)
1 Priority (37)
2 Relativity (18)
3 Tommie Boy (8)
4 Mardi Gras (2)
5 Cash Money (5)

PRIORITY RECORDS

TOP INDIE R&B SINGLES
Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 They Let It Slow—H-Town—Relativity
2 Look into My Eyes—Bone Thugs-N-Harmony—Ruthless/Relativity
3 I Miss My Homes—Master P Featuring Pimp C And The Shocka—No Limit/Priority
4 Make Em' Say Uhh!!—Master P Featuring Fred, Silk The Shocka, Mia X & Mystikal—No Limit/Priority
5 Backyard Boogie—Mack 10—Priority
6 Sometimes...The Brand New Heavies—Delicious Vinyl/Red Ant
7 Da' Dip—FreakNasty—Hard/Power
8 If I Could Teach The World—Bone Thugs-N-Harmony—Ruthless/Relativity
9 How Ya Do Dat—Master P Featuring Young Bleed and C-Lo—No Limit/Priority
10 If I Could Change—Master P Featuring Steady Mobbin', M.a. X, M.a. B. Dick & O'Dell—No Limit/Priority
11 That's Right—DJ Too Featuring Rahzel The Dream—Breakaway/Success/Priority
12 C U When U Get There—C-Cool Featuring 40 Thieves—Tommy Boy
13 I've Been Having An Affair—Tonya—J-Town/Malaco
14 Mournful Tears—D'Angelo
15 Stop the Gunfight—Trapp Featuring 2Pac, Notorious B.i.G—Def Trapp/Intersound

Continued on page 68
## R&B Singles

18. **TALKIN’ BOUT BANK** — The Whodidas—Southpaw/Delicious Vinyl/Red Ant
19. **JUST BE STRAIGHT WITH ME** — Sikk The Shacker Featuring Master P; Destiny’s Child, O’Dell, Ma B. Dick—No Limit/Priority
20. **NOVIN’ MOVE BUT THE MONEY** — Mic Geranima Featuring DMX & Black Rob—Blunt/TVT

### Top Indie R&B Singles Imprints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Imprint (No. Of Charted Singles)</th>
<th>No Limit (7)</th>
<th>RUTHLESS (4)</th>
<th>TOMMY BOY (5)</th>
<th>DELICIOUS VINYL (4)</th>
<th>PRIORITY (8)</th>
<th>POWER (4)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LOOK INTO MY EYES — Bone Thugs-N-Harmony — Ruthless/Relativity</td>
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Bone Thugs-N-Harmony: “Look Into My Eyes” is the No. 1 Indie Rap Single.

### Top Indie Rap Singles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>Title — Artist/Imprint/Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>FREE — Ultra Nate—Strictly Rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A LITTLE BIT OF ECTASY — Jocelyn Enriquez—Classified/Timber/Tommy Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ONE MORE NIGHT — Amber—Tommy Boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>OFF THE BOOKS — The Beatnuts Featuring Big Punisher &amp; Cuban Link — Violator/Strictly Rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I WANT LOVE — Tony Mascolo—Modern Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>WHO AM I — Bone Man — 2 Hard/VPR Интеррит/Strictly Rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MY HEART WILL GO ON — Deja Vu — Interрит/Strictly Rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>GET READY TO BOUNCE — Brooklyn Bounce — Edel America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Music/Audio Cassettes, Optical Discs – CD-Audio, CD-Video, CD-ROM, CD-i
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label</th>
<th>8</th>
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<td>Po. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 DAVE GRUSIN PRESENTS WEST SIDE STORY—Dave Grusin—Telarc</td>
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<td>2 CAUGHT IN THE ACT —LIVE!—Royal Crown Revue—Surfdog/ULG</td>
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<td>3 MOTHERS &amp; DAUGHTERS—Rosemary Clooney—Concord Jazz/Concord</td>
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<td>4 MONK ON MONK—T.S. Monk—N2K Encoded</td>
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<td>5 A TRIBUTE TO OSCAR PETERSON —LIVE AT THE TOWN HALL—Oscar Peterson—Telarc</td>
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<td>6 OSCAR IN PARIS—LIVE AT THE SALLE PLEYEL—Oscar Peterson—Telarc</td>
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<td>7 REMEMBERING BUD POWELL—Chick Corea &amp; Friends—Stretch/Concord</td>
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TOP INDIES MUSIC IMPRINTS

3 INNA HEIGHTS—Buju Banton—Germain/VP
4 STRICTLY THE BEST 19—Various Artists—VP
5 YARDCORE—Born Jamericans—Delicious Vinyl
6 BEST OF BOB MARLEY—Bob Marley—Madacy
7 STRICTLY THE BEST 20—Various Artists—VP
8 FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN 2—Reggae Celebrates the Grateful Dead—Various Artists—Riviera
9 PASSION—Lady Saw—VP
10 RIGHT ON TIME—Hepcats—Hellcat/Epiphany

TOP INDIES REGGAE IMPRINTS

3 INNA HEIGHTS—Buju Banton—Germain/VP
4 STRICTLY THE BEST 19—Various Artists—VP
5 YARDCORE—Born Jamericans—Delicious Vinyl
6 BEST OF BOB MARLEY—Bob Marley—Madacy
7 STRICTLY THE BEST 20—Various Artists—VP
8 FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN 2—Reggae Celebrates the Grateful Dead—Various Artists—Riviera
9 PASSION—Lady Saw—VP
10 RIGHT ON TIME—Hepcats—Hellcat/Epiphany

REGGAE GOLD 1997

"Reggae Gold 1997" is the No. 1 Indie Reggae Album.

INDIES

TOP INDIES GOSPEL IMPRINTS

1 Oleta Adams—"Come Walk With Me" is the No. 1 Indie Gospel Album.
2 STILL STANDING—The Williams Brothers—Blackberry/Malaco
3 BOLD—Angie & Debbie Winans—ATF/Diamond
4 ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD—Wanda Nero Butler—Sound Of Gospel
5 TESTIFY—Dat Peoples—Atlanta Int'l
6 LIVE ON THE EAST COAST—Let Every Ear Hear—The Williams Sisters—First Lite
7 I'LL SEE YOU IN THE RAPTURE—Mississippi Mass Choir—Malaco
8 GREATEST HITS—The Georgia Mass Choir—Sony
9 THE KING IS COMING ANY DAY—Barry Crawford's Purpose—Harmony
10 Hattie B's Daughter—Dorothy Norwood—Malaco

TOP INDIES COUNTRY IMPRINTS

1 LIFE IN GENERAL—MeP's—Tooth & Nail/Diamond

TOP INDIES GOSPEL ALBUMS

1 COME WALK WITH ME—Oleta Adams—Harmony

TOP INDIES COUNTRY ALBUMS

1 COME WALK WITH ME—Oleta Adams—Harmony

"Jock Jams Vol. 1" is the No. 1 Indie Pop Catalog Album.

TOP INDIES POP CATALOG ALBUMS

1 JOCK JAMS VOL. 1—Various Artists—Tommy Boy
2 CHRISTMAS IN THE AIRE—Mannheim Steamroller—American Gramaphone
3 ME AGAINST THE WORLD—2Pac—Interscope/Priority
4 A FRESH AIRE CHRISTMAS—Mannheim Steamroller—American Gramaphone
5 DISNEY'S CHRISTMAS COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney
6 CHRISTMAS—Mannheim Steamroller—American Gramaphone
7 GHETTO'S TRYING TO KILL ME—Master P—No Limit/Priority
8 THE LITTLE MERMAID—Soundtrack—Walt Disney
9 CHRONICLE VOL. 1—Creedence Clearwater Revival—Fantasy
10 THE GIFT—Kenny Rogers—Magnetone
11 E. 1999 ETERNAL—Bone Thugs-N-Harmony—Ruffless/Relativity
12 A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS—Vince Guaraldi—Fantasy
13 DISNEY CHILDREN'S FAVORITES VOLUME 1—Various Artists—Walt Disney
14 A CHRISTMAS TOGETHER—John Denver & The Muppets—Laserlight

VP Records, reggae music's number 1 label, with Billboard's top 4 reggae albums.
Firmly committed to the original spirit of rock and roll, Royalty Records has broken ground from day one with the release of New York’s Po’ Boy Swing. Showing an equal interest in state of the art bands like track one a.b., and punk era legends Wayne/Jayne County and Iggy Pop (via the tribute CD in coordination with LIFEBeat), Royalty’s primary concern remains quality and follow thru. Royalty discovery Fuzzbubble has found a home with Puff Daddy’s Bad Boy label, and now, the crowning achievement is REO Speedealer, who are labeled as "The coolest Tex-Ass band since the Buttholes" by Paper Magazine’s Steve Blush.

Royalty proudly joins forces with Wasabi Music Group—a division of BMG Distribution, a strategic network comprised of the extraordinary talents at DNA, Cargo, Nail, Surefire, CTD LTD., and Revolver USA, to ensure that all those who want the new Rock and Roll will indeed get what they want.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROYALTY RECORDS
INDIES

TOP INDIE KID AUDIO

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 DISNEY CHILDREN'S FAVORITE SONGS VOLUME 1—Various Artists—Walt Disney
2 CLASSIC DISNEY VOL. 1: 60 YEARS OF MUSICAL MAGIC—Various Artists—Walt Disney
3 HERCULES—Read-Along—Walt Disney
4 WINNIE THE POOH—Sing-Along—Walt Disney
5 CLASSIC DISNEY VOL. II: 60 YEARS OF MUSICAL MAGIC—Various Artists—Walt Disney
6 DISNEY'S CHRISTMAS COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney
7 20 SIMPLY SUPER SINGABLE SILLY SONGS—Various Artists—Walt Disney
8 DISNEY CHILDREN'S FAVORITES VOLUME 2—Various Artists—Walt Disney
9 CLASSIC DISNEY VOL. III: 60 YEARS OF MUSICAL MAGIC—Various Artists—Walt Disney
10 WINNIE THE POOH: TAKE MY HAND SONGS FROM THE 100 ACRE WOOD—Various Artists—Walt Disney
11 CLASSIC DISNEY VOL. IV: 60 YEARS OF MUSICAL MAGIC—Various Artists—Walt Disney
12 THE LION KING—Read-Along—Walt Disney
13 DISNEY'S PRINCESS COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney

"Disney Children's Favorite Songs Volume 1" is the No. 1 Indie Kid Audio

14 THE LITTLE MERMAID—Read-Along—Walt Disney
15 HALLOWEEN SONGS AND SOUNDS—Various Artists—Walt Disney
16 TOY STORY—Read-Along—Walt Disney
17 FLUBBER—Read-Along—Walt Disney
18 THE LITTLE MERMAID—Sing-Along—Walt Disney
19 BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS—Various Artists—Walt Disney
20 HAPPY HOLIDAYS, LOVE BARNEY—Barney—Barney Publishing

Records

TOP INDIE KID AUDIO IMPRENT

Pos. IMPRINT [No. Of Charted Albums]
1 WALT DISNEY (52)
2 BENSON (5)
3 BARNEY PUBLISHING (1)
4 SMARTY PANTS (1)
5 BARNEY MUSIC (2)

TOP INDIE BILLBOARD LATIN 50 ALBUMS

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 VIVIR—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
2 DE JEFES—Los Tigres Del Norte—Fonovisa
3 MARCO—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
4 ASI COMO TU—Los Tigres Del Norte—Fonovisa
5 LA ULTIMA HUELLA—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
6 ENRIQUE IGLESIAS—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
7 COMO TE RECUERDO—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
8 RECUERDO ESPECIAL—Michael Salgado—Joey
9 EN CONCIERTO VOL. II—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
10 MI ACRE—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
11 THE FLUDDER—Read-Along—Walt Disney
12 DISNEY'S CLASSIC COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney
13 DISNEY'S SIMPLY MUSICAL—Various Artists—Walt Disney
14 DISNEY'S MY LITTLE PONY: FRIENDS—Various Artists—Walt Disney
15 DISNEY'S BARNEY—Sing-Along—Walt Disney
16 DISNEY'S MUSICAL COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney
17 DISNEY'S SIMPLY MUSICAL—Various Artists—Walt Disney
18 DISNEY'S DISNEY'S MUSICAL COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney
19 DISNEY'S DISNEY'S MUSICAL COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney
20 DISNEY'S DISNEY'S MUSICAL COLLECTION—Various Artists—Walt Disney

TOP INDIE BILLBOARD LATIN 50 IMPRENT

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 SOLO EN TI—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
2 DESPESERADAMENTE ENAMORADO—Jordi—Fonovisa
3 YA ME VOY PARA SIEMPRE—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
4 LA VENIA BENDITA—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
5 MIERNE—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
6 ACEPTA MI ERROR—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
7 MI ULTIMO ADIOS—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
8 O SOY O FUI—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
9 EL MOJADO ACAUDALADO—Los Tigres Del Norte—Fonovisa
10 MOTIVOS—Majo—Fonovisa

TOP INDIE GATL ATIC TRACKS

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 SOLO EN TI—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
2 DESPESERADAMENTE—Enamorado—Jordi—Fonovisa
3 YA ME VOY PARA SIEMPRE—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
4 LA VENIA BENDITA—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
5 MIERNE—Enrique Iglesias—Fonovisa
6 ACEPTA MI ERROR—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa
7 MI ULTIMO ADIOS—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
8 O SOY O FUI—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa
9 EL MOJADO ACAUDALADO—Los Tigres Del Norte—Fonovisa
10 MOTIVOS—Majo—Fonovisa

TOP INDIE GATL ATIC IMPRENT

Pos. IMPRINT [No. Of Charted Singles]
1 FONOVISA (59)
2 LUNA (5)
3 CAIMAN (4)
4 EMI (1)
5 TROPIC (2)

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KXFT

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BILBOARD SPOTLIGHT
Unable To Compete With The Majors, Indie Labels Concentrate On The Minor Leagues Of College And Regional Radio

By DOUG REECE

n an era where eye-catching programs such as KUFO Portland Ore.'s legalized pay-to-play program and Capitol Nashville's "pay-to-say" initiative keep grabbing headlines, it seems that the gap between indie labels and big-bucks commercial radio is only widening.

"It's an uphill battle every day," says indie-label promotion staffers spoken to for this story, describing their role as the underdog. "It's like banging your head into a wall." Still, they eschew sympathy and instead talk about loopholes and alternative courses of action.

I n fact, a quick look at the April charts reveals there are exceptions to the major-label dominance on the commercial airplay charts.

CMC International and Van Zant are making headway at mainstream rock with their acts. Van Zant and DJR Band, respectively. Meanwhile, 2 Hard/VP's Rickie Lee Jones gets some recognition on the Hot 100 Airplay chart with "Who Am I?"

FAVORED STATUS

Still, while programmers emphasize that song quality is the most important in programming decisions, most admit to favoring major-label acts.

"For us, it's about the music, no matter what label it's on, but the majors always take some sort of priority because they have the backing," says triple-A KLUP Kansas City, Mo., PD Steve Stevens. "There is so much product out there that, for every good CD I get, there are five or six that are just trash. I hate to do it, but major labels take precedence." Still, he mentions labels such as TVT Records and Razor & Tie as models of credibility and excellence and applauds acts for an invigorated effort to micro-market acts and label impressive regional breakthrough stories.

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RADIO DAZE
Continued from page 75
counterparts, adjusting quickly to the market.

"There is a different goal in mind and a different plan with each project," says Razor & Tie national director of radio promotions Liz Orpola, who has had success with Clueless T. Judd, 38 Special and Frances Dunnery. "None of this is rocket science. You make an assessment about how the majors would do it and ask yourself how it can be done without breaking the bank and still being effective.

PROGRAMMER PROMOTIONS
Similar Entertainment's VP of marketing Michael Myers says that his label has found success with turnkey promotions for its veteran rock and jazz artists. "Artists and giveaways launched during artist visits are pivotal," he says, for engaging programmers.

"All the formats are overcrowded and fairly rigid," says Myers. "Sure, if it's in the comfort level you can get at [programmers], but we go in with value-added promotions and other things that help the stations think good in the market. Instead of just coming in and saying, 'Play our record,' we have something running. Those things are important to being doing, especially as an independent."

Meeting with Myers' suggestion that labels use a selective targeting approach, Dean Connors, PD at country station WASP-FM in Pittsburgh, Penn., says indie-owners would do well to limit their releases and spend more time and money on each project. Even then, he says, indie artists are at a disadvantage.

"It's tough, and here's how [indies] can beat the game: have better music," says Connors. "If you're going to put Phil West on Cornsock Records limited up against Shem's Austin or Ana, Phil West better be 10 times better than Shem's. It's better be something spectacular."

Some indie artists, however, view airplay as a non-essential-necessary ingredient in their marketing mix.

"We do have some songs coming out this year that, in the back of our minds, radio play would be very much enjoyed, but the flip side is we can sell 100,000 albums without getting radio," says Steve Levy, president/founder of electronic label Moonshine. One such act is Keoki, whose album "Ego Trip" had a respectable residency on the Heatseekers album chart regardless of a lack of airplay.

Smaller indies are also taking a casual approach.

"Radio has a different marketing value for us as it does for a larger label," says Jeff Marlow, owner of the Epiphany-distributed Crack! "My hands turn all the time, so they build a following. We get top-20 college play and then push the commercial stations as they go out to market. If radio doesn't hit, there's still touring, press and direct-to-consumer programs to get the record out there."

Executives such as Sean Whitaker, who does radio promotions for punk/indie label Sub Pop Records, say that, while commercial radio is welcome, it hoovers the label to concentrate on non-commercial formats.

"It's very important for us to keep things on a music fan's level instead of going after people who are only interested in commercial radio and singles," says Whitaker. "College radio is important to us because those people are music fans, and they're going to be telling their friends about us.

One of Schultz's promotions that helped generate interest for his band the Zippers was a teaser campaign for "The Waiting Song" single. The promotion, which cost the label a fraction of what most majors spend on postage, included a Denny's gift certificate in the mailing of the single, which focused on 40 key stations.

After building a story at college, public or a small circle of commercial stations, employing an indie promoter is still common in order to get a foot in the door at key commercial stations.

One of the way Sherman Oakes, Calif.-based, multi-genre label Ark 21 has evolved its radio-promotions strategy to build armies such as singer-songwriter Maia Sharp is by focusing on major-market non-commercial stations, such as KCRW Los Angeles, WPNP Philadelphia and WPLJ in New York.

"Indie is an attitude and lifestyle," says Karen Lee, Ark 21's VP of promotions. "It doesn't mean you're always right, but it does require an unbelievable amount of perseverance and passion and enthusiasm. Longevity usually wins out."
U.K. INDIES
Continued from page 63

new material! You fancy being on the label?" It kind of happened in a really casual way; we didn’t have an assault on labels or anything. ‘We’ve got this business plan.’

SINE OF THE TIMES
If Apollo 440’s marriage of indie creativity and major-label muscle sounds almost accidental, another part of the Sony empire has been highly businesslike in embracing either leading independent labels. SINE (Sony Music Independent Network Europe) was established Jan. 1, 1997, to provide international representation of key local labels. But in less than 18 months, the division has built an impressive array of independent partners for whom it now clears the path to widespread European releases.

Guy Chadwick

U.K. independents whose output goes under SINE’s international umbrella include Nude Independent, Ignition, Skin/Loaded, Lalaka and, for several years, Scenarts. European labels represented by SINE are Double T and Yo Mama. These labels, all adept at achieving hits on their own terms in their home markets, thus retain autonomy while tapping into Sony’s international marketing wherewithal.

The growing tendency for cutting-edge dance labels to accept major back-up outside their home territory was underscored in February, when Julian Palma, long recognized as a leading light of U.K. R&B for his work at Island with Mica Paris, Stoney MG’s and, since joining SINE, Volatile. British singer Sammie is the start-up imprint’s first signing, and announcements of other acquisitions were being anticipated at press time.

Scenarts’ roster of 10 acts includes U.K. modern-rock veterans Edwin Collins and Gary Chadwick, as well as British chart regulars the Divine Comedy and baby acts such as Catchers and Pelvis. It has representation in some European markets from SINE, but also works with other companies in certain territories, including Virgin in France. According to international manager Chris Winter, SINE is “a case of complete distribution across according to the local cloth.

It’s a question of the market being into the music, and then the label company being up for it,” says Metzler. ‘Vini has the cream of the indie labels in France, and we’ve toured their bands there a lot. With SINE, it can be hard to get any of your small acts pushed up there; they’ve had any success in the U.K.; they want to wait. But, luckily, in a lot of SINE offices, we’ve got a lot of fans.”

At the creative level, the traditional concerns about excessive interference from a multinational major have surfaced for Apollo 440. “We lead a completely autonomous existence,” says Nolas. “We have our own office, so basically, we make whatever records we want and just deliver a DAT to the label. The last time someone from the label was here was when we played them mixes of the last album a year and a half ago. We just don’t see them from one month to the next.

“We simply deliver them a track and say, ‘This is the single’- and they have certain comments to make. Generally, we give them an album, and they go with it, and it all works pretty well. I can imagine if you were having problems with your label, that wouldn’t be a good thing, but they’ve never really disliked anything so far.”

Another traditional wrinkle in the works for smaller indie operators has been a lack of clout or credibility at retail. But the comments on that subject of Echo’s Steve Lewis about his label’s go-it-alone domestic success could serve as a rallying call to all those of an independent spirit.

“If you’ve got the right product, it comes down to how you can present it,” he says. “There’s no point treating retail as anything other than an ally. You want to build your brand sold by the multiple [dealer chain] that asks you to take part in their packages and so on. You have to go with these people with a story, about what you’re doing [with the art] in the media, where you have support. If you’ve got a good story and a good product, they don’t really care whether it’s coming from an indie or a major.”
Indies Still Skanking

Majors Jumped On The Ska Bandwagon, But Indies Have Been There From The Start And Continue To Support The Bands

BY CARRIE BELL

With bands like the Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Sublime crowding the upper echelons of The Billboard 200, tracks like "Sell Out" or "Dopeman" playing every hour on the hour on modern-rock stations, and musicians like Gwen Stefani becoming bona fide middle-America celebrities, 1997 was the year that ska broke. It seems fans will be skanking to the beat throughout 1998.

"Alternative rock and grunge made a big statement and made substance popular, but things got too heavy," says Paul Burgess, VP of marketing for TVT Records, home of Reel-O-Nine. "The young people looked for something fun and practical for everyday life. They either found Hanson and the Spice Girls or they dug ska."

Although it seemed like the genre came out of nowhere, a legion of independent labels and hardcore fans have carried the torch of the mid-'80s rock mixture since its beginning in 1980s Jamaica. Companies like Moon Ska, Heart Beat, Rebel Entertainment and Triple Crown churn out ska albums and compilations every month, as opposed to the safe one-hand-per-label theories of majors like Capitol, MCA, Epic or Mercury.

"I don't understand all this talk about a third wave, because ska never left," says King Django, owner of Southbound records and member of New York City's Stubborn All-Stars. "But the music is evolving, and many of the mainstream players have very little to do with the original ska music."

According to Carl Capriglio, president of Oglio Entertainment, which relaunched "Take Warning: Songs Of Operation Ivy" and is working with Blockbuster on an exclusive ska compilation called "Skabusters," indies are usually ahead of the major game when it comes to supporting unsigned talent.

"Indies are willing to take a few risks and promote what they believe in, as opposed to pushing just what sells," Capriglio says. "The small operations can make enough money with small hits to stick around and produce younger, less popular bands. They show 100% commitment to ska."

SPECTRUM OF SKA

Django notes that indie-label promotion and devotion also spanned a wider variety of ska styles. "There's so much out there to listen to. People from coast to coast are experimenting and others pay homage to ska's original form."

This evolution has led to two distinct movements in America: retro/traditional and hybrids for the '90s.

The classic ska sound is slower, less aggressive, and usually has more social, political and cultural commentary written into the lyrics. It places more emphasis on the horns than the guitar. The stronghold of traditional tunes is the East Coast, an epicenter in New York City, which is exemplified by bands like the Slackers, the Allstonians, the Scfallows and the Toasters.

"We sell a lot more of the deep-roots...
Jersey-based newcomers in a plaid-filled offers about Gainesville, where and punk-rock Coast Mighty—personal enough are "We've both ska Epitaph the way the way the way the way kids came to be. The Last "There are fanatics for both movements, but I think if you have a good enough product, you'll be able to break personal boundaries," Red Big Fish trumpet Scott Klompfinstein says. "We've toured all over the States this year and have never been told to go home where the kids appreciate our music."

But the West's main version of ska is happier, faster and influenced by the punk rock movement.

"There are exceptions to the rule, but in general, the East's bands are more about the tradition of ska and the West offers a lot of good-time music with a punk-rock edge," says the lovely Miss Stephanie, keyboardist for New Jersey's Inspector 8. "It seems to follow the West Coast way of life: going to the beach, drinking beer, skateboarding. Not that it's bad—look at how well it has done."

Skacore is also not limited to the shores of the Golden State. The Mighty Mighty Bosstones have been playing plaid-filled clubs and serving up grizzled trade like "The Impression That I Get" and "Someday I Suppose" more than a decade from Boston. Capitol Records' newcomers Less Than Jake (LTJ) turned Gainesville, Fl., into a den of skankin' madness.

"We started as a pure punk band, but the ska horns crept in five years ago and we liked the way it sounded," LTJ's Vinnie says. "We are what you'd call a contemporary ska band. Maybe we are on the wrong coast, but there's room in every state for bands that do it right."

THE LOWDOWN ON HYBRIDS

"Beyond the oversimplified distinction between retro and updated, ska branch-es off into a million different hybrids. You name it, and someone is playing it.

A growing movement is swing ska, represented by the likes of Royal Crown Revue, Cherry Poppin' Daddies, Seattle's Easy Big Fella, Jump With Joey (three of whom's albums were re-released on Ryolodic in July) and Skavoochie & the Epitones.

Other ska projects can be linked to religion. Christian bands like The Insiders or the Philharmonic five Iron Frenzy are elevating the massive music movement to a higher level, while Mephiskapheles is representing the man from down under.

"The devil tricked us into working for him, although we now go about it will-ingly," Greg Robinson of Mephiskapheles says. "We are just as soulless and hedonistic as the next band. It hasn't kept us off MTV, and why should it?"

Less extreme, but just as entertaining, is the movement to mix stage show and ska. No one does this quite as well as the Aquabats, a self-described "crack unit of dorks" from Aqua Hannah who have stage names and sing TV-esque anthems while wearing costumes.

"The first time we wore the costumes was a joke to make our friends laugh. We weren't trying to enter the mainstream consciousness," says bassist and organ player Crash McLarson, who adds the band is up for a Disney-produced TV show about their characters. "But then people liked it, and we figured we'd go whole hog with a complete story."

RETAIL SUPPORT

Mainstream organizations like Blockbuster and the Red Hot Organization have realized the expertise of smaller labels and have called on them to do several projects. The Red Hot Organization plans to release "Red Hot & Rare" next fall with new ska acts and old ska legends performing '60s soul covers.

"We try to stay in tune with the young, hip community to reach and ed-ucate them about AIDS through music," says executive producer John Carlin. "This is a vibrant genre that has passed the test of time."

But as with all trends on the upbeat, insiders whisper about the inevitable backlash and fall from fashion.

"This is the first time the mighty mer-chandising machine known as the U.S. music industry has taken an interest in ska, and it is likely to follow the same pattern as grunge. A few acts break out, several copy acts follow, everything gets promoted to death until people move on to the next big thing," says Rob Hingley, member of the Toasters and owner of Moon ska. "The lucky thing is that it isn't an industry-created trend. The majors may drop out, but the Indies will be there when the dust settles to help the dedicated bands keep keeping on. There is a lot more music out there to explore."
DISTRIBUTORS ROCK ON
Continued from page 62

RISKY IMPORT BUSINESS
One area that has undergone greater scrutiny by distributors is import buying. While importing has long been the bedrock of indie-rock wholesaling, it has proven calamitous for some companies in recent years.

At ums park, USM's Agent of NE T us $145 160

THE CHAINS GANG
Finally, some in the indie-rock distribution community, while they still view independent mom-and-pop stores as their meat and potatoes, are seeing certain chains as an increasingly important component of their sales base.

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BILLYBOB SPOTLIGHT
the Cardigans and "raised their visibility," he adds.

Labels generally tell the coalition about upcoming releases several months before they are to hit the stores. Advance copies are provided for listening. Although each band is highlighted for only a month, VanCleave maintains that coalition stores remain committed "for the life of the record." In the Magic Planter store, the Adopt A Band setup includes a front-window display, listening-booth position, end-cap display, front-counter display, eye-level brochures, other internal displays and mandatory in-store play.

For the exposure, labels pay each store a $175 a month, a modest amount when overhead is factored in.

The program is expensive for the labels, though, costing them $11,000 a month, which makes it better suited to major than indie record companies.

**GROUPS WITHIN GROUPS**

Now, sub-coalitions are being formed. In the Los Angeles area, several stores have banded into the Local Independent Network of Cool Stores (LINCS), although remaining within the larger coalition. "Media costs in L.A. are so high. They don't receive the co-op dollars to get into the bigger media. So collectively they'll try to get them," says Currier.

"We want to create an identity for independent retail in L.A.," says Rander Foster, owner of the Fingerprints store and LINCS organizer. CMS and LINCS are pop/rock coalitions, but they're not the only retail groups around. Urban-music merchants have begun a number of coalitions, although none has a national reach.

George Daniels, the owner of George's Music Room in Chicago and a member of the NARM board, is credited with starting and advising various coalitions. He says these urban coalitions now operate in New York, New Jersey, D.C., Akron, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and the West Coast outside L.A. The formula they use is one developed by Royce Fortune of Fortune Records in Ingleswood, Calif.

It was SoundScan that brought the urban retailers together, at the time the Billboard charts were being changed to reflect actual sales at stores. Daniels says R&B retailers were upset because they were faced with the high cost of computerizing their systems in order to keep reporting weekly sales to Billboard.

National United Independent Retailers (NUIR) was formed and Daniels elected president. "I accepted reluctantly," says Daniels. "How could I run my store and the coalition, too? I suggested that each member go back to their market and create coalitions."

For the urban retailers, the main issue is "becoming more proactive, rather than receiving what the labels are giving out," says Daniels. He believes the independent accounts should become better at obtaining dollars for developing artists, as CMS has.

**COMMON CONCERNS**

A big concern for all indie retailers (as well as chains) is source-tagging—the installing of electronic anti-theft devices on CDs during the manufacturing process rather than at the stores. "Shrinkage is still a big issue for us," says VanCleave. "And employees take a lot of valuable time putting security tags on product." The record companies are reluctant to start source-tagging because they fear lawsuits by manufacturers of anti-theft technology companies whose systems aren't used.

SoundScan is an issue for some indie retailers, too. Currier says, "What is SoundScan doing with their information?" He asks, "Why is SoundScan consulting our larger competition and using our information to help their business?"

This has become a concern with the growing trend of "co-management of inventory," whereby the label sales representative will write the product order with the retail buyer. Indie merchants fear chairs are benefiting from sales information they have provided to SoundScan.

Despite their complaints, though, the coalitions have no intention of terminating their relationship with SoundScan. "That would hurt the hands we're working with," says Currier.
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BIRTHS

Girl, Erina Shea, to Ginny Shea and Matthew McCormick, April 4 in Providence, R.I. Mother is owner of publicity/promotion company Mixtel Media.


Girl, Claire Boone, to Ky and Kyl Brewer, April 27 in Bucks County, Pa. Mother is a former staffer in the marketing division at Mercury Records. Father is an Innervous/World Group recording artist and does voice-over work for VH1.

Girl, Miranda Erin, to Lisa Brauns- tum and James Gimsburg, April 30 in Chicago. Father is president of Cedille Records.

DEATHS

Brad Singer, 45, of a viral infection, May 3 in Tempe, Ariz. Singer was the owner and founder of the eight-store, Tempe-based Zia Record Exchange. He opened his first Zia outlet in 1980. In 1987, Singer started Impact Music, a wholesale distributor catering to independent record stores around the U.S. As a consistent advocate of music from the Grand Canyon State, he launched Ephiphany Records in 1992, which has released albums by the Refreshments, Beat Angels, and Piersons. He also produced the genre-crossing, award-winning "Hijole" compilations featuring Arizona artists. He is survived by his children, Bryan, Zachary, and Caitlin; his mother and father, Lynn and Bud Singer; and sisters Jill Singer, Arlyn Strouse, and Brenda St. George.

Melodric Miracle: Smash Mouth, the Posies, Gary Busey, John Taylor Terrorist, and John Easdale Group will donate their talents to Miracle in the Desert '98 on May 23 at the Mission Hot Springs in Desert Hot Springs, Calif. The drug-free rock festival and in-line skating, skateboard, and BMX bike exhibition benefits the Musicians’ Assistance Program, the Ranch, and Skillbuilders, an after-school program for mentally and physically challenged children. Contact: Marc- cee Rondan at 818-380-0400 or Janet Newcomb at 760-530-1844.


By the Books: Pearl Jam matched the $76,000 raised by the Alliance for Education for the Stanford Book Fund, named after ailing Seattle Superintendent of Schools John Stanford. The fund supports school libraries in the band’s hometown. Contact: Epic Records at 310-449-2870.

MAY


May 13, Second Music Industry & New Technologies Conference, sponsored by the County Music Assn. and BiffSoutlh, Nashville, Nashville, June 1-244-2840.

May 13-17, Assn. For Independent Music Convention, Adam’s Mark Hotel, Denver. 303-633-0946.


May 15-17, Key West Songwriters Festival, Key West, Fl. 305-296-1552.

May 16, San Diego Blues Fest, Embarcadero Marina Park South, San Diego, 619-283-9570.

May 16-19, European Audio Engineer- ing Society Exhibit, Axia Exhibition Center, Amsterdam. 44-1-875-6218.

May 17-18, MTV/Billboard Asian Music Con- ference, Regent Hotel, Hong Kong. 212-536-5225.


May 21, Re-Arranging Arrangers, New York chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, New York. 212-245-0808.

May 22-25, Northwest FolkFest, Seattle, Seattle. 206-684-7327.


Q ALSO MAKES MARK IN PUBLISHING

(Continued from page 44)

for an upcoming project.

In addition to his company’s copyrights, Jones retains controlling interests in the catalogues of the Brothers Johnson, Michael Been, Siedah Garrett, Ivan Lins, Marc Kinchen, and Glen Ballard. Jones’ own creativity has, of course, been a factor in the success of his publishing operation. Particu- larly surprising is a 1962 work, “Soul Bossa Nova,” an instrumental Jones recorded for Mercury Records that, incidentally, was engineered by Phil Ramone, one of the industry’s top producers. First, the original record- ing of the work, which Jones wrote by expanding a cue in his soundtrack score to “The Pawnbroker,” became a major hit in its own right, reaching the top 20 on Billboard’s Hot 100. "Soul Bossa Nova," was written for a solo instrumental ensemble, with prominently featured guitar, saxophone, and string parts. It was recorded at the famed A&R Studios in New York City, with engineer Phil Ramone on the boards. The song quickly became a hit on both the R&B and easy listening charts, reaching the top 10 on Billboard’s Adult Contemporary chart. In addition, it was also recorded for the soundtrack of the film "The Pawnbroker," released by Famous Artists. "Soul Bossa Nova," was released on the Philips label. It eventually sold over one million copies, making it a major hit on the R&B and easy listening charts. It was also featured on the soundtrack of the film "The Pawnbroker," released by Famous Artists. "Soul Bossa Nova," was released on the Philips label. It eventually sold over one million copies, making it a major hit on the R&B and easy listening charts. It was also featured on the soundtrack of the film "The Pawnbroker," released by Famous Artists. "Soul Bossa Nova," was released on the Philips label. It eventually sold over one million copies, making it a major hit on the R&B and easy listening charts.
As Memorial Day Draws Near, Digital Video Revises Its Plans For Divx’s Unveiling

REBOOT: Digital Video Express’ moment of truth has been delayed. The Zenith edition of its Divx player and perhaps 50,000 copies of the disposable, pay-per-view disc were supposed to go on display Memorial Day weekend in 40 stores in San Francisco and Richmond, Va. But we learned at deadline that the introduction has been pushed back. “They’re just not ready,” says a source. Whenever it happens, the launch promises to be a slugfest.

Warner Home Video, no friend to the Divx variation on DVD, plans a counter-marketing campaign in those cities plus three others as a way to introduce its rental program. This could undercut Digital Video’s message.

Digital Video has been accused of confusing the consumer; now the DVD camp is intent on returning the favor.

Nonetheless, Divx is forging ahead. Digital Video spokesman Josh Dare says the company, owned by Circuit City Stores, has allocated $100 million to promote it, on top of the $130 million spent on R&D and during movie rentals.

By the fourth quarter, Dare says, 400 titles should be in stores, primarily in Circuit City and Good Guys outlets. By then, as well, Thomson and Matsushita will have shipped their players. But where to put them and the accompanying software? Digital Video can’t seem to interest other chains. “Blockbuster has taken a pass,” says Dare—news that pleases other video retailers who have their hands full trying to resuscitate tape rentals. Plan B for Divx includes drugstores and super-markets. They may prove equally hard to land.

AIR FARE: Twenty years after the fact, two networks have discovered home video. Egdal, NBC flashed an 800 number once during the broadcast of its “Merlin” miniseries and sold 100,000 cassettes.

The direct-response response was sufficient to draw the attention of The New York Times, which gave it front-page coverage. Thereupon, Walt Disney Televisi
tion president Charles Hirschhorn suggested Disney-owned ABC follow NBC’s lead to boost program revenues, if not ratings.

Direct-response spots on CBS, PBS, and cable channels have been a home video staple for years. It’s just that NBC and ABC never paid attention until the same cahllens started snatching away their viewers. Now the ancillary has become the exemplary. But if no one is watching, who’s going to buy?

HELPING OUT: Buena Vista Home Entertainment and Bonneville Worldwide Entertainment are sponsoring the Video Industry AIDS Action Committee’s fourth annual Art for AIDS Sake auction, to be held 6-10 p.m. May 19 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los An
gles. Gallerie Michael in Beverly Hills is assembling the auction, including works by Cezanne, Manet, and Rembrandt. Admission is a $50 donation.

VIDEOGINGS: MGM Home Entertainment bonded with “Tomorrow Never Dies,” shipping 170,000 copies of the list
est 007 caper. Records should it past the current DVD record holder, Columbia TriStar’s “Air Force One,” which started at 12,000 and topped out close to 200,000 units. If recent experience is any guide, much of the “Tomorrow” order will wind up on Pacific Rim players stripped of regional coding chips.

Distributor Valley Media in Woodland, Calif., has launched a “Dealer’s Choice” program designed to pull stores into the new format. Choices include a point-of-sale signag kit; a rolling display with room for 120 discs and four rental players, and a free spinner rack with 48- or 112-unit orders. All product is 100% returnable.


New Line Home Video ships “Wag The Dog,” starring Academy Award nominee Dustin Hoffman, Robert De Niro, and Anne Heche, on July 1, day and date with the cassette. . . . Similar Entertainment has four dual-layer titles arriving in mid-May: “America By Rail,” “Naked On The Beach,” “Space Age,” and “Tread/Retread.” Single-layer titles include “Conspir
cy Theory,” “Grumling’s White Tigen" and “Wheels, Heels, And Hot Licks.”
BMG Video Is Getting Educational; WOW! 3 Opens

BMG'S DISCOVERY. Just because it's educational doesn't mean it can't be entertaining. That's the message BMG Video will convey with a new line of programs from the Discovery Channel and the Learning Channel. After years of distributing their own product, the cable networks signed a long-term distribution deal with BMG last December.

This month, BMG is revamping the line to give it broader appeal. "We see more of an upside at retail if you make this product seem more entertaining rather than educational," says BMG director of marketing Michelle Fidler. "One of the things we're doing is changing the packaging to make it have more of a theatrical look and not make it look like a special-interest title.

Part of the packaging changes will include larger cover art, clever taglines, and blurs from recent releases. Following a lead from A&E Home Video, BMG will try to tie in Discovery product to event movies opening this summer, such as "The X-Files" and "Godzilla" and 20th Century Fox's "The X-Files." A&E saw sales of its "Titanic" documentary soar to more than 150,000 units earlier this year.

On May 19, BMG will release "Beyond T-Rex," priced at $19.98, and re-promote "Paleo World" series, which includes "Mysteries Of Evolution," "Sea Monsters," and "The Rise Of The Predators," to coincide with the re-release of "Godzilla" over Memorial Day weekend.

The June delivery of "Spies Above" and "Farewell Good Brothers," a documentary about people who say they have had alien encounters, is slightly ahead of the June 19 opening of "The X-Files." The titles are priced at $19.98 and $19.99, respectively.

"When a film becomes a national sensation, people want to learn more about the subject," says Fidler, "and we want to make Discovery the place to find it."

BMG will also take advantage of the advertising Discovery does for the new shows by releasing the corresponding videos closer to airtime. As an example, "The Egyptians II" will be in stores May 19 following its May 4 airing on Discovery.

Fidler says BMG plans a common street date each month to maintain consistency at retail. Discovery will continue to handle on-air and direct-response sales.

CLASSICS DRIVE SALES. A strange mix of classical, comedy, and daredevil programming is lifting sales at Kultur/White Star Video to new heights. Kultur reports that holiday programs "Boboiko's Swan Lake" and "The Kirov Ballet's Nutcracker" have shipped more than 100,000 copies each. In addition, "John Cleese's How To Irritate People" and the "Erie Kovacs" collection have each delivered nearly 100,000 units.

Chairman Dennis Hedlund says that the 10-volume "Young People's Concerts With Leonard Bernstein" is doing "very well" and that retailers aren't looking at the set price of $49.95 at the point. The set is now also available in three packs priced at $89.85 each or single tapes at $42.95. "Record chains with strong classical departments, such as HMV and Virgin, are doing well with all our classical titles," says Hedlund, "while mass merchants are interested in our "Elvis Kneivel" titles." Also selling: a line of motor-sports videos from the Duke Library.

Kultur remains on a steady course even though the audience for special-interest tapes isn't really growing," he adds. "But despite that, we're seeing sales rise by 4% to 5% a year."

WOW! IN THE VALLEY: The Good Guys! and Tower Records will open their third WOW! store, in Glendale, Calif., this month.

The store, located about 15 miles east of Hollywood in the San Gabriel Valley, will feature a new area called the audio/video exposition. The design concept showcases the latest in equipment in a home-like setting, with four environments, including the "ultra media center," the "family media center," and a home office room, dubbed "work@home.com." The latter features computer setups.

Specialized sales staff are on hand to demonstrate the equipment and help customers design their own home theater offices. The audio/video area debuted in select Good Guys! stores last year.

Like its predecessors, the Glendale WOW! will feature thousands of CD, video, laser-disc, and DVD titles, as well as more than 4,000 consumer electronic items.
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Great Egyptians II coming soon to home video.

*Based on EQUITREND Surveys 1996-1997. © 1998 BMG Video, a unit of BMG Entertainment. 1540 Broadway, NY, NY 10036. All rights reserved.
‘Little Men’ To Get A Large Video Push

by Moira McCormick

Child’s Play previewed “Little Men,” produced by Los Angeles-based filmmaker and found it among the best family movies we’ve seen. It sports a superlative script, direction, and acting, particularly by 14-year-old Ben Cook as the troubled orphan Jack.

The movie picks up where “Little Women” left off, with heroine Jo March now married to her professor sweetheart, Frits Bhaer, and running a school for boys. "Little Men" is expected to find a built-in audience among those who enjoyed director Gillian Armstrong’s luminous 1994 version of "Little Women," which starred Winona Ryder, Susan Sarandon, Gabriel Byrne, and Christian Bale. The sequel features Mariel Hemingway as Jo and Chris Sarandon as Fritz.

"Little Women" is one of my favorite movies of all time," says Capone. "With ‘Little Men,’ we saw a film we knew would play just as well on the big screen." Warner Bros. is so enthusiastic that they’re positioning it as the lead title of our 75th-anniversary third-quarter promotion,” he adds.

The clamshell package will include a Warner Bros. 75th-anniversary savings book that contains $150 worth of coupons for merchandise, theme parks, music products, pop corn, and online services.

“Little Men” premiered in eight markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, Indianapolis, and Minneapolis. It will shortly be followed by openings in 12-15 secondary regions, according to Capone.

Warner took the same approach last year with “Shiloh,” based on Phyllis Reynolds Naylor’s Newbery Award-winning book. In video, it has sold more than 1 million cassettes. Capone notes, “We’re following the ‘Shiloh’ strategy to a T with ‘Little Men.’”

“Shiloh” played theatrically from April through mid-July 1997, and its overall excellent reviews acted as valuable advertising for its late-June VHS release. With “Little Men,” Capone says, “we have another whole month to build word of mouth.”

Promotion actually got under way in April, when “Little Men” trailers began running in front of Warner Bros. theatrical features in 20 cities. TV and print advertising kicked in May 8. “I’d love to put out quality family movies like this on a regular basis,” Capone says. “With home video, there’s always concern about product awareness.”

Capone added that movies based on well-loved books, like “Little Men” and “Shiloh,” offer not only quality but also built-in familiarity.

SPRING HAS SPRUNG: Disney is offering free toy chests featuring either Winnie-the-Pooh or Spot the Dog in its current “Spring Fun & Friendship” promotion.

The program includes seven videos, including three new titles, each priced at $12.99. Consumers can receive a toy chest free with the purchase of any four eligible Pooh or Spot videos, or they can buy a chest for $4.45 with the purchase of any two cassettes.

The toy chests are constructed of

(Continued on next page)
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**CPIG Enters Retailing With DD Acquisition**

**BY SAM ANDREWS**

LONDON—U.K.-based international character and sports licensing agent Copyright Promotions Group (CPG) enters retailing with the acquisition of British supplier DD Video for about $4.5 million.

DD Video, which specializes in British military and aviation titles, is the trading name of Leisureview Ltd. Leisureview reported sales of $4.6 million for the year ended July 31, 1997, and reported a pretax profit of approximately $160,000.

The company has a library of 300 programs either acquired from licensors or produced by the label itself. In addition to the traditional wholesale and retailer network, it also sells via direct mail.

CPG hopes to finance the purchase through a share issue that is expected to raise $5.7 million.

The move gives CPG a vehicle through which to market the various sports rights it represents. One of CPG's major shareholders is sports and media marketing giant ISL, which holds a 25% stake. ISL has the licensing rights to the soccer World Cup and the International Amateur Athletic Federation World Athletic Championships and is the marketing agent for European soccer's governing body, the United European Football Assn.

In December 1997, ISL provisionally appointed CPG as the worldwide licensing agent for Euro 2000, the European soccer championship. The deal becomes official in the next two months.

Says CPG chief executive David Cardwell, "There is a tremendous synergy in that DD Video has a mail order and video retail business through which we can exploit other rights that we own, particularly the sports rights held by ISL."

DD Video managing director Richard Jones maintains the deal is "enormously beneficial in terms of exposure to international markets." The company, meanwhile, is looking to expand its TV production footprint.

To date it has co-produced "Battle For The Skies" with Discovery Channel Europe and "Airborne" with the History Channel, and it has struck several U.S. deals, including one with GoodTimes Home Video.

"America is the great challenge," says Jones. "We are looking at opportunities in our own right there, especially on the direct marketing side."

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**POLYGRAM TAKES SWING AT BASEBALL**

(Continued from page 83)

Parent PolyGram has music to spare. "We're working with our record labels to see what they can contribute to the project. There is a pool of artists we're hoping to draw from," Scamardo says. "It made the NFL hot, and it's a terrific way to reach this audience." Jon Bon Jovi and Elton John are under consideration for a title called "Major League Beats," which should be out in time for the July 7 All-Star game.

Prior to that release, PolyGram Video plans to release three or four new titles, including a pair of sequels that Scamardo says have been done with "more energy" than the originals. The approximately 70-title MLB catalog was revamped in time for the start of the season.

What PolyGram won't have is much in the way of cross-promotions. Opportunities were missed because "we got a bit of a late start due to the timing of the deal," Scamardo acknowledges. But he maintains that PolyGram is "planting seeds for the next season."

One deal has taken hold that Scamardo thinks will boost MLB and NFL activity. "The Sports Illustrated magazine is offering free issues of the magazine and a reduced subscription rate to consumers who buy a whole baseball."

---

**CHILD'S PLAY**

(Continued from preceding page)

heavy-duty cardboard with reinforced hinged lids and different graphics on all four sides. Each is approximately 20 inches wide, 15 inches deep, and 14 inches high.

The offer is good through March 3, 1999, while supplies last. The mail-in certificate is found in each cassette package.

Disney's new titles are "Winnie-The-Pooh: Imagine That, Christopher Robin!," "Winnie-The-Pooh: Three Cheers For Eeyore & Rabbit!," and "Spot And His Grandparents Go To The Carnival." The four others are "Clever Little Piglet," "Pooch Wishes" (plague-ific tales), and "Sweet Dreams, Spot." Each runs 30-44 minutes.
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REACH YOUR AD COMMUNITY
BILLYBOARD MAGAZINE
NAB Urges FCC To Drop Microradio Plan

BY BILL HOLLAND
WASHINGTON—The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), in April 27 comments to the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), said it would be “foolish” for the commission to establish a new, low-power “microradio” radio service. In recent months, interest has grown in establishing community radio stations that would broadcast to limited coverage areas, in some cases just a neighborhood.

FCC chairman Bill Kennard has said he would like to investigate the possibility of a new service of hun-
dreds of microradio stations between 1 and 10 watts that could fulfill community needs and promote divers-
ity. The FCC, however, continues to crack down on so-called pirate broadcastes, which often broadcast from such localized stations.

“Interference on the airwaves continues to be serious concern for legitimate, licensed radio stations,” wrote NAB president/CEO Edward O. Fritts. “We think it would be folly for the FCC to add hundreds of micropower stations that would only increase the problem.”

Besides citing possible interference, the NAB comments pointed out that the FCC wouldn’t have ade-
quate resources to monitor such small stations and added that the commission shouldn’t create a new service “in order to curb the prolif-
eration of illegal pirate stations.”

The NAB filing added that micro-
radio “would create small islands of usable coverage in an ocean of inter-
ference.”

Live Christian-Music Show Slated For Summer Bow

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE
NASHVILLE—Reinforcement Com-
munications, the Dupree Co., and
the Lamb’s Church in New York are
joining forces for “Live From The
Lamb’s,” a weekly two-hour na-
tionally syndicated radio show slated to
premiere around July 1.

Broadcast from the Lamb’s, an
off-Broadway theater located in
Times Square, the show will fea-
ture top contemporary Christian
music artists performing live
“unplugged” concerts in the 350-
seat venue. Thomas Nelson Pub-
lisheers will be the program’s title
sponsor.

Airing Sunday evenings from 5-
7 p.m. EDT, the show will be car-
ed on Morningstar Radio Net-
work’s 125 affiliates and other
Christian outlets. There are also
plans to approach mainstream sta-
tions about airing the series.

“Live From The Lamb’s” was
created by Joe Battaglia, president
of Wyckoff, N.J.-based Renaissance
Communications; Cindy Dupree of
the Dupree Co.; and pastor John
Calhoun of the Lamb’s Manhattan
Church of the Nazarene. Battaglia
says he first had the idea to do such
a show when he was working for
WWJY New York and producing
concerts at the Lamb’s.

“Every artist I’ve spoken to is
very excited about his opportunity,
because many of them got their
start in New York with our concert
series at the Lamb’s 10 to 12 years
ago—Steven Curtis Chapman,
Margaret Becker, Twila Paris, Lar-
nelle Harris, Phil Keaggy,” says
Battaglia of the series that ran
from 1985 to 1989. “The list goes on
and on, and they all have fond mem-
ories of the kind of venue it is.”

Dupree thinks a Christian music
show like this will fare well in
the Big Apple. “There are wonder-
ful church communities in New York
that would embrace this type of
venture, and there are a couple of
to retain those that sell Christian materials and music

Chancellor Forms New Marketing Group

Chancellor Media Corp. has
formed a new division, Chancellor
Marketing Group, to enhance the
revenue it derives from sales pro-

motions activities.

The new division, which will
spearhead Chancellor’s marketing
effort, comes from the company’s
purchase of Global Sales Develop-
ment, a Richmond, Va.-based con-
sulting firm.

Global president/holder Alison
Glander is named president of the
new Chancellor Marketing Group
and senior VP of Chancellor Media.
Chancellor COO Jim de Castro

Comments on the acquisition dem-

strates the company’s “commit-
tment to increasing top-line growth
and unlocking the value at each of
its 108 radio stations. Promotion

revenue represents a reservoir of
untapped growth.”

Global Sales Development works
with 160 client stations in 32 cities.

CHUCK TAYLOR
**WINTER ’98 ARBITRONs**

12-plus overall average quarter hour share (#) indicates Arbitron market rank. (Copyright 1998, Arbitron Ratings Co. May not be quoted or reproduced without the prior written permission of Arbitron.

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**LIVE CHRISTIAN-MUSIC SHOW SLATED FOR SUMMER BOW**

(Continued from preceding page)

"...and product," she says.

"One of our challenges is that we want to put this forth to the national media in a way that sets a precedent. We want to continue to position Christian music in New York with the advertising and industry with which we've worked with, and with other companies and people and..."

Battaglia agrees that the show will raise the profile of Christian music, but she really enjoys about what it could mean to the industry and many of the artists who [make up that industry]," he says. "To give them that kind of platform..."
"Flagpole Sitta," the overtly bouncy track at No. 11 on this issue’s Modern Rock Tracks, is a contradiction in terms concocted by Scottie’s Harvey Danger: It’s a thinking man’s pop song, a bubbly jingle that takes an intellectual jab at pseudo-intellectualism.

“This song has a lot of layers—the catchy tune, the silly lines, the parody, and the more serious meaning,” says vocalist Sean Nelson. “It’s the kind of song people sing along to but don’t realize it makes fun of them, like ‘Smells Like Teen Spirit.’ It contains simple truths, but no answers.”

Nelson is quick to admit it’s a bit of a hyperbole. “We explain it as a rant against consumption and the media. But that’s a little bit self-indulging, since

the music industry is all about consumption, and that’s how we pay the bills. Not to mention I’m using the media right now to further that consumption.”

But it hasn’t always been that way for the 5-year-old quartet, which began at the University of Washington doing covers of Nirvana and Mudhoney songs. Nelson says he, guitarist Jeff J. Lin, drummer Evan Sult, and bassist Aaron Huffman actually ran in the opposite direction from fame. “We aren’t self-promoters,” he reports. “It’s not that we aren’t good at that. If you chase bigness, you only generate hype, and inevitably people find out if you are good or not. We took a long time getting comfortable with music as not to create simple meaningless pop songs that litter airwaves.”

Luckily, KNDD (the End) Seattle championed the song, and Sush/Shiden picked up the band’s album “Where Have All The Merchymen Gone?”

“We owe the Man a lot at this point, and we intend to deliver,” Nelson adds. “But I can’t wait to get back in the studio. This one was recorded too cheap and fast for our own good. The next will be leaps and bounds over it.”

**Mainstream Rock Tracks**

**Modern Rock Tracks**
For Chicago, The Life Of A Working Band Remains A Hard Habit To Break

by Chuck Taylor

CHICAGO

Blowing their own horn: In the 31 years that Chicago has been making music, the band has never stopped touring. And that, says bassist Peter Cetera in 1985—

but have never bought into the drama of irreconcilable ego crises, drug and alcohol impulses, or walkouts, the kinds of things that lead groups trying to balance the demands of schedule and celebrity to a nasty demise.

“We had the advantage of being a larger group, so we were fairly insulated,” says Lamm. “It brought us a togetherness and a leaning on each other that made the other distractions a non-factor, so we never found it necessary to break up. There is a strength of character in each of the guys in the band and also a collective strength. No, we’re not the band that recorded (first album) Chicago Transit Authority! But we’re really good band and, in some ways, a better band. And yet it remains Chicago. It’s a weird dichotomy, like an extended family.”

Reliving many of the group’s past musical moments during the process of putting together this latest retrospective offers the players a clear view of just how far they have traveled together: “When we looked at the product we had, it was incredible,” says Parazsader. “Thank God it was an easy thing to do; we’re blessed with so many hits. We’ve put together a pretty nice volume of work, and that gave us a certain amount of musical pride.”

Included on “The Heart Of Chicago 1967-1997 Volume II” are nuggets as “Feelin’ Stronger Every Day,” “Love Me Tomorrow,” “Old Days,” “Say The Night,” and “Don’t Wanna Live Without Your Love.” The first single, “All Roads Lead To You,” was first presented in demo form, produced by Lamm and the band started building the rhythm section, then added horns. (The band members refer to this as being “Chicagoized.”)

“It was built, the song just came alive,” says Parazsader. “It’s like listening to it with vocals, the rhythm section, and horns, it came out not as much dreamy as it did having an edge to it, having a little more energy. We were pleasantly surprised. It was one of those magical things, and as much fun as it could be.”

The band will back the album with a 33-date summer festival tour with Hall & Oates, beginning June 17. Both acts agree that the pairing is an appropriate match. Says Parazsader: “We think it’s a great marriage, because they’re a real musical act, as we’d like to flatter ourselves as being. And according to Daryl Hall, it’s a ‘natural fit’ for the band.”

“We share a common musical outlook. They’re pretty soulful people. They come from a different region, but it’s the same kind of vibe.”

After that leg finishes at the end of July, Parazsader says, Chicago will take a six-day breather “to wash our socks,” then return to the road through September.

In the meantime, the guys are in the studio recording the Christma album for holiday release. “Thirty years ago we said that the Christmas album would be something that’s a legacy, something that could return every year,” says Parazsader. “But we’ve worked so much in those first three years—300 days—a year, we’ve never got around to it.”

Soon after the organic approach the band took with its 1985 “Night And Day” collection of hits from the late 1930s and 40s, it revisited the idea of a holiday album. “The whole process on ’Night And Day’ was very creative for us,” Lamm says. “It had been a while since we were in a position to arrange and rehearse before ever stepping into the studio. It really is an ensemble recording. When we decided to do the Christmas album, we realized a similar approach would be best.”

And finally, “The Little Drummer Boy,” “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful,” “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town,” and the like, the album produced by Lamm, will contain one original song, “Chicago,” by writer/producer and player Lee Loughnane and John Durrill.

We looked at a lot of other Christmas albums over the last five years and realized it’s pretty difficult to write something of the caliber of ‘The Christmas Song’ or ‘White Christmas.’ There’s a reason those songs are standards,” says Lamm. “The one written by Lee is extraordinary and has a lot of credibility. Believe me, it wouldn’t have been included if it couldn’t stand up to the rest.”

And then, as if the goal checklist wasn’t long enough for 1998, Chicago intends to re-enter the studio in October to begin recording its next studio album.

“Yeah, we’ve got a little bit to chew on for most of the year,” admits Parazsader. “It’s just that we’re listening to it with vocals, the rhythm section, and horns, it came out not as much dreamy as it did having an edge to it, having a little more energy. We were pleasantly surprised. It was one of those magical things, and as much fun as it could be.”

E-mail Chuck Taylor at cjohny@billboard.com.

Bowen’s Top 40 Savvy Takes Star 94’s Ratings Skyward

“I’m NOT SURE anyone thought we could get this thing this high,” says Dan Bowen, PD of Jefferson-Pilot’s WSTR (Star 94) Atlanta. A year ago, Star was sitting at a 5.1 share—a fairly respectable 12-plus number, given today’s post-Telecom climate. Fast forward to April 1998, and the dialkey delivered a whopping 8.1; the station’s previous record was a 7.2 share. It’s now up to an 8.3 and is third in the market in the second weekly Arbitron trend. With that, Star 94 has become the market’s No. 1-cumming music station, says Bowen.

To most industry observers, Star 94, with adhering to the top-40 for the ‘market’ thesis, never really fit the trend’s need for a mass appeal top-40 template. On paper, some said, the station’s format was damn near AC. “One is not a sufficient ingredient that has been proved not to work here and again proves music from another trend,” says Bowen. “I think a lot of people assume that they could come in here, do mainstream, and be huge. If that were true, the late WAPW [Power 99] would still be here.”

“We’re very disciplined about the types of records that fit our sound, which really does translate into top-40 for Atlanta,” adds Bowen, who works with Jefferson-Pilot VP of programming Don Benson and music director J.R. Ammons. “We’re fairly conserva-
tive and not out of the box on lots of stuff.”

Not surprisingly, this approach is very similar to the vibe at WNCI Columbus, Ohio, where Bowen spent 12 years.

“Coming from the outside, I thought we could play certain songs,” Bowen says. “But after looking at research, I found there’s this very clear-cut line, musically.”


Bowen transferred to Star 94 in March 1997 after nine months at his first PD gig at Jefferson-Pilot sister KQKS Denver, which had just finished the transition from mainstream mix 107.5 to rhythmic KS 107.5. “When I took the job, Don, ‘If you’re not the right guy for this format, tell me,’” Bowen says. “Don assured me that KS 107.5 needed a solid thinker and a marketing approach that would take the station to the next level.”

It took some time to learn the music, but after 90 days into the new format, the signs were obvious that it was on its way.”

Meanwhile, PD Kevin Peters had exited Star 94, and Benson came calling on Bowen’s 12 years of main-

trend experience as WNCI’s assist-

ant PD, music di-

rector, and promo-

tion director.

“The personali-

ties and marketing were already in place,” Bowen says. “Just came in and changed the music. We know our strengths.”

Those include an already successful station with a dangerously stable air staff. “I wanted to be able to enhance that heritage without stepping on it,” Bowen says. “We just took the station and put all the elements to the test, just to make sure everything was as good as we thought it should be. Over time, we tried to add so many layers that a station tends to become very broad. It was time to scrape off the old layers and get back to basics. The dialkey can do it on a regular basis, because over time we’ve added this and this and we can do it all.”

Another not-so-secret weapon at Bowen’s disposal is Benson, who’s conveniently located down the hall when he’s not on the road. “I can draw upon Don’s experience as a former PD of Star; but he’s here only as an advisor,” says Bowen. “I have no problem asking his opinion on songs, but he never sets any mandates for Star.”

VP/GM Mark Kanos has been at the station for 30 years. Operations Manager/director of marketing Alan Hennes is an eight-year station vet. And music director Am-

mmons has developed a very keen programming sense, but at his own pace. Says Bowen.

So, what about the conventional wisdom that those 18-34 years are over in the major markets? “I’m not sure what that means anymore,” says Bowen. “Our hard work is paying off, and I’d like to believe that this run will continue for some time to come.”

KEVIN CARTER
BET Plans Rollout Of 4 Spinoff Channels; Rod Stewart On VH1

NEW BET CHANNELS: More details have emerged about the spinoff channels planned by BET, which is continuing to expand its business ventures (Billboard, March 28). BET will launch four new spinoff channels (with a yet-to-be-announced name) as part of a digital cable package called BET Sounds (Billboard, Bulletin, May 1).

The four channels will focus on R&B, inspirational/gospel, world music, and rap/hip hop. BET Sounds will also include BET on Jazz. The launch date for BET Sound has not yet been determined, but it is expected to be sometime this year, according to BET.

NEW BET NATIONAL OF AFFILIATE MARKETING: Lee Chappin says, “We did extensive research and found that the majority of our subscribers said they wanted more channels.”

Programming for BET’s spinoff channels will primarily consist of videos and promotional content. “But that may evolve,” adds Chappin. “We’re toying with the idea of longform programming, such as having ‘where are they now?’ types of shows.”

This is the latest network to announce spinoff music channels. In November 1997, the Box launched an R&B-only channel called Urban, while MTV Networks said that in July it will launch an R&B channel called VH1 Soul (Billboard, December 6, 1997).

What about the concern that BET might lose some of its original viewers to its spinoff channels?

Of the competition from other channels as well as its own, Chappin says, “We believe that all of these channels can fit into the marketplace.”

He also notes that even though world music and gospel audiences may be marginalized in terms of record sales, “once a national outlet exists for this music, then I think the music industry will be more likely to produce videoclips for this kind of music.”

Priority Records VP of video promotion (U.S.) Shellie Fontana observes that “it isn’t enough room for BET and other national networks to play all the hip-hop and rap videos out there. VH1 spinoff plan is a great thing for urban music.”

Mark Weinstein, president of independent video promotion company R’N’F Freelance, adds, “To the extent that the new channels give exposure to more new artists, it’s a positive thing. But if these new channels divide the pie in terms of splitting the audience, it could backfire if the audience becomes too fragmented.”

VH1 STORYTELLERS NEWS: Rod Stewart

rocks New York’s Supper Club for a recent VH1 “Storytellers” taping. Some of the best moments from the show, directed by Stewart, who was confident and jovial through the performance, will be heard as “Rocks,” “Cigarettes And Alcohol,” and “Oh La La” from his new album, When We Were The New Boys. And, of course, he also sang hits like “Maggie May,” “Tonight’s The Night (Gonna Be Alright),” “You’re In My Heart,” “Reason To Believe,” “Hot Legs,” “Forever Young,” and “I Have To Tell You Late.”

Stewart’s “Storytellers” episode will premiere on VH1 June 21 in the new “Storytellers” time slot of 7 p.m. ET Sunday. Other upcoming “Storytellers” episodes include Culture Club (June 14), Ringo Starr (June 28), and Bonnie Raitt (July 12).

BY LARRY KOTLER

production notes

LOS ANGELES

10 Speed shot “Space Queen” with director Ted Crittenden.

SEATTLE

Jermaine Dupri shot “Jump On It” with director Darrel Grant.

Washington

Steve Carr directed Def Squad’s “Full Cooperation” clip. All City shot “The Actual” with director Abdul Malik Abbott.

OTHER CITIES

Dallas was location for Matt King’s “A Woman’s Tears” (directed by Jim Gerik) and “Riot Nrrrl” from 2 Skinnies’ J directed by Nos Nwos.

Director Jim Shea lensed Hal Ketchum’s “I Saw The Light” in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

illerbillboard May 16, 1998

95
Buddy Guy Hopes to Widen Audience With Silvertone Set

(Continued from page 1)

both view “Heavy Love” as perhaps the musician’s most important album since his 1991 Silvertone bowl, “Damn Right I’ve Got The Blues,” which re- ceived a 1991 Billboard Century Award honor as the nonparalel blues guitarist of his Chicago-bred generation.

Michael Tedesco, director of Sil- vertone Records North America, says, “Damn Right I’ve Got The Blues” is now a gold record. . . . This record, I would say, has the potential to do the same kind of business that that record has done.”

Guy’s manager, Scott Cameron of the Cameron Organization in L.A., says, “I hope this will be a much wider exposure of his profile to a much bigger audience than he’s had so far. I began working with Buddy in 1991, and [watched] the profile grow these last 22 years. We’ve only seen it continuing to grow, and hopefully this year, this record, this round of touring, are going to increase that audience by a significant number again, as Damn Right I’ve Got The Blues” did.

Produced by David Z, who has worked with young blues guitarist lap- ions Jonny Lang and Kenny Wayne Shepherd, “Heavy Love” moves deeply into R&B territory, albeit with a contemporary sensibility.

Tedesco says, “David without question had an idea about taking an orthodox 12-bar blues form and fusing it with some more modern rhythms, basically, where you’re still keeping a blues element, but you’re updating the rhythmic com- ponent. And Buddy was very, very intrigued by that.

To be sure, straight-up blues remains prominent on the album, in such performances as the burning “Heavy Love,” “Ain’t No Grave,” a crisp re-arranged cover of the Muddy Waters classic “I Just Want To Make Love To You,” the stellar acoustic “Did Someone Make A Fool Outta You,” and the blistered homage to Jimmy Reed, “Let Me Show You.”

R&B LEANINGS

But Guy also slants R&B territor- ily, with the funkified “Heavy Love,” covers of Louis Jordan’s 1949 hit “Saturday Night Fish Fry” and Freddie Scott’s 1966 soul smash, “Are You Lonely For Me,” and “Midnight Train,” a Stax-tinged duet with Lang.

Guy explains that the R&B slant came naturally: “When I got to Chicago, when you were playing, competing for the gigs, you had to play everything. . . . You had to change the way you were playing to keep a gig in those blues joints in Chicago. I was just a rhythm & blues player when I came up.”

Guy notes, “There’s a couple of songs on [Heavy Love] in par- ticular that will give Buddy more of an avenue back into an African- American audience. You won’t find any of your radio stations in that genre programming blues.”

The R&B flavor of “Heavy Love” is also present in the presence of tracks ex-Booker T & The MG’s guitarist Steve Cropper, who joins the basic lineup of guitarist Jack Holder, bassist David M. Smith, drummer Richie Hardesty (Light Foot), and keyboardist Reese Wy-
nins (formerly with Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble). Guy says of Cropper, “When someone like Steve’s in the studio, I’ll be so busy peepin’, tryin’ to see what he’s doin’, I forget what I gotta do.”

He is equally effusive in his praise of guest star Lang, who opened close to show for Guy a couple of years ago.

“This one sounds like he’s 27, 28 years old,” Guy says. “He sounds like he’s been around and sh*t like Muddy and the rest of ‘em was. The guy’s just got it. He’s an unbel- lievable young man, and I think he’s here to stay.”

Guy says, “He’s one of my biggest inspirations, and it’s flattering to know that you can let him at all, let alone be on his album.”

Guy acknowledges that his current emphasis on non-blues material and the track with Lang may repre- sent a way of getting around com- mercial radio’s reluctance to spin straight blues.

“It’s not gonna make me change my mind and don’t play blues,” he says. “I’m more just sayin’, OK man, if I could just play something to get inside this building, then you’ve got to listen to the rest of the sh*t I’m going to play. I’m trying to make a record [that will make radio say] ‘Hey man, that’s right all right, I’ve gotta play it’.”

Guy remarks about the songs on Heavy Love in particular that will give Buddy more of an avenue back into an African-American audience. You won’t find any of your radio stations in that genre programming blues.

The R&B flavor of Heavy Love is also present in the presence of tracks ex-Booker T & The MG’s guitarist Steve Cropper, who joins the basic lineup of guitarist Jack Holder, bassist David M. Smith, drummer Richie Hardesty (Light Foot), and keyboardist Reese Wy-
They also had funding from a dedicated source. Blackwell is in the process of lining up financing for Islandlife. "We’re going to be looking to raise about $100 million," says Blackwell, adding that he would like the bulk of the money to come from four or five entities. One rumored potential investor is Ted Waitt, chairman/CEO of the computer manufacturer Gateway 2000. "We met because of an investment we both have in a R/C-106 miniature-vehicle entertainment company [Launch]," says Blackwell. "I’d love for him to be involved." There also has been speculation that the two might make a joint venture or invest in an online delivery system. "That’s not cut in stone, not even plastic," says Blackwell. "I think I could certainly say that we’ve become friends. And often when people do business become friends, something evolves out of it."

Palm Pictures (Music) For Blackwell, combining the film and music companies under the Palm umbrella only made sense, as he sees DVD as the carrier of the future. "Several years ago, I wondered why we weren’t promoting more, and I was told it was because it would have such a short life span, because soon they would be able to download [music files] on a CD-size carrier," he says. "And I’ve been looking for it since then. I believe DVD is going to be the most important vehicle for the original music." "One of the plans is to release videos from projects as DVD singles," says Majd. "That’s the minimum commitment we hope to have for the audio projects. More ambitious, a longform DVD companion which will also be released on home video."

The first audio releases from Palm, which will be in the traditional CD format, will be “In Search Of The Lost Riders” from East Ranglin and “Nomad Soul” from Senegal singer M’Santher. According to sources, they are the first of many releases from a group of internationally acclaimed musicians. Plans are for the SL&B Robbie’s “Dream Of A Man” and “Base Strip To The Bone” and a soundtrack to “Six-String Samurai,” with Palm acquired at Slam Dance, the edgy alternative festival that runs concurrently with the Sundance Film Festival. It will arrive in theaters in September, distributed by Manga.

In addition, Islandlife’s various releases, Palm will release, through Manga, “The Basketball Diaries” and “Mandela: Son Of Africa, Father Of A Nation.” Glicer says Islandlife will also release on DVD the compilation films “Ghost In The Shell” and “Ninja Scroll,” the latter of which has already sold over 275,000 videos in the U.S.

In terms of developing movies, Burg says, Palm’s goal is “to find new, young filmmakers. In the last year, with the earlier films, we felt we could self-distribute (through Manga). We would like to stay in business with them as they develop.”

Blackwell also wants Palm Pictures to focus on Jamaican culture. “My heart is really in Jamaica,” he says. “I’m trying to develop the film industry in Jamaica. I don’t want that pumped up more than it is—I’m talking tiny, low-budget films—but I’d like to make one or two every year. They wouldn’t all be musical stories like ‘Dancehall Queen,’ but they’d always have a strong music content.”

BLUE MOUNTAIN MUSIC Islandlife’s London-based publishing arm, Blue Mountain Music, is home to 13 writers and 3,600 copyrights. The 35-year-old company also oversees the Bob Marley catalog outside of the U.S. and U2’s music publishing in the U.K. Among the writers and artists signed to the company are James and Wally Badarou. Blue Mountain expects to sign at least three more songwriters this year but is not looking for additional licenses with all of Blackwell’s companies under one umbrella, Blue Mountain chief Alistair Norbury says his goal is to integrate his division with the other entities. For example, developing artist Marlena was signed to Blue Mountain while in Jamaica, and the company is in discussions with the publisher about extending the deal. “There’s no reason to cut off your nose to spite your face, as it were,” says Blackwell. “There’s no better way to do an excellent job with the publishing.”

Regardless of the company that Blue Mountain aligns itself with, the publisher will be able to increase its music presence, says Norbury. “We’re thinking about having a dedicated Blue Mountain person work at the sub-publishing company, or even working out of Palm in New York,” he says, “so we can get more active in the U.S., in the covers market and more in the synchronization market.”

BOB MARLEY MUSIC As Bob Marley’s popularity shows no signs of waning in the world, Bob Marley Music continues to be the clear, highbrow for his name and image. In addition to the planned reissuing of the Marley boxed set, “Songs Of Freedom,” the division is keeping an eye on the reissuing of the Marley catalog; these are requested for all kinds of projects, ranging from film usage to samples in other songs. Marley’s image continues to be a highly coveted one. "Our approach is different from going to one of the big merchandise companies and giving them exclusive licenses," says Doreen Crujeiras, who oversees Bob Marley Music. "We give out nonexclusive deals to give the smaller guys a chance to sell T-shirts. We have mousepads to T-shirts to posters. Everything we do is in conjunction with the Marley family.

ISLAND OUTPOST The newest outpost of Blackwell’s hotel and recording studio division is Goldeneye, which is being developed on the Jamaican site where Ian Fleming created James Bond. Other Jamaican properties include Strawberry Hill, the Caves, and Jake’s. In the Bahamas, Island Outpost has Pink Sands and Compass Point, which houses the famous Compass Point Studios. In Miami, Island Outpost owns the Tides resort, as well as the Marlin, which includes South Beach Studios.

Now, the main project is the development of Goldeneye," says Blackwell. “But we have plans to do another resort property in the Bahamas.”

ISLANDLIFE.COM All facets of Islandlife can be accessed at www.islandlife.com, the company’s web site. The site, which was run by Trevor Glicer, will feature sound clips of artist interviews and music, release information on Palm Pictures audio and video projects, and information on Islandlife’s upcoming projects. (Continued on page 98)
IFPI MEETING TO FOCUS ON BUDGET, NEW LEADER

(Continued from page 1)

occur Monday (11)-Thursday (14) in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, where the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) is scheduled to hold its biannual council meeting. The London-based organization represents the $38 billion recording industry on a worldwide basis, with some 1,300 member companies from more than 70 countries. Approximately 200 of the industry's most seasoned executives will gather at Kuala Lumpur's Regent Hotel for a formal agenda that will tackle such concerns as Internet licensing, online music retailing, the World Intellectual Property Organization copyright treaties, piracy, and performing rights (see story, this page). Underpinning any industry discussion will be the dis
tion of IFPI's 1998-99 budget—which includes a significant hike in anti-piracy funding—and the anticipate
tion of the federation's new leader, day Berman, former chair

man of the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA).

"Everybody has to start thinking forward—and wider," says IFPI director general Nic Garnett, who adds that the biannual council meeting "will emerge from the Malaysian meeting after it's approved and funded by the 26

"The document covers all aspects of IFPI's affairs, all the major themes," he says, adding that it will be circulated to Kuala Lumpur panes. "The October meeting will reflect the council meeting's delibera
tions and that it will subsequently be made widely ava

As our job becomes more complex and issues become more interrelated," Garnett explains, "it's very important for national IFPI groups and the industry as a whole to know what we're doing."

The tome will also reflect the perspe

cceptions of the organization's sec

eretariat in London. "We also have a vision," says the director general.

The most influential component of IFPI's main board is its executive committee. This includes PolyGram's chairman, Ono, and PolyGram's Worldwide, EMI Recorded Music president Ken Berry, Sony Music International president Bob Bovlin, BMI Entertain ment International president/CEO Russ Giguere, Universal Music International president Jorgen Larsen, Warner Music International chairman/CEO Ramon Lopez, RIAA president/CEO Hilary Rosen, BMI Entertainment International Asia-Pacific and Poly Music/Universal chairman/CEO Antoni "Ant" Suny, as well as Garnett and IFPI chairman David Fine. Most are expected in Kuala

Lumpur.

Members of this blue-ribbon group will also meet with govern ment officials of the host nation, as they have in other locales that the IFPI board and committee have visi
ted. The goal is to stress the record ing industry's value in economic and cul
tural terms. On Wednesday (13), Y.B. Dato' Leo Mogge, the M'sian minister for energy, telec
oms, and posts, will give the coun
cil a keynote address.

Kuala Lumpur was selected for the conclave before Asia plunged into its current financial crisis, which has taken the shine off the region's near-term potential for music industry growth. Garnett says the venue was chosen to stress

ISLANDLIFE'S BLACKWELL

(Continued from page 97)

on Mango.

Additionally, from the Web site visitors can purchase more than 100 releases from Palm Pictures art
ists and like-minded acts, as well as Mango releases. Recent releases on the site are the web site that it reflects all the different Islandlife en
tities and brings them together," says Crujeiras.

An important challenge before him, Blackwell looks back on his days with PolyGram with few regrets. "It wasn't a mistake that I have linked with PolyGram," he says. "I learned a lot, and it was a time there, certainly the first four

years or so, were so excellent. It was just the latter part—when I became like fitting a square peg in a round hole—that it was a problem."

And he looks ahead with clear

eyed excitement. "It was much more since I started in 1969. I knew absolutely nothing, and in the last 40 years I've learned a lot from experience. But I've always been blessed with the association. And it's still about that and finding and identify

ing the right talent and nurtur

ing the talent and creatively market

ing the talent. Some things have changed since I started, but most things are the same."

areas will IFPI spend less?"

The way the federation's budget is raised and spent is of equal concern to independent labels. Executives at some of these firms distribute through their national group fees—consider their interests under

represent. (There are five inde

pendent on IFPI's board—three are on the executive committee.)

For example, British industries—a small but vibrant force there—have no board presence except through their national group, whose chair

men heads Warner Music U.K.

Small, mid-sized, and major rec

cord companies alike should benefit from the Berman's 1998-99 budget is said to include around $5 million for a worldwide "zero tolerance" anti-piracy drive spearheaded by director of enforcement, lan Grant, himself. "We will recruit to the federation from the Hong Kong police."

"Zero tolerance is the way for

ward," says Smellie. "We have to show everybody, including govern

ments, that we're serious." Sources indicate the campaign includes provisions for new region

al anti-piracy coordinators in

countries, with national IFPI groups in fight

ing illegal operators. However, those national groups already contribute to the overall IFPI anti-piracy budget, and the prospect of paying even more in the future could be contentious.

"The council has to approve (in

Kuala Lumpur) the level of contribu

tions from the national groups," Garnett says. "Those contributions could possibly increase, or possibly not. The board may "undertake ele

ments of the new budget, he adds.

Worldwide, the six major record companies heavily underwrite IFPI's anti-piracy programs. "Finding the right balance of anti-piracy funding on a national and international basis is essential," says Peter Zembik, joint managing direc

tor of the IFPI's anti-piracy opera

"Those groups that already make significant contributions should not be burdened (unfairly)."

It's adjusted to introduce a full-time chairperson's post and that Berman's appointment is on the agenda of the executive committee in Kuala Lumpur. An official announce

ment isn't likely until the next board meeting this fall.

Fine is halfway through a two-
year term and will step down in 1999, according to sources; Berman will serve as an IFPI consultant for the rest of 1998. The level of Berman's compensation through 2001 may provoke lively debate in Malaysia, but such is the respect for his abilities and achievements as RIAA chair that no major objections are anticipated.

"There will be no objection," says a senior European IFPI official. "This is a good step forward. Most were concerned at first with the new compensation levels that were set underwritten by the six major record companies.

"We'll be elated in Latin America (if Berman is-appointed) but, worldwide, is the Americas, I am pleased," says Berman. "We're working with Jay for the past three or four years. He's a fine entreprene

ur and a man of good sense."
Hot 100 Airplay

May 16, 1998

Hot 100 Singles Sales

May 16, 1998

Records are titles which have appeared on the Hot 100 chart for more than 20 weeks and have dropped below the top 50.
**Billboard Hot 100 Singles**

**MAY 16, 1998**

**Title**

1. **Billboard.**

2. **MAY**

3. **maxi-single**

4. **12**

5. **7**

6. **100**

7. **31**

8. **39**

9. **23**

10. **17**

11. **64**

12. **98**

13. **59**

14. **57**

15. **56**

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61. **10**

62. **9**

63. **8**

64. **7**

65. **6**

66. **5**

67. **4**

68. **3**

69. **2**

70. **1**

**Title**

1. **BEATLES**

2. **MAXI-SINGLE**

3. **Billboard/BPI**

4. **Communications**

5. **Billboard/Mediabase**

6. **Las Vegas**

7. **Chicago**

8. **New York**

9. **Los Angeles**

10. **Miami**

11. **Atlanta**

12. **Washington**

13. **Boston**

14. **Philadelphia**

15. **San Francisco**

16. **Seattle**

17. **Minneapolis**

18. **Denver**

19. **Phoenix**

20. **Dallas**

21. **Austin**

22. **St. Louis**

23. **Detroit**

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97. **San Francisco**

98. **Dallas**

99. **Austin**

100. **St. Louis**

**Compiler's Notes:**

- Compiled according to the Nielsen SoundScan system, which measures the total sales of an album over a specific period.

- Nielsen SoundScan is a service that provides comprehensive and accurate sales data for music albums and singles in the United States.

- The Nielsen SoundScan system collects and aggregates data from a wide range of retailers to provide a reliable representation of sales trends.

- The Billboard Hot 100 is a weekly music chart that ranks the top 100 songs in the United States based on sales, radio airplay, and streaming.

- The chart is published by Billboard, a weekly music magazine, and is one of the most widely recognized and influential music charts in the world.
Natalie Imbruglia scores her first. No. 1 Hot 100 Airplay song with "Torn" (BCA). The track has 95 million audience impressions from airplay at 257 Hot 100 monitored stations. . . The most-im proved songs on Hot 100 Airplay are Sparkle's "Be Careful!" (Rock Land/Interscope) and Natalie Imbruglia's "Torn" (Elektra/EVEG). "Be Careful!" is the first song from R. Kelly's co-venture with Interscope. Rock Land Records, posts a 67% improvement to leap 69 to Hot 100. Sparkle has 17.8 million audience impressions from airplay at 39 stations, including 7.5 million impressions from WQHT New York, WPGC Washington, D.C., and WERG Baltimore combined. Kelly wrote, produced, and contributes uncredited vocals on "Be Careful!".

"Kind & Generous," Merchant's first new song since 1996's "dealougy," laps 7 to 1 due to a 69% increase in audience impressions. The song has 16 million impressions from airplay at 147 stations. Elektra is considering releasing a commercial single depending on the song's development at top 40 radio. Interscope has no plans to commercially release "Careful!" nor does RCA plan to release "Torn.

WHAT'S NEXT: Demand for Janet's "I Got Lonely" (Virgin) is so great that the single scanned 5,200 units prior to its May 5 street date. If the single had sold enough to enter the top 75 of Hot 100 Singles Sales, "I Got Lonely" would have been mandated to bow in Hot 100 No. 34, but the single missed the cut by 786 units. There were, however, enough early scans at the R&B core-store panel to force a premature debut at No. 37 on R&B Hot Singles Sales and at No. 6 on Hot R&B Singles. After a full week of scans, "I Got Lonely" sought to debut in the top 15 of next issue's Hot 100. A look for Gloria Estefan's "Heaven's What I Feel" ( Epic) to bow in the top 50 of the Hot 100.

TITANIC" HITS 10 MILLION MARK IN APRIL RIAA CERTIFICATIONS

(Continued from page 10)

LUTHER ALLISON HONORED AT HANDY AWARDS

(Continued from page 10)

The next revolution is taking place in music marketing. To learn more, call 203-323-7382.
### Billboard 200: May 16, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>RANK</th>
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<th>TITLE</th>
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<th>WEEKS ON SHORE</th>
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<th>ROLLING WEEKS</th>
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**Re-entry:**

1. **SONIC YOUTH** - ATP @ BLUES:NOISE 031/04/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
2. **BILLY MILES** - UNIVERSAL 031/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
3. **DANZIG** - UNIVERSAL 031/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
4. **LUCAS** - UNIVERSAL 031/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
5. **THE JACKSONS** - UNIVERSAL 031/06/07 (16.98/24.98)

**New:**

1. **Fugees** - DISCORDER 01/02/03/04/05/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
2. **UNCLE SAM** - STONEDNESS 03/04/05/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
3. **MARY J. BLIGE** - MCA 031/04/05/06/07 (16.98/24.98)
4. **PROPELLERS OF WAR** - DECKSAFES 03/04/05/06/07 (16.98/24.98)

**Continued...**
NESS: CONSOLATION.

The latest round of acquisitions by SFX Entertainment, which was recently spun off from the broadcast-unit company, consists of three experienced positions.

It comes as the company prepares to launch a significant ticketing operation.

On May 4, SFX announced the acquisition of a third-party ticketing firm, promoting the company's Graf Law Co. and its ticketing arm, Next Ticketing, for $80 million. The 4,800-seat Oakes Amphitheater in N.C. for $12 million; and an 8% interest in Event Merchandising Inc. (EMI), owned by manager Howard Kaufman, for $8 million.

Also announced as part of the shopping spree was the purchase of Avalon Attractions, a Southern California-based concert promoter, for $27 million.

SFX CEO Mike Ferrel says in an interview that the purchase of the concert promoter best suited for us, considering its large-scale operations.

The acquisition of SFX is a significant deal for the entertainment industry.

"The acquisition of SFX is a significant event for the entertainment industry," says President F. X. Sillerman. "The acquisition of SFX is a significant event for the entertainment industry."
City Of Hope To Honor Billboard’s Lander, White

Howard Lander, executive VP of BPI Communications and president of the Billboard Music Group, and Timothy White, editor-in-chief of Billboard, have been selected by the City of Hope to receive this year’s Spirit of Life Award.

“For over 20 years the ‘Spirit of Life’ has been awarded to leaders in the music industry,” says Don Pasaman, president of the music and entertainment industry chapter for the City of Hope. “We recognize individuals who have accomplished both personal and professional achievements in the business.”

**Musician’s Guide Improved**

The Musician’s Guide To Touring and Promotion has held thousands of band gigs, airplay, press coverage and distribution throughout the U.S. and Canada. Now in its 10th edition, the Musician’s Guide contains city-by-city listings of clubs, radio stations, record stores, local media, and cassette/CD distributors; a band directory; a booking and A&R directory; listings of music industry web sites/orienting services, information on equipment repair/rental, listings of national publications and fanzines, and a music business services directory (listing attorneys, managers, and agents).

Special to the new edition is a section on health insurance options.

**The Guide** is available in music stores and bookstores for $10.95 or via mail for $11.95 post-paid.

**Contact**

Musician’s Guide to Touring and Promotion

1515 Broadway, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10036

Refer questions to Joan Masella at 212-536-5184.

Billboard, Rhino Hit the Road

Kid Rhino, in association with Billboard, has released “Family Travel Classics,” the fourth title in Kid Rhino’s family classics series. The album compiles 10 unforgettable songs from film and television and is packaged as entertainment for families on vacation.

Kid Rhino is the children’s imprint of Rhino Records, which has issued numerous lines of successful Billboard-branded compilations. Several of the titles have been certified gold by the RIAA.

“Family Travel” features classics from favorite TV series like “The Brady Bunch,” “The Flying Nun,” “Route 66,” and “Star Trek.” There also are songs from Hollywood and Broadway, by artists such as Nelson Riddle, Judy Garland, Stephen Spielberg, and others.

The package captures the first time on CD novelties such as Sally Field performing “I’m On My Way” from “The Flying Nun” and Hayley Mills singing “Side By Side” from the film “Bring Your Smile Along.”

The compilation is priced at $9.98 for CD and $5.98 for cassette; there is also a 6x8 blister pack cassette version. For further information call Cindy Laudati at Rhino Media Relations at 310-474-4778.

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**Who’s Next? ‘Live’ Long And Prosperous**

BY HOLDING OFF Mariah Carey’s “My All” (Columbia) and Shania Twain’s “You’re Still The One” (Mercury), Ne-Yo’s “Too Close” (Arista) remains No. 1 on the Hot 100 for a fourth week, thus becoming the longest running chart-topper of 1998. It’s also the longest-running No. 1 since Elton John’s “Something About The Way You Look Tonight” “Candle In The Wind 1997” (Rocket) completed its 14-week run a few months ago.

In any other recent year, a four-week reign over the singles chart wouldn’t be big news, but with the rapid turnover of No. 1 hits in 1998, it’s enough to make “Too Close” a leading contender for top single of the year honors.

At the moment, that title goes to Elton’s two-sided hit, which is still on the Hot 100, falling 45-46 in its 32nd (and possibly final) chart week. If we continue to have a quick succession of No. 1 songs through the rest of the year, “Something” “Candle” could be Billboard’s top single of the year. That would make the tribute single to the late Princess Diana the No. 1 record of the year two years in a row, an unprecedented event.

“HOVINO: Continuing its slow descent on the Hot 100, “How Do I Live” by LeAnn Rimes slips 28-31 to No. 2 this week. In an earlier day, that easily could have been the longest-running single in the history of the chart, but in the last two years we’ve had two singles reach the 60-week mark or better: “Macarena” (Bayside Boys Mix) by Los Del Río (60 weeks) and “Foolish Games” “You Were Meant For Me” by Jewel (65 weeks). It remains to be seen if Rimes can beat Jewel’s record, but given the slow movement of the triple-platinum single, it’s a contender to match the 55-week third-place mark set by Everything But The Girl’s “Missing” and Duncan Sheik’s “ Barely Breathing.”

While “How Do I Live” leaves the top 30, Rimes’ newest single bulleted 54-27 in its fifth chart week.

Looking Through Your Eyes” (Curb), which earns Greatest Gainer/Sales honors, isn’t the follow-up to “How Do I Live” that single was already succeeded by Rimes’ remake of Deby Boone’s “You Light Up My Life,” which fell off the chart a few months back.

45 AT 33: It’s starting to look as if there will never be another No. 1 single in Canada (see Hits of the World, page 50). Elton John’s “Candle In The Wind 1997” “Something About The Way You Look Tonight” is No. 1 for the third consecutive week. According to Canadian chart columnist Nanda Lien, that means “Candle” has been No. 1 longer than all of Elton’s other chart-topping singles combined.

Add up the number of weeks his other singles spent at No. 1, and you come up with a total of 31.

“Candle” has been No. 1 more than twice the time as the second-longest-running No. 1 Canadian hit, “I’ll Be Missing You” by Puff Daddy & Faith Evans (Featuring 112), which was on top for 13 weeks.

Elton’s single has spent nine Canadian chart weeks at No. 1. And by remaining in the top 10 for 33 weeks, it has tied the record for the single with the most weeks in the top 10. The other longevity champ is Elton’s “Can You Feel The Love Tonight.”
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June 2.