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 relicense 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 1989. Among the top executives at Islandlife are former Island executive VP Hooman Majd and Larry Mestel, previously executive VFCOO 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 Picturesstaffers, 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)
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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www.virginrecords.com
AOL Keyword: Virgin Records
BY EILEEN FITZPATRICK

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.

Tommorow, 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 $39.95.

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 promotion 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 which—Las Vegas stores where the sale of used CDs is prohibited.

Originally, Brooks’ label, Capitol Nashville, had set a $69.95 suggested retail price, but many retailers offered the same price for the set (Billboard, April 11). Several weeks ago, though, the label set a MAP of $27.95 and suggested the retailer 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 because—other retailers for others, but a small one for Garth.”

He says the label was not pressured by 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, “as long as they needed it, so we gave it to them.”

Wherehouse country music buyer Jeff Stoltz says the chain did not use co-op dollars in the ad. 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 will continue the promotion to remain competitive with deep discounts on used CDs. “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 $27.98, this is a way for us to break through the clutter,” Stoltz says.

Apparenty the strategy has worked; the chain expects to sell 8,000 units of the title during the first week of its availability; 5,000 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 that isn’t concerned about the Wherehouse promotion.

“I think it’s a clever idea,” says Tower Records president Russo 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 $29.95.

Indeed, Kmart is likely to do well with the title, since Brooks is promoting the title with an exclusive Kmart ad that features the artist stockishing shelves and flicking a switch that momentarily changes the “K” in Kmart into a “G” for Garth. The ads are scheduled to begin in two weeks.

Kmart has the box on sale for $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 blast- ed 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 marketing and merchandising for music and video Len Consimo. “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 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 albums will be reissued on vinyl for its 10th anniversary date (Billboard, April 11).

Quigley defends the strategy and adds that orders were “heavier” from the retail than from mass mer-

P’Gram Joins EMI As Option For Suitors

BY MARK SOLOMONS and ROBBERT TILLI

LONDON—The prospect of two of the world’s major music companies changing hands has emerged after the Universal music parent Semper on May 6 confirmed long held suspicions that the group is evaluating its options for its majority stake in PolyGram (Billboard, Bulletin, May 7).

“The decision is not an immediate one, 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 buyer—believed to be Universal music parent Semper on May 6 confirmed long held suspicions that the group is evaluating its options for its majority stake in PolyGram (Billboard, Bulletin, May 7).

The decision is not an immediate one, 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 buyer. The source’s list includes another major—Sony or BMG, for example—making a play for PolyGram.

PolyGram’s shares rose 12% in Amsterdam and New York May 6, after Philips issued a statement that it would “embark on 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 98.125, up .5125. The prices value PolyGram at 17.84 billion guilders ($86.56 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.

Philips’ 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 speculation 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)
**No. 1 IN BILLBOARD**

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**Top Or The News**

6. Clinton administration may veto copyright-extension bill if it includes exemption legislation for restaurants.
7. Executive Turntable: Steve Ellis is promoted at Mercury.

**Artists & Music**

12. Reflective new Rigo Stor album includes appearance by members of big-name artists.

This Week's Billboard Online

88 Classified
106 Market Watch
106 Chart Beat: Next's "Too Close" a contender for top single of the year honors.
106 Homefront: Howard Lender and Timothy White to receive City of Hope's Spirit of Life Award.

**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 in 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 future U.S. trade sanctions. They also endanger their status as members of the World Trade Organization (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 Bulgaria would be identified as a Priority Foreign Country—the top tier for problem countries—unless gains were shown.

Since then, Bulgaria has announced the establishment of a CD manufacturing plant licensing decree that seeks to close illegal CD plants and says it is committed to placing CD plants under 24-hour surveillance.

The action follows strong lobbying by IFPI executives of Bulgarian leaders, including a meeting with Interior Minister Bogomil Boinov on 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 showdown 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 were it not for CD factory raids conducted April 26 and April 28 by Hong Kong authorities in which 7 million CDs were seized. The USTR says 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 Intellectual Property Organization treaties by member nations will result in rules requiring nations to provide tough intellectual property protection across the board—and across national boundaries.

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by Jeff Clark-Meads in London.
Olivia Newton-John
"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
Platinum, K-Tel Up The Online Ante

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) and others 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.

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

Sony Music is also selling music online, the most recent being direct music marketer K-Tel International and Internet bookseller Amazon.com. The two 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 CDbetter (Billboard, 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 increasingly aggressive in the near future.

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

MY-CD already has licensing deals with such labels as Alligator, Bar/None, Knitting Factory, and American Gramaphone, and, according to Bennett, is on the verge of announcing a partnership with a major-label affiliate.

“Labels are definitely coming around to this as a real business that has a substantial consumer demand,” says Bennett.

Exploiting its association with Bandai, one of the third-largest toy makers in the world, the company also plans to make available

(Continued on page 80)

Sony Music Shines in ’98 Results

BY CHUCK TAYLOR

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

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

“We’re extremely pleased with the first few months of Global,” Sony Music Entertainment president/CEO Thomas Mottola tells Billboard. “It is reflective of our ongoing commitment to provide wide artist development and an 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 fared well during the first quarter.

As Stock Soars, K-Tel Offers Words Of Caution

NEW YORK—In the first quarter 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 spending.

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 attributed to the music business alone.

The latest announcement from K-Tel that it had formed an agreement with infringement production company Case 990 was a blow to K-Tel’s proprietary music, beginning in June. The infomercials would also plug K-Tel’s World Web Music retail site, K-Tel Express.

A few days earlier, K-Tel had announced it had made a deal with Billboard Music Group to run ads on the company’s shorts 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-
TRACY BYRD  "I'M FROM THE COUNTRY"

The Artist Who Delivers True Country Hits Delivers A True Country Album

“Im From The Country”

Available May 12th
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 to the online music and retail World Wide Web sites Music Boulevard (www.musicbldv.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 to people who are going to play 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 also 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, play the album or not. Artists, view Billboard reviews of the album being played, and make purchases and scout 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 can participate," says Grey. "All they have to do is work with us to allow the proper uploading and downloading of data. The whole reason we wanted the best experience for people using Windows, We're not interested in getting a part of anyone's sales."

For the other enhanced retail function, Microsoft is cautiously optimistic.

"It would have to be user-driven," says Akers when asked if the links could someday be used to suggest 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 were sold in Microsoft Plus! 98. Rob Enderle, director of desktop and mobile technology for Cambridge, Mass.-based consultancy and analyst firm GigaInformation Group, predicts that Windows Plus! 98 will sell several million copies.

According to Enderle, 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 helped build an installed base.

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

"The Plus! pack tends to move in February 1998. The software sales drop off rather sharply," says Enderle. "They should be able to move somewhere in the neighborhood of 4 million. It's a very high percentage of sales of the year, and I would guess close to another 6 million in 1999."

(Continued on page 46)

Music Helps Seagram's 3rd Qtr.

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

For the quarter, which ended March 31, the entertainment and beverage company's Universal Music division posted earnings of $200.9 million, up 200% 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.

Hauer, and nearly all of the remaining staff, yielded rumors that Warner was withdrawing from the Christian market.

Among those still at Warner Alliance, according to sources, are VP of gospel Detrue Alexander, national promotion director Brenda Smith, and Eric Mulliet in marketing. The current roster mainly consists of gospel acts Beverly Crawford, O'Landra 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 start-up in the fall of 1995, 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, Van Azzoli, and Phil Quartararo," she 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 Newsboys when he was the head of Virgin.


BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—In a renewed show of commitment to the Christian marketplace, Warner Bros. is forming a new Christian music company to be headed by VP of Christian Distribution (WCD) GM Melinda Scruggs Gales (Billboard Bulletin, April 24).

Gales will report to a board composed of Atlantic Group co-chairmen Van Azzoli, Warner Bros. Records Inc president Phil Quartararo, and WEA Distribution chairman/CEO Dave Mount. The name of the new venture and Gales' title have yet to be determined.

Information on the new company's structure and staff is expected to be announced in the next few weeks.

The new company will encompass the current roster and catalog of the Warner Alliance label, whose future has been in question in recent months. Last year the Warner Alliance staff was slashed from seven to two in the wake of corporate restructuring.

The recent departure of such high-profile artists as Wayne Watson and Caedmon's Call, as well as label head Neal Joseph, VP of promotion and marketing Chris

Int'l Biz Flies 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 fiesta 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 50,000, 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 Music was evidence that multinationals are renewing their stakes in the magically rich region abandoned by American majors after Fidel Castro's victory in 1959 and the nationalization of private companies in Cuba.

U.S. business on the island has been subsequently stymied for more than a year. (Continued on page 46)

Music Helps Seagram’s 3rd Qtr.
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

Luther Allison Honored At Handy Awards

BY LARRY Flick
NEW YORK—After a string of refined adult-pop efforts, Rod Stewart fondly revisits his raunch-rock roots with “When We Were The New Boys,” a spunky Warner Bros. collection that balances the sound of his Faces-era tenure with material penned by a slew of new-generation rockers.

Slated for worldwide 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 “Suck Yourself,” alongside more classic fare such as the Ronnie Lane/Ron Wood composition “Ooh La La.”

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

“Albums like ‘Every Picture Tells A Story’ continue to be an immeasurable influence on young musicians,” 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 selling 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—(Continued on page 14)

‘Titanic’ Hits 10 Million Mark

in April RIAA Certifications

BY CARRIE BELL
LOS ANGELES—The “Titanic” soundtrack continued full-steam ahead, hitting certified sales of 10 million, according to April figures from the Recording Industry Assn. of America.

The certification makes the title one of the three best-selling soundtracks in the ’90s, along with “The Lion King” (10 million) and “The Bodyguard” (16 million). “Titanic” is tied with “The Lion King” as the No. 5 best-selling soundtrack of all time.

The Carpenters’ “The Singles 1969-1973,” certified at 7 million, became the highest-certified album by a duo. Five other albums by the sibling act went multi-platinum, while seven went platinum and one went gold.

Madonna reached a landmark with her latest, “Ray of Light.” Certified double-platinum, it made her the first female vocalist to have seven multi-platinum studio albums. She is trailed by Mariah Carey and Barbra Streisand, who each have five.

Madonna’s “Frozen” became her 17th gold single, placing her behind Janet Jackson—who has 18—as the female artist with the most gold singles.

“Rumors” by Fleetwood Mac moved into the top five of the best-selling albums, with certified sales of 18 million.

The RIAA awarded 29 multi-platinum, 46 platinum, and 43 gold albums last month. Three platinum and nine gold singles were also certified.

With 47 awards, Reader’s Digest Music led the labels with the most certifications, which included the first albums by Bing Crosby, Marty Lanza, and Glenn Miller to reach the certified 1 million mark.

The Verve (Virgin), Robyn (RCA), and Natalie Imbruglia (RCA) also celebrated their first RIAA million-sellers, while other gold-album debuts include Next (RCA), Uncle 4 (Continued on page 101)

Arista/Austin’s Strategy

Reaps Hit Single For Sister 7

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

The group, whose label debut album, “This The Trip,” came out last July, had already built a loyal fan club list of more than 20,000 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 gigs and hit fan and industry word-of-mouth.

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

“They’re in the genre of what we remember rock’n’roll bands to be,” says Passick. “They play with an urgency that makes you sweat, combine rock’n’roll with the tremendous voice of Patrice, who is one of the most extraordinary front women I’ve seen in many a year.”

But Sister 7, which also includes guitarist Wayne Sutton and drummer Sean Phillips (no relation to Darrell), 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 to a strong sense of direction among the group members, who brought different musical influences and writing styles to the table when they formed in February 7, 1991, when they were first called Little Sister.

“They spent so much time living 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 continued nonstop after the release of “This The Trip,” with Arista/Austin initially targeting the existing fan base and sending the band to radio conventions 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 number of ‘潛in’ fans. They put 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, owner John T. Kunz has been one of Sister 7’s strongest backers since 1992, when its first 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 spotlighting 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 jumping on and taking them from something that was a home-grown product into something that’s blossoming everywhere.”

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 “extra-bouncy” 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 playing around the country playing in front of radio station executives, on radio stations, and at radio-sponsored shows,” says Schnur.

Tommy Mattern, assistant PD (Continued on page 16)
Trisha Yearwood
The Triple Crown

Academy of Country Music Awards
TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

NARAS (Grammy)
BEST FEMALE COUNTRY VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Country Music Association
FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

Trisha,
Congratulations on a fantastic year!
Artists & Music

Star Appearances Grace Ringo’s Set

Mercury’s ‘Vertical Man’ Features A High-Profile Lineup

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

NEW YORK—There are a lot of doors that being an ex-Beatle will open, but one is especially valuable to Ringo Starr when it comes to asking other artists if they will appear on his album.

“I can call anybody. It’s up to them to say yes or not, but at least they accept the phone call,” Starr says, with a laugh.

Among the guests offering their resounding support on “Vertical Man,” coming June 16 from Mercury Records, are Starr’s former bandmates Paul McCartney and George Harrison, as well as Brian Wilson, Scott Weiland, Ozzzy Osbourne, Joe Walsh, Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler, and Alanis Morissette. The latter two appear on a remake of “Drift Away,” with Tyler singing and playing drums.

 Although delighted at the high-profile lineup, Mercury executives downplay the guests’ significance when it comes to marketing the album. “Ringo has traditionally had guests on his album,” says Josh Zie- man, VP of product development for Mercury Records (U.S.). “In 1992’s “Time Takes Time” on Private Music, “Vertical Man” straddles the line between pop and rock and it’s choked full of tuneful melodies with, at times, surprisingly reflective lyrics.

“People forget that we’re growing up,” he shrugs, regarding the lyrics. “I don’t want to admit it, but a day at a time I’m starting to say, ‘Well, I think it’s time to grow up now, Richie.’ And I say, ‘OK. I’ve put up the fight for so long. These are the things that interest me now.’

Starr hooked up with the album’s producer, songwriter Mark Hudson, through songwriter Dean Graken, owner of Mercury’s Graven’s attorney, Hudson, Grakel, and fellow songwriter/guitarist Steve Dudas gathered at Starr’s house in Los Angeles and started writing. Several sessions—and with breaks for vacations, tours, and other business—the foursome had written an album of material.

“This is the first time I’ve really been involved [in my record],” Starr says. “Whereas before, I’d just sort jick out other people’s

(Continued on page 19)

Atlantic Makes A Bid For Sinéad O’Connor; Tyler’s Knee Injury Stalls Aerosmith Tour

TIDBITS: Look for Atlantic Records to sign Sinéad O’Connor. O’Connor, who was formerly an EMI Records, has her last ER “Gospel Oak,” picked up by Columbia Records following EMI’s bankruptcy. Her next was a one-off deal (Billboard Bulletin, May 1).

Aerosmith has postponed the remainder of its North American tour after lead singer Steven Tyler damaged his knee in a show in Anchorage, Alaska. Tyler will have to undergo knee surgery followed by 12 weeks of rehab. The dates, which ran through June 4, are expected to be rescheduled for later this year.

In other Aerosmith news, the band just cut a ballad, “I Don’t Want To Miss A Thing,” for the “Armageddon” soundtrack. The movie’s cast includes Tyler’s daughter, Liv. This marks the first time the group has recorded an original song for a major studio film.

On June 20, HBO will air a concert featuring Billy Joel and Elton John. At that evening in Vienna, the special, produced by Picture Vision, Jon Small, will be directed by David Mallet.

Nick Low is hired the hits of June 9 in San Francisco in support of his new album, “Dig My Mood.”

RCA has restructured its publicity department. Publicity director Gina Orr has moved from the east Coast to the West Coast, while Michael Taur, associate director of publicity, in Los Angeles, has left the company.

Voting continues through May 30 on the U.S. Post Office’s new stamp series based on the ’60s. Among the contenders are the arts and entertainment category are a Beatles stamp and one commemorating Woodstock.

CREATION’S BABY: Creation Records in the U.K. will release an EP of new Ronnie Spector recordings in the fall. The EP consists of material Specter has been working on for months, as chronicled in this column, with producers Joey Ramone and Daniel Rey. The highlight of the set is a gorgeous version of Johnny Thunders’ “You Can’t Put Your Arms Around A Memory.” No U.S. release is scheduled. As far as full-length album plans, a Creation spokesperson says the band is currently none but that “anything is possible.”

COMING UP: Universal Records will release a Chumbawamba album in the fall that will consist of material from its previous eight U.K. record-

ings—none of which came out in the U.S.—as well as a few new tunes. The first single will be “Top Of The World,” which is already out in the Europe. Imperial Teen, Roddy Bottum’s full-time project since the dissolution of Faith No More, has just completed its follow-up to “Seasick.” “What Is Not To Love” will come out in August on Slash/London.

In other Slash news, former Grant Lee Buffalo guitarist Paul Kimble is working on an album with his new band, Pistol Star. Expect a late sum-

mer/early fall release.

Woohoo: On Sept. 1, Rhino Records will release “Go Simplicious With The Simpsons,” a follow-up to 1996’s “Songs In The Key Of Springfield.” Similar to its predecessor, the new disc will contain songs, underscore music, and interstitial dialogue from the series. A two-CD single collection from Depeche Mode, titled “The Singles 86-98,” is slated for release on Oct. 13. The set will contain a new song, “Only When I Lose Myself,” which will be serviced to alternative radio in late August.

I HAD TO HAPPEN: Just as 500 Music is releasing the “Ally McBeal” soundtrack, Peter Pan Records has two records featuring that annoying dancing baby who appears periodically to McBeal.

“The Official Dancing Baby CD” features four remixes of “Hooked On A Feeling,” which the dancing baby cava to on the show. The CD came out April 28 and appears on this issue’s Hot 100 Bubbling Under chart. The tune is performed by the new act Baby Talk. A full-length Dancing Baby album, featuring 14 bubble-gum hits like “Sugar Sugar” and “Dizzy,” will be released May 26.

Since, as far as we know, the Dancing Baby doesn’t sing (or he’d be the Singing Baby), what makes these Dancing Baby CDs official is that Peter Pan’s parent company, PPI Entertainment, has the license to manufacture and distribute Dancing Baby audio and video products. Therefore the over of the releases is a 3D, animated, lentorium package of the Baby dancing. Get it now, because we believe the Baby’s 15 minutes of fame were over 20 minutes ago.

In the same vein, Jamie Records, better known for its back catalog of 50s and 60s music, has rushed released “Goodbye Seinfeld” by Soda & 7. The song recalls specific episodes and laments the program’s end. For those people with a life who may not know, NBC is airing the last episode of “Sein-

feld” on Thursday (11).

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 sec-


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

“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 to be. I want it to just be a little off.”

He adds, “This is the kind of stuff that I like, so I’m trying to do it, because I can’t hear it if I don’t do it. Where am I goin’ to hear it? If I don’t do it it’s not gonna be there.”

Strange Pleasure,” Vaughan’s solo debut, was released in 1994. But Vaughan says the four-year lag be-
tween projects wasn’t due to any lack of on his part.

“I wasn’t much layin’ on the couch for four years,” he says. “I did a lot of touring after the last album. It took me awhile to get some songs, and then when I went in, different things happened, things that were out of my control. A tour would come up, and we’d go in and the studio I wanted wasn’t available. I’d go somewhere else, and I’d get kicked out of there. A lot of different things hap-

pened.”

(Continued on page 12)

Last Waltz” Memories. Robbie Robertson, center, is flanked by VH1 president John Sykes, left, and director Martin Scorsese, right, following the taping of an interview for VH1 special to celebrate the 20th anniversary of “The Last Waltz.”

Atlantic’s 3D Tour film chronicled the last performance by the Band in 1976. Robert-

son, formerly with the Band, subsequently provided music for a number of Scorsese films.

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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 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," Dickins 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 Savigar "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 ornery, guitar-heavy set that largely re-creates the tone of a live concert. "Rocks" 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 Rob Beayes, 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 and 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 on Monday (11).

Now that the creative part of the project is behind him, Stewart, who is managed by Arnold Stiefel and Annie Chullis, 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 Delsener/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 if I’m away from the stage for too long."

Before he hits the road, Stewart will shoot a videoclip 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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**STEWART REVISITS HIS ROOTS**

(Continued from page 10)

**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 quarterly 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.

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

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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 referred to 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 majors 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 no longer fighting, 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 international 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, DG15—a department whose role responsibility was the smooth running of the single European market—was evenly keen that the status quo of collective licensing not 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.

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ARISTA/AUSTIN'S SISTER 7 (Continued from page 10)

music director at modern AC WALT 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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IT'S ABOUT TIME

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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 blessed with the state-of-the-street remakes by Mijangos, Rhythm Masters, DJ Icye, 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 Cohn 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)
songs or songs other people had
written that I thought were vague-
ously trying to say what I would have
liked to say, on this, we’re really
trying to say what I want to say,
thank you.”

The first single, the shuffling sing-
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 say-
ing, ‘You were one of them, you
know.’ ”

Despite Starr’s iconic 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 chal-
lenge for us to get exposure at radio,
but we feel the music will speak for
itself,” he says. “We’ll be aggres-
vively 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 (10) at New York’s Shea Stad-
ium, site of the Beatles’ ground-
breaking U.S. date in 1965. “It will be
a Beatles’ return to Shea Stad-
ium,” says Zieman. “Ringo’s going
to the stadium and will lead the audi-
ence in a verse of ‘La De Da.’ ”

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

Other release-week activities
include a syndicated radio special
June 15 to world-premiere the
album. The special will include inter-
views 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-Stars.

More specifically, Mercury is
working with the organizers of Beat-
lefest to coordinate a mailing to
recent convention attendees. The
postcard mailing will offer a deal
whereby fans who pre-order 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 fea-
ture 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 art-
work 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,
Queensboro National Record Mart.

“He always was the Sunny Bono
of the Beatles; everybody likes him,”
says Artale. “It sounds like some-
thing 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-Stars]. I
think people that like music like him.”

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

However, other than a few select-
ed 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-
Stars because it’s so much fun. I get
down in front and do the entertain-
ing thing, and then I’m back behind
the drums, and it can’t be bad back-
ning Jack Bruce and Peter Frampton
and having all the fun while they
take the weight.”
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.


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 took home 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.

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 André Crouch, right, who won in the contemporary gospel album category for "Pray."

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.

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 2: We Need Jesus." Pictured, from left, are band members Louie Weaver, Kevin Brandow, Pete Orta, Lonnie Chapin, and John Schilt.

During GMA Week, Phil Vischer, president/CEO of Big Idea Entertainment (better known to "Vegetable 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 Nudd 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 Squirt Entertainment president Steve Taylor.

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.

ASCAP held a dinner at Nashville's Richland Country Club to honor its Christian music songwriters and publishers. "Beauty For Ashes," written and recorded by Crystal Lewis and published by Metro One, was named song of the year. Mark Heimermann was named ASCAP's Christian songwriter of the year. Pictured, from left, are Metro One's Brian Ray, Lewis, ASCAP's Dan Keen, ASCAP's Connie Bradley, EMI Christian Music Publishing's Steve Rice, and Heimermann.
R&B MUSIC

Catch this R&B essential player's guide. The hottest artists, directors, executives & stations will pack the pages of this music industry must-read. We'll report on the rise of "neo-soul", examine the integral role videos play, report on the latest British acts, feature year-to-date charts and more!! Call today to join in!

CONTACT: Kara DioGuardi 212.536.5008

ISSUE DATE: JUNE 6
AD CLOSE: MAY 12

SOUNDS OF THE CITIES: MUNICH

A complete who's who of Munich: talent, labels, clubs, retailers and more! This is your chance to reach this exploding German marketplace.

ISSUE DATE: JUNE 6
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Christine Chinetti
44.171.323.6686

DVD

All you need to know about DVD, the latest cutting edge technology. From DVD creation to retail sales, we'll explore the technology behind this new video phenomenon. Jump on this technological wave today!

ISSUE DATE: JUNE 13
AD CLOSE: MAY 19

Judy Yzquierdo
213.535.2304

MUSIC PUBLISHING

Vintage copyrights in TV and radio commercials, high tech methods used to monitor usage and the Songwriters Hall of Fame are just a few of the highlights featured in this special spotlight. Don't miss out!

ISSUE DATE: JUNE 13
AD CLOSE: MAY 19

Jill Carrigan
213.525.2302

FUTURE SPECIALS

ITALY - Issue date: JUNE 20 • Ad Close: MAY 26
WORLD & CELTIC MUSIC - Issue Date: JUNE 20 • Ad Close: MAY 26
JAZZ - Issue Date: JUNE 27 • Ad Close: JUNE 2

PRE VSDA - Issue Date: JULY 4 • Ad Close: JUNE 9
AMSTERDAM - Issue Date: JULY 4 • Ad Close: JUNE 9
VSDA - Issue Date: JULY 11 • Ad Close: JUNE 16

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London 44.171.323.6686
McMahon, an original lead soloist from "Riverdance," is performing the show at the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood through May 17. Partradig 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 Loungegroove debut, "Loaded," the Hi Fi Killers tweak their instrumental old-school funk/hop vibe on the full-length "Posses- sion," due June 9.

The album, which features vocal contributions from such artists as Lonnie Marshall, Tobias Flowers, and Reggie Watts, also re- enlists renowned Muscle Shoals 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 dou- ble-album: including a bonus CD of instru- mental cuts and outtakes from earlier sessions.

I'M A SLUTT: Slipstream/Mer- cury is hoping to break a furious, throbbing cover of Berlin's "I'm A ..." by industrial rock act the Rorschach Test. So far, the Seattle-based group's track is getting spins at such mainstream rock stations as WRCX Chicago, WLZL Milwaukee, and KXTE Los Vegas.

BILLYROADWAY: Melbourne, Australia-based Sherry Rich will be backed by Wil- co members James Stirrat, Tim Gooch, 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 Australia Record Industry Assn.-winning Warner Bros. act the Super-
REVIEWED MATERIALS

EVALUATING VITAL ISSUES

ALBUMS: SPOTLIGHT: Releases deemed by the review editors to deserve special attention on the basis of musical merit and/or Billboard chart potential. VITAL ISSUES: (Re)released albums of special artistic, archival, and commercial interest, and outstanding collection material. See alsointhefieldofCríticaMusicale.MUSICALMATERIALТОYOURSLEARS! New releases picked to fit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format. CRITICS CHOICES: New releases, regardless of chart potential. Highly recommended for the jaded and the hip.

SPOTLIGHT

SPOTLIGHT

NEEDS A LEAD-IN

NEEDS A LEAD-IN

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NEEDS A LEAD-IN
R & B


Although popstars are still basking in the glow of "A Rose Is Still A Rose," R&B talent is getting its own groove on from Lady Sla's current opus. This time, she teams up with Jermaine Dupri and Manuel Sease for a soulful, sleekADORING cruiser that keeps her on the tip of what's current, while also keeping it mature enough for older listeners to enjoy in production frills. Popped up by a chorus that simply won't quit, "We Ve Gone Again" actually has the muscle to be Franklin's biggest multi-format single in ages. Hose love of Ariana, however, to serve her core audience at R&B radio first.


Rerecording a classic is risky business, especially when the artist doing the cover is an international hitmaker. However, in re- "I Honestly Love You" for her new album Back With A Heart," Newton-John tackles the head-on, head-on. As charming as the original was, on this new version, the 64-year-old Newton-John sounds like a woman who has experienced life and fully conveys the depth of emotion in the lyrics. Her voice is more relaxed but conveys passion and vulnerability in a hearty emotional cocktail. Like the recent rerelease of her film "Grease," this deserves to be a hit all over again.


In the '70s Donna Fargo hit with the charts with "The Happy Girl In The Whole U.S.A." Now, her McBride hits with a 70's take on female fulfillment. More lyrically poetical and insightful than Fargo's hit, "Happy Girl" offers a cunning waltz

N E W & N O T E W O R T H Y

NICOLE Make It Hot (approx. length: 4:05) PRODUCERS: TemptTion WRITERS: M. Cline PUBLISHER: Miss Corision, ASCAP Elektra 1108 (c/o Elektra/Asylum) (solo single)

It's not easy to be a pop band unwilling to show its songs through a radio-frequency broadcast. "TemptTion" has been struggling to find a large audience for its oftbeat yet insolent blend of four-seated, chic, and it's a real shame. Shun, subject-ridded songs like "She" are ultimately more satisfying and likely to age more gracefully than more venal efforts that muck up the airwaves. With its swirling guitars, quietlyurgent rhythm and twangy guitar line, "Make It Hot" is nowhere near enough to deny, but it does have a few moments worth a step forward and herald this finely crafted band. "TemptTion" is back, and if not hurt for the folks at RCA to put a little extra promotion elbow grease into this project. It can work for Natalie Imbruglia...

SCOTT THOMAS Band Valentine (2:47) Imperial PRODUCERS: Scott Thomas, Andrew Williams WRITERS: Scott Thomas, Mike Grant PUBLISHERS: TouchstoneTV/ATC Records, ASCAP Deep Seal 001 (c/o Elektra/Asylum) (solo single)

With all the world happily lost in '70s and '80s nostalgia, it makes perfect sense that someone would begin mixing the various dominant sounds of those eras far more than covers of familiar hits. Enter Thomas and company, who conjure up pleasant memories of the bands that ruled pop strata. Layering the lyrics with equal portions of seductive sassy and no-nonsense aggression, Thomas and company have created a musical concoction that crosses at an easy, tick-tock pace. The melody is filled out with quicky percussive, well-placed guitar riffs and synthesizers. As this song adds needed hit potential, Elliott and company甲状腺the formula that will continue to showcase the group, which will ensure immediate widespread play at R&B and pop radio. Can't hardly wait to hear what Nivea offers next.

The TIM GANT PROJECT featuring ROBERTA THOMAS Party Like Britts, Pitto (1:57) R&B

ROCK TRACKS

FEEDER High 1:53 PUBLISHER: Concrete Sound, Island/Sony Music

NMG

NEW YORK MAY 16, 1999

BILLY JOEL'S "The Great American Songbook finds that every fan of La M's current opus has been salivating to some degree as a simple. Simply, "Hoy Of Light" is African at her absolute best. Within a framework of metallic, guttural harmonies charged, often poetic song is fueled by a thick, steampunkian baseline and hard-edge trance textures. All the while, Miss things perform with a technical flexibility that not even the most die-hard loyalist could have been skeptical back in the days of Like A Virgin or even Bedtime Stories. Each element of the track adds up to an irresistible anthem that nourishes the brain while also inspiring frenetic, possibly uncontrollable body movement. Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott and LaMour provide appropriately trendy breakdowns and rhythmic flourishes, while she has the sheer rhythm intensity or bottomless barrel of one-tick-the-clock drums that make up Orilt's brilliant renotations of his own original production. An outta-here smasheroo.

Lisa Stansfield I'm Leavin' (4:10) PRODUCERS: not listed WRITERS: not listed PUBLISHERS: not listed REMARKS: Hey, Hey! Artist: 1402 (1990) (c/o Sony Music)

With this interstellar, heartbreak-ballad, Stansfield offers her strongest, most emotionally viable single since All Woman. Lyrically, it stretches miles beyond staidard love-gone-wrong fare. La Lisa delivers a vocal that is straight from the gut. Every syllable drips with raw, empa-thy, and, in the mood for a slow jam, Aristra serves up an upempo remix that packs the same punch. Actually, Herer delivers a springy groove and plush keyboards that considerably widen the song's appeal. Given the right amount of pro-motional TLC, "I'm Leavin'" can become this season's equivalent to Toni Braxton's multi-format smash, "Break My Heart." Look for the original version of the band's gloria- ously mellow-styled, recent, single album, while the remix will appear on the forthcoming V.P. of Stansfield dance single.

Louie Says She (4:03) PRODUCERS: Clark Stiles, SamSnick PUBLISHER: Sony Sunstar/Sony Music

UK>I> PUBLISHERS: Daddy's I'm a Lover/Street/Sony/EMI, Sony Music ASCAP RIAA: 54540 (solo single)

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The TIM GANT PROJECT featuring ROBERTA THOMAS Party Like Britts, Pitto (1:57) R&B

ROCK TRACKS

FEEDER High 1:53 PUBLISHER: Concrete Sound, Island/Sony Music

NMG

NEW YORK MAY 16, 1999

BILLY JOEL'S "The Great American Songbook
three
ators

 evaluator.
 Home Video, Warner Home Video 60 minutes. $19.98

 From the video's opening credits to the

 the history of the Beatles, the video

 the Chicago-based Vee-Jay Records.
 Longtime fans will find much to

 "For What It's Worth," the single
 released by the group in 1967, is

 "Please Mrs. Moore," the single
 released in 1966, is a soulful
 about a man who tries to

 the Beatles, the video offers a
 comprehensive look at the
 group's first releases in the US.
 In addition, it chronicles how two
 different records tried to enter the
 music charts at the same time.

 Suddenly, the Beatles could do
 no wrong, and these pre-Capitol
 singles, the first two released by
 Chicago-based label Vee-Jay and
 the latter by indie Swan Records,
 were rescued from obscurity and
 catapulted up the charts.

 "Songs, Pictures and Stories Of
 The Fabulous Beatles on Vee-Jay
 Records by Bruce Spizer 495 Productions 242 pages. $19.99

 Looking back on it now, it's hard
to believe that the Beatles' first
 albums were anything but
 masterpieces.

 Furthermore, the album takes
 listeners on a journey through
 the early years of the Beatles' career,
 exploring their musical development
 and the influence of various cultural
 movements on their music.

 The album also includes
 interviews with band members
 and other industry figures,
 providing insights into the
 creative process behind the
 album.

 Reviews & Previews

 The Beatles' "Help!" album
 The Classic Collection Vol. 2
 Vee-Jay Records

 home video

 Lilac, Illinois
 180 minutes. $19.99

 The video captures the
timely and timeless
 appeal of the Beatles' music,
 as well as their impact
 on popular culture.

 The video includes
 interviews with band members
 and other industry figures,
 providing insights into
 the creative process behind
 the album.

 The video also explores
 the cultural and historical
 context of the album,
 offering a deeper
 understanding of its
 significance.

 Awards & Honors

 GOLDEN MISSION

 an entertainment

 The video offers a unique
 perspective on the Beatles' music,
 as well as their influence on
 generations of fans.

 The video also includes
 interviews with band members
 and other industry figures,
 providing insights into
 the creative process behind
 the album.

 The video explores
 the cultural and historical
 context of the album,
 offering a deeper
 understanding of its
 significance.

 The video is a
 valuable resource for
 listeners and
 collectors alike.
Regina Belle Displays Diva Diversity On New MCA Set

BY MICHAEL PACOLETTA

Since she made 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 has maintained her position in the spotlight as a soul singer, 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 9 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," Belle says. "I am all about variety, which is something my first two albums really explored. By the third album, I was getting more dictated 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 any body else.

"Even at a young age, I was a seasoned singer," she adds. "So I could fit into many musical genres. I really realize 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 pigeon-holed 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 spokesman 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 Gotch U"); Marvin Bell ("I've Had Enough" and "Never Should Have Let You Go"); and Erik "E-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.

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

RETAIL'S MUSE: The controversy over remixes that receive airplay but are unavailable at retail was heated at the Impact Superstar Mart attended April 29-May 3 at the Reno (Nev.) Hilton Hotel and Casino. The subject was raised during the April 30 retailers' luncheon meeting sponsored by WEA.

According to Larry "Blue Rag" White, VP of the World Wide Retailers Assn. in Compton, Calif., merchants continue to be dismayed by the fact that a large number of remixed singles by R&B and hip-hop artists are not being released commercially. 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 find a way to 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 heavyweight DJs as Sony Music Distribution chairman Danny Yarbrough, EMI Music distribution president Joe Richard Cottrell, and WEA chairman/CEO Dave Mount. Among the topics discussed at the panel was the problem of illegal mix tapes. Although it's an issue that has often been blamed completely on the entrepreneurial efforts of mix-tape 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 and... bring 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 remixes, 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 at black music at Arista (U.S.), says that the label and its imprints plan the release of remixes carefully. He says that one of the issues that is understood is that additional commercial remixes are often created after a commercial single's release. While the commercial single may include some remixes, 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 Offenbach, 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, Offenbach 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 to make the music as accessible as possible to radio programmers. We believe the more airplay we get, the more records we'll sell."

Offenbach 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,'" Offenbach 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," Offenbach says. "The high medium would be a hit, but the label will 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."
BATTLE ANYBODY? Hip-hop has always had one foot grounded in competition or—as it’s called in the game—"battle." Whether it’s two DJs showcasing the creativity of their scratchcuts or cut selections, an MC lyrically dismantling an opponent with well-chosen words and outrageous personal potshots, a graffiti artist tagging another’s work, or a break-dance contest at a warehouse, the world of hip-hop is rife with cutting-edge choreography or new techniques, battle 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 formidably matched MCs who have faced off so publicly with only lyrical skill 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 personal 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 that’s a joke, because it’s not necessary. Everybody involved thinks this is a healthy thing (for hip-hop), and we want to keep it that way." The battle has opened up 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 personal problems between 2Pac and the Notorious B.I.G. and the larger East Coast/West Coast rap rivalry.

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Brewing 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 exploits the lesser-known artist’s path to recognition.

In early ’98, Canibus recorded "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 on April 13. The track was produced by Wyclef Jean, who manages Canibus, and features boxing champ Mike Tyson as his trainer. "I was starting to feel that Canibus recorded the track, not to gain recognition or fan the flames of competition, but for himself. "He just felt he had something to get off his chest, and that’s fine with me."

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 LL 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 Illtest” bodybuilding calisthenic. The discs will be packaged with DMX’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 a major tour), but that he would like both artists to discuss any outlying issues.

“Canibus doesn’t want to get pigeonholed as just the kid who went up against LL,” Tabari says. “He’s done a lot, 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. Everything Tabari thinks is a healthy thing (for hip-hop), and he is really a mathematical, scientific rapper.”

Canibus’ upcoming album, which is being released on the road, is slated for release in July, and is tentatively titled “Lyrical Warfare.”

Many are hoping to bring the battle to a close, 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 Eavander 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, which she hosts with Jonathon Quednom, on 88’s monthly ladies’ night program, and on City University of New York’s WNYU. Quednom 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 MCs,” says Mecca. “But I plan to feature 88hip-hop.com’s Kim and Queen Pen, but also independently signed artists like Heather B and What from Natural Resource. We [also] decided not to talk about the artists, but the women who are the drive, the ones in their careers, from the stylists to the publicist to the receptionist to the street-team manager.”

“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 all the things we plan like sexism in 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 Quednom 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 pneumo.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 Montfa Reel, 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 magazine is honoring its cover-story theme of "hip-hop" with the upcoming August premiere of Blaze magazine. Helmed by Jimmy Johnson, Vibe magazine’s former managing editor, the publication will focus on the genre, including art interviews (“Sirens: Females On The Forefront”), executive interviews (“Pull No Prizes: Women At Work”), and a final roundtable segment discussing the various issues in the women’s industry face (“Nashen [pronounced nation]: Focused Women Building”). The show was created by DJ Mecca, who spins on 88hip-hop.com Tuesday and Wednesday night, on 88’s monthly ladies’ night program, and on City University of New York’s WNYU. Quednom co-hosts the program with Zenobia Simmons, publicist at Penalty Records.

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COMING SOON
and releases from
Juvenile, Hot Boys, B.G.
able customizable DVDs within the next two years.

K-tel announced April 30 that it, too, will be offering cut-rate CDs online, to be created from a selection of 3,500 titles to which K-tel owns the masters (Billboard Bulletin, May 1). The "Custom Compilation System," developed in collaboration with RealNetworks, will be part of K-tel's previously announced online auction and retail concept. Now of the company's online expansion has sent its stock soaring in recent weeks (see story, page 6).

Platinum's catalog includes titles by the Beach Boys, Dionne Warwick, the Band, and Peter Cetera. "We're a music company using distribution through the Internet to broaden the reach of our artists," said Michael Ares, senior vice president for the Downer Grove, Illinois-based Platinum.

The third part of this new business will allow consumers to make their own CDs. Web site visitors will be able to select tracks from Platinum's catalog, download them and store them on the hard drives of their computers, and then manufacture their own disc using a CD-recorder. Customers have the option of ordering the recordable drive and software from the Web site for about $200.

Platinum's spokesman says that the company has not determined the pricing structure for the new service, but that it "will be competitive" with other online firms. The company that will fulfill the online orders has not been determined yet.

The label's partner in the venture is Platinum Technology, a separate company that develops technology for electronic commerce. The technology company is taking "a financial interest" in the music firm, the spokesmen says. Platinum Entertainment's stock, which trades over-the-counter, rose from about $11 a share before the news was announced to about $14.50 at press time, a 32% increase.

While I've only heard "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," the label is trying to re-establish the singer," Askew says. "This song is much hipper and more upbeat than Regina's past work, which will definitely help in introducing her to a new and younger crowd. I just hope the tried-and-true Regina fans aren't too surprised. MCA will need an out-of-the-box marketing plan that is aggressive and focused so that new consumers, as well as established fans, are made aware of the project. Also, it will greatly help to get her out on the road with a younger female artist, somebody like a Mary J. Blige.

The vocally gifted Belle has always had a penchant for exploring a wide range of musical territory. Her upbringing included singing along to such soulful artists as Shirley Caesar, the Emotions, Donny Hathaway, Knight, and Billie Holiday.

While a student at Rutgers University, Belle discovered that she was able to perform at many venues in New York's Greenwich Village. At one such performance, she was spotted by New York radio personality The Harpster (of WBLS fame), who suggested she work with the Manhattans. Belle was soon on the road with the group, for Dionne Warwick, Knight, and LaBelle. In 1986, Belle's mellifluous voice appeared on the Manhattans' "Kiss To Be Cruel.

One year later, she made her mark as a solo artist with the critically acclaimed "All By Myself," which spawned the hit singles "Show Me The Way" and the Holiday-hued "So Many Tears." This was followed in 1989 by "Stay With Me," certified gold by the Recording Industry Assn. of America. Several years later, Belle scored a major coup with a track from her "Passion" album.

"Who knew that A Whole New World (Aladdin's Theme)," would go on to win four Grammy Awards?" says the singer of her duet with Peabo Bryson. "Peabo and I didn't. But it sure made us happy.

In 1995, Belle released "Reachin' Back," a collection of songs that found the singer revisiting some of black music's golden moments. "Reachin' Back" kept her wedged in that mature audience because she wasn't singing old school, but old favorites, and a big difference," says Marilyn Batchelor, MCA's national director of marketing.

"Many people take for granted—especially those who have appreciated her music over the years—that everybody knows Regina, and that many people know her songs than know the woman behind them. Our job is to bring her back, on an intimate level, into the forefront of retail, the media, and radio." MCA will be courting older fans as well as pursuing younger ones.

"There is a wealth of flavor on this album," says Batchelor. "The title track is a straight-up R&B ballad, while "Baby Love" has a funky hip-hop-flavored vibe that is very lounge-y, which should work with the college audience we'll definitely be going after."

David Miller's "Reachin' Back" album was serviced to BET in mid-February. In the video, shot at Orlando, Fla.'s Universal Studios, Miller is in pursuit of preteen actress Jurnee Smollett from the movie "Eve's Bayou."

Based on the video's heavy rotation, Holt says, many retailers in the Midwest have asked when they will be serviced with the single.

"The label is also carefully planning Miller's radio exposure, targeting mainstream RB stations. "We want to develop and market David without all of the restrictions of the standard six-week plan in the street before we go to radio, when radio says go. Right now, we're keeping our ears to the street," says Holt.

Where the artist's image is concerned, Holt says, the plan is to keep the teen looking like "the little boy next door.

"We want to keep David casual, comfortable, and hip. But we want to make sure he wears his clothes and that they don't wear him," she says.

Once the school year ends in late June, Holt says Miller will do a national promotional tour with young artists from other labels. "We're going to be reintroducing youth activities at the YMCA and amusement parks and include a cross-promotional tie-in with "a well-known retailer" in malls across the country.

Miller's "School Train" performance with Riley and labelmate Nutta Butta will air May 30. Holt says that as the project picks up momentum, the label hopes to garner Miller a guest appearance on an appropriate TV series.

Promotional materials for the artist—including a big kit designed to look like a notebook, memo pads, book holders, posters, stickers, and limited-edition watches—were to be sent early this month.

Frank Johnson, a buyer for Inner City Records, a five-store chain in Baltimore, says he has given copies of the 12-inch version of "Hard To Handle" to many of his radio colleagues. "Radio is eating up the single in the Baltimore/Washington area. It's a fun, danceable track that has both the radio and street components. Hollis wants it to be the "new "Click." He can't resist the 'Symphony' loop under the track. If radio is playing Usher, then David Miller will definitely be a hit."

One of the DJs Johnson gave the single to was Regge Liz, mix-show director for R&B WERQ Baltimore. Since receiving "Hard To Handle" two weeks ago, Regge says, he has played the record three to four times a week during his weekend mix shows.

"Listeners are calling me up wanting to know what the song is and who sings it," Regge says. "It's just a matter of getting the streets to love it. Once that happens, program directors will love it, too."

Good & Early. Janet's "I Get Lonely" (Virgin), which features vocal group BLACKstreet, makes a strong entry at No. 6 on Hot R&B Singles, where it earns the Hot Shot Debut. Despite this respectable bow, the track technically should have entered next issue's chart, since the single had a May 5 in-store date.

In the case of Hot R&B Singles (and Hot 100 Singles, which is the only other billboard chart that mixes sales and airplay), billboard policy states that a single will appear on the overall chart if it has enough sales to enter the top 75 on the component singles sales list. The title debuted at No. 37 on Hot R&B Singles Sales but ranked below No. 75 on Hot 100 Singles Sales and therefore was held off that chart.

With an audience of 48 million listeners, "I Get Lonely" will likely spring 6-1 next issue once a full week of sales are compiled.

Given that 48 million listener audience for "I Get Lonely," a few records that were in line for No. 1 stripes could end up getting robbed of that opportunity. Mya & Suede's "It's All About Me" (University/Interscope) was within a hair of the No. 1 position this issue. That single has 35 million listeners and sits at No. 2 on Hot R&B Singles Sales with 21,500 units. The other candidate, Xscape's "The Arms Of The One Who Loves You" (So So Def, Columbia), is a building story that, were it not for the new Janet single, could have reached the summit within the next three weeks.

Big, Indeed. With a yearlong street-awareness campaign for the project, don't be surprised to see Big Punisher's solo outing, "Capital Punishment" (Loud/RCA), make a loud move as the summer of 1997 and ran more than 300 billboard advertisements nationally, targeting urban consumers. Additionally, Punisher released two singles before his album hit stores, a marketing tactic that several labels have adopted late. The one, at No. 7 on Hot Rap Singles. The follow-up, "Still Not A Player," which features vocalist Joe, is not commercially available but has an audience of 27 million listeners across 75 stations this issue. That song ranks at No. 9 on Hot R&B Airplay.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>SONGWRITER(S)</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>IMPRINT &amp; NUMBER/PROMOTION LABEL</th>
<th>NO. OF WEEKS</th>
<th>WEEKLY RANK</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>NO. 1</em></td>
<td>MYA &amp; SISQO</td>
<td>IT'S ALL ABOUT ME</td>
<td>G-MASTER</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
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<td>J.DUPRI</td>
<td>I GET LONELY</td>
<td>JANET</td>
<td>G-MASTER</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>YOUR WOOD</td>
<td>J.DUPRI</td>
<td>I.M.</td>
<td>Island</td>
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<td>ALL MY LIFE</td>
<td>J.DUPRI</td>
<td>I.M.</td>
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<td>B. ROBINSON, J. SHAKUR, J. JOHNNY</td>
<td>ROS STILLS A ROSE</td>
<td>J.DUPRI</td>
<td>I.M.</td>
<td>Island</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>NEW</em></td>
<td>J.BERRY, D.RUDNICK</td>
<td>TAKE IT OFF</td>
<td>THE SHOCKER, MIA &amp; THE BUSTA</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>MCA</td>
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<td>L. HUTTON</td>
<td>I WON'T CHOOSE YOU</td>
<td>THE SHOCKER, MIA &amp; THE BUSTA</td>
<td>MCA</td>
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<td>WRAY</td>
<td>REVOLUTION</td>
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<td><em>NEW</em></td>
<td>L. BANDKAMP, J. MARSHALL, R. SOLOMON</td>
<td>MAKE SPACE</td>
<td>MATTHEW</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>THE SHOCKER, MIA &amp; THE BUSTA</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>MCA</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Top Artists**:
- **J.DUPRI**: 6
- **WE'RE STRAWBERRIES**: 5
- **J.DUPRI, M.PENDLETON, BABYFACE, D.SIMMONS**: 4
- **TIMBALAND**: 3
- **J.DUPRI**: 3

**Top Songs**:
- "I GET LONELY" by JANET
- "YOUR WOOD" by J.DUPRI
- "ALL MY LIFE" by J.DUPRI, P. BENNETT, J. BENNETT
- "ROS STILLS A ROSE" by J.DUPRI
- "MAKE SPACE" by MATTHEW

**Top Labels**:
- Island
- MCA
- Revolution
- Atlantic
- G-MASTER

**Greatest Gainers**:
- "I GET LONELY" by JANET
- "YOUR WOOD" by J.DUPRI
- "ALL MY LIFE" by J.DUPRI, P. BENNETT, J. BENNETT
- "ROS STILLS A ROSE" by J.DUPRI
- "MAKE SPACE" by MATTHEW

**Additional Information**:
- The chart is compiled from Billboard magazine's Hot R&B Singles chart.
- The ranking is based on sales and airplay.
- The chart includes songs by various artists and producers.
- The chart is a snapshot of the music industry trends at the time.
Swedish Dance Acts Honored

BY KAI R. LOFTHS

STOCKHOLM—Swedish techno duo Antiloop was the big winner at the Swedish Dance Music Awards, held at Stockholm's annual Big Bang dance confab. The Stockholm/PolyGram act earned four nods in the competition for house/techno act, dance album (for The面, Dance and Group), and dance single (for “In My Mind”).

Since its domestic release in March 1997, “In My Mind” has scooped up a sizable share of turntable action in territories throughout Europe. The act has yet to see a U.S. 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 Gaidi, who took home best hip-hop/R&B artist honors; the C&N Project, in the best remix category for “Burning”; and Deniz Pop, as best producer.

The Swedish Dance Music Awards are based on nomination lists and votes from 350 DJs from across the Nordic region. E-Type, a labelmate of Antiloop at Stockholms Records, says that the awards “are really important to me [other awards], because they are voted by DJs who come direct from 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 annual Swedish, 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 manager Maria Elsner of Stockholm’s Souza, who was given a special dance industry music award, says of the ceremony, “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.”

Acts who performed live at Big Band included Naté, 666, Boris D’ugosch, Alexia, 2 Unlimited, Sweet Box, Sonic Dream, and Basic Element.

Hey Now: Been wondering where CeCe Peniston has been hiding? The fierce diva who gave clubland the classic anthem “Finally,” among numerous goodies, has at last resurfaced—and she has (at least briefly) shed the jeep-R&B sound that tainted her last A&M album a few years ago. On the rousing “Nobody Else,” she repeats the soulful time-talk that producer Steve “Silk” Hurley and fineshes her instantly recognizable voice over a ferocious house groove.

The chemistry the two share is unmistakable. Peniston steamrolls through the song with an intense, unusually gritty passion, while Hurley surrounds her performance with percussive crescendos that are all DJ boards that ooze with tasty old-school funk. Without a doubt, this ranks among the artist’s strongest recordings. And at a time when all the world is feeling nostalgic, she is poised for a smashing comeback.

“Nobody Else” previews Peniston’s forthcoming album for Hurley’s Chicago-based Silk Entertainment Records, which is due this fall. It’ll also be featured on the producer’s own project for the label, “The Voices Of Life,” which includes the glorious worldwide hit “The Word Is Love” by Sharon Pass. Look for that album this summer.

Judy Torres is also working her program on the comeback trail. The Latin-freestyle siren who made hearts flutter eons ago with “No Reason To Cry” has hooked up with the increasingly powerful Third Millennium Management in New York and has just cut a bump’n’jew jam with producers/turntablist Brinsley Evans. The infectious “Back In Your Arms” shows Torres singing better than ever over a giddy, disco-liked house groove. This is the kind of festive fodder that programmers at tastemaking radio stations like WKTU New York and WBBM (B-96) Chicago usually trip over themselves to put on the air.

In the Mix: Our pals Bobby Gay and Ernie Lake, aka Soul Solution, may not have made the final cut in the remix of the year contest at this year’s Grammys (though we’ll never understand why), they are certainly gathering a lot of play for another killer submission reel.

In addition to recent hits by Gloria Estefan and Celine Dion, the label has seen their distinctive house sound into a string of sparklers that includes Shania Twain’s “You’re Still The One” (which works astonishingly well, despite its original country flavor), Hanson’s “Thinking Of You,” Boyz II Men’s “Doo Wop,” and Cyndi Lauper’s chest-pounding rendition of “Disco Inferno.” The latter cut will be featured on the forthcoming soundtrack to “A Night At Roxbury.” On a completely different stylish tip, San Diego’s budding SuperCell Records exhibits the potential to rise miles above its underground cult status following the release of “Dooey” by Interzone.

Masterminded by Dr. Rokter (aka British producer Matt Hall), the track is a feast for fans of cinematic electro-pop, given its dramatic and atmospheric effort, “Doo Wop”—as well as its fine flip-side track, “Dub In E”—provides purists something meaty to dig into, while also cracking open a welcoming door for hook-oriented novices to join the fun. These cuts are an intriguing preview of Rokter’s first album for SuperCell.
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**JULY 8 - 10, 1998**

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# Hot Dance Music

## Club Play

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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Army of Lovers</strong></td>
<td><em>My Life</em></td>
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**Billboard**

**DANCE charts**

1. **Number 1 Series 1976-1997:** Chronological listings of every song that reached the top position on the Club Play and Sales charts. Lists Billboard issue date, title, artist, and label. - **$50.00**
2. **Top Ten 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 indexed. - **$50.00**
3. **Top Songs of the Year 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**
Raye Covers Wide Ground On Epic Set

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.

“This is more of an overall record,” Raye says. “We’re not breaking anything off the album. Everything on the record is going to be used. It’s not the kind of little bits-and-pieces record that these days is.”

Raye says “The Eleventh Commandment” is about the things people do to each other and what they fail to do if they do, “mission accomplished.”

Raye says Karen Taylor-Good (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” will “ignite the fires” of the public’s sympathy.

Raye’s next single, “Never Far Away,” is about drug addiction and the search for self-help. “I’ve been doing a lot of research on this,” Raye says. “We’re trying to get the message across.”

Sugar Hill’s Hillman Revisits Roots

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—It didn’t start out that way, but after discussing his next project, new Sugar Hill solo album “Like A Hurricane” became somewhat of a stylistic career reenactment for Tony and Larry Rice.

It wasn’t intentional, but it covers everything from his start in bluegrass through rock’n’roll, country rock, and Desert Rose, says Hillman. His singular recording career commenced in the early ’80s 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 the country-rock credo flying the 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 1996 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 16 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 fellow Desert Rose founding member John Jorgenson each co-produced some tracks. Among the guest 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 Byrds recorded. “It’s a very heavy influence by the Byrds, had a hit with in 1964. The rocker ‘Living On The Edge,’ Hillman says, represents his late-’70s solo period, while “Anna’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 I’ve had on any one in ages,” Hillman says. “It 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 (83), radio doesn’t want to know from me.”

But at Koch-distributed Sugar Hill, director of national promotion and marketing 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.

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 Gibson Cafe on Lower Broadway. Guests included Tom T. Hall, Conway Twitty, and Jesse Colter, Kitty Wells; Bashful Brother Oswald; and Patty Loveless and her husband, Emory Gordy Jr. Lower Broadway hasn’t seen so many stretch limos since Tammy Wynette’s memorial service.

“Those nights will live on as a memorable bluegrass jam, with Earl joining his sons Gary and Randy, the Del McCoury Band, Marty Stuari, Travis Tritt, Jimmy Martin, John Hartford, Josh Graves, Tut Taylor, Jesse McReynolds, the Whites, Tim O’Brien, and many others onstage.

Host Henry Juskiewicz, 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 Nashville’s Lucky Dog Records. Blake Chancey will produce a PayCheck album for a summer release; this will be PayCheck’s first album of new material in 11 years. Jim Lauderdale 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 Oedayland Music Group. He has been creative manager... At Atlantic Records Nashville, Greg Sas is named VP of national promotion. Sas, who 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 radio special “Garth A To Z.” Brooks will do his own front-end announcing of each song... Also on the Garth front, author Bruce Feiner, 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 says he’s gotten the warmest praise he’s had for the book it 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 class—RCO Records—and signed and recorded two artists. They presented the two, Christi John and Wade Valla, at a May 3 showcase at Warner-Reprise Nashville.

At the RCA Label Group, Brita Davis becomes manager of artist development for the RCA label, Aubrey Parker becomes promotion administrator for RLG, Tiffany Lauer becomes manager of product development for RLG sales, and Michelle Brown is manager of RLG media marketing. Countrycom, 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. Countrycom 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 B 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. Philip’s School and Community Center and Chuck Norris’ Kick Drugs Out of America campaign... Boyd II Men were among the many artists 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 1933. “Plant And Scruggs At Carnegie Hall,” featuring the legendary Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, was a landmark live country album when it was released in 1942; 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.
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RAYE COVERS WIDE GROUND ON EPIC SET
(Continued from page 36)
mandment” has a similar impact.

On “Walls,” Raye continues to balance social commentary with ballads and up tempo tunes. He says that for “Walls,” he wanted to write something that could be shared by people of all ages. The song is an honest reflection about the world we live in today. It’s a song about love, loss and heartbreak. Raye’s voice is strong and emotive, and the lyrics hit close to home for anyone who has ever experienced heartache.

The song is written in the style of a country ballad, with Raye’s voice soaring through the highs and lows of the melody. The chorus is particularly memorable, with Raye’s voice Building to a powerful climax. The song is both悲伤 and comforting, and it’s easy to see why Raye has become such a popular artist.

Next, we’ll take a closer look at the recording process for “I Should’ve Known Better.” The track was recorded in Nashville, Tennessee, and features Raye’s signature sound.

“I Should’ve Known Better” is a Country ballad, with Raye’s voice soaring through the highs and lows of the melody. The chorus is particularly memorable, with Raye’s voice Building to a powerful climax. The song is both悲伤 and comforting, and it’s easy to see why Raye has become such a popular artist.
Studio Action
ARTISTS & MUSIC

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 Toz told a panel of insiders that initial DVD audio titles likely appear in dual inventories.

"From a label view, for the launch we'll have a 'delaux' DVD audio release in 5.1-channel surround sound and a companion, two-channel stereo CD for most buyers," Toz 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 200 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 something new," Grammy-winning producer and MPGA 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/ multi-track engineer/label head renowned for his work 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/producer 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 68 companies, according to Kellogg. There are more than 356 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 56 DTS multichannel CDs and another 60-plus due by year's end, added Smith.

All panelists and many of the audience members agreed that the MPG 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

BILBOARD'S NO. 1 SINGLES (MAY 9, 1998)

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Top of The Charts
Engineering Excellence
www.quantegy.com

499
167
456

Hit Maker's Formula:

Hit Maker's Formula:

Pro audio professionals gathered at Quad Studios in New York for a listening session of 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 MPGA executive editor Chris Stone. In front, from left, are award-winning producer/engineers Elliott Scheiner, Al Schmitt, and Ed Cherney, who is also MPGA president.
JEFFEN'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-and-soul radio. The festive, disco- and hip-hop-influenced track, which is produced by the B-52s' Jean Luc, rowns a healthy portion of "Boogie Oogie Oogie" by A Taste Of Honey—will ship to club DJs in mid-July.

All of this activity suits Stull 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 1996 when they recorded "The Feeling" for the independent Aquabogg Boogie Recordings. The track, which appears on this album in its reformed form, peaked at No. 1 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, the three DJs, 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 training 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 something." 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."

CURRENTLY IN LONDON performing with the Berlin Staatskapelle, Rarenreim will be back with the CSO for the fall; the schedule includes a recording ses-

on for a Richard Strauss album on Rarenreim's exclu-
sive outlet, Teldec. The next Rarenreim/CSO release will be a De Falla disc in November, following such fine recitals of Berio's '12 Variations' Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 from last year; an all-Schoenberg set from 1994, and a disc teaming of Carter's great "Furia" with Toru Takemitsu's "Visions" and Luciano Berio's "Continuo" from '95. Rarenreim per-
rformed and conducted with Virtu and Hoel in November with the new two-disc 40th anniversary set from the Chicago Symphony Chorus, drawn from the CSO's broadcast archives and issued for sale in its Symphony Store and as a download. The shelving of the funding raiser was a blow.

The CSO chief since '91, Rarenreim just extended his contract to 2002-2003, and he says Chicago feels like home: "I didn't expect to see Symphony Center fulfill its promise of bringing world-class 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 Chicagouans." 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 big achievement," he says, "but the fact is that we now have a new Symphony Center in thanks to the city of Chicago and its corporate community, led by John Brian, 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 Chicagouans 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."

TOP CLASSICAL CROSSOVER

**No. 1 **

1. Sarah Brightman & The London Symphony Orchestra

**No. 2 **

2. Chamber Symphony No. 1

**No. 3 **

3. Beethoven: Symphony No. 7

**No. 4 **

4. Schumann: Symphonic Poem

**No. 5 **

5. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4

**No. 6 **

6. Tchaikovsky: Andante Cantabile

**No. 7 **

7. Mahler: Symphony No. 2

**No. 8 **

8. Mozart: Violin Concerto

**No. 9 **

9. Beethoven: Symphony No. 9

**No. 10 **

10. Schumann: Symphonic Poem

**No. 11 **

11. Mozart: Symphony No. 41

**No. 12 **

12. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6

**No. 13 **

13. Beethoven: Symphony No. 9

**No. 14 **

14. Schumann: Symphonic Poem

**No. 15 **

15. Beethoven: Symphony No. 7
VAUGHAN

(Continued from page 18)

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 both "Strange Pleasures" and "Family Style," Vaughan's 1990 duet album with Stevie Ray) enlisted such players as Dr. John, vibraphonist Larry Bunker, and guitarist Denzil Freeman to augment organist Bill Willis and drummer George Rains, the longtime mainstays of Vaughan's working band.

"Strange Pleasures" 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 us on a trip down earthy subject matter.

"My first album, I was going through a lot of stuff, and it kind of spiritual... 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 stylistic precursors.

Vaughan notes, "For instance, [with the new song] Positively Meant To Be I was listening to Ivo Joe Hunter, and he was singing 'Since I Met You Baby.' I thought, 'Man, that's a perfect song.'... My anniversary's coming up, so I thought, 'Man, I just sit down and try to do that.' And that's what that song 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 formats, any formats that play that music. We're going to go on tour simultaneously with the in-store date in June," Poppe says.

Noting that guitar manufacturer Fender has created a signature Jimmie Vaughan Tex-Mex model, Poppe says, "We're using some of them for radio and retail giveaways, and we're servicing some of that with Fender, so that it sends the right people to the stores to buy his guitars." She adds, "We're actually going to give three guitars to three people who come to the record store to get 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 Monterey Interna-
tional, will kick off a tour May 14 at a benefit for PBS outlet KLPR, producer of the public TV series "Austin City Limits." He'll 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.

Waterloo owner John Kunz says of Vaughan, "His influence has been felt going on about 25 years now, going back to the beginning with the Fabu-

The Big Ten. ForeFront Records recently announced plans for the label's 10th-

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Q Also Makes Mark In Publishing

BY IRV LIGHTMAN

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

“The first person I ever met as aarranger/pro-
der and owner of multimedia companies
has a solid, 1,300-song catal-
log that houses his own composi-
tions as well as those of a wide swath of contem-
porary writers.

In the ‘60s, however, the concept of a com-
poser/producer opening a music publish-
ing firm was rare indeed.

“I credit two people with the idea to
get into publishing,” Jones says. “One
was Charlie Tiven, the publisher for whom I did stock jazz
arrangements. The other was Dr. Billy Taylor (the piano-ist/educa-
tor). He said, ‘Quincy Jones, 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 good in steel, it was the decision in 1964 to appoint Judith Bright to run the company for him on a day-to-
time basis, he says. In financial terms, Quincy Jones Music Publishing, which is administered by Warner/Chappell Music, has doubled its bot-
tom 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 de-
partment.”

Says Bright, “I started with Quin-
cy 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 publish-
ing 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 pack-
daging with our
artists. We’ll use
Quincy’s televi-
sion and film
company [Quincy
Jones Entertain-
ment] as well as
his record label
[Quincy Jones as
vehicles to
drive the artists into any and all
areas of the entertainment industries
that are new to our talent’s
creativity.”

Bright would like to see A&R
executives “see the shift back to
picking songs that are good for an
artist and then find an appropriate
director to add the flavor that they
are after. I think we’d get much better
material on albums rather than
just a few standalone songs. Today
it seems that the producer, who is often
even as the writer, is of the few tracks
on a record before a song is
ever heard.”

Other company staffs are cre-
ative director Jay Brown and
creative coordinator Terri Lynn, along with
support staffs Joy Crump, Kimani
Calendar, and Milan 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 Jack-
son on his “Off The Wall” album. Quincy Jones Music Publishing has
recently covered songs by Jackson, Tevin
Campbell, George Benson, Ivan Lins,
Donna Summer, Patti Austin, the
Manhattan Transfer, Jones Ink,
Barry White, and Ray Charles, and
there are current chart turns by K-Ci & JoJo, SWV, Uncle Sam, and
Mase, as well as “The Players Club”
and soundtracks by Mase, Judeci, Uncle Sam, and Tupac Shakur.

Quincy Jones Music Publishing
producer/track R&Y Bennett is rid-
ing 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,
“Qu’s Jook Joint,” while Brazilian
songwriter/recording artist Flavio
Caymmi recently completed scoring
for the feature film “BellaDonna.”

Also, Juanita Wynn, a gospel artist,
is writing with gospel group Take 6
(Continued on page 62)

BROWN TIES HIS YELLOW RIBBON AROUND
A String Of Songwriting Successes

MERRY MELODIES: For more than three decades, L. Russell
Brown has been co-writing some of rock’n’roll’s most deliciously
tuneful hits. He would readily agree, however, that it’s his 1973
year that was “In Atlanta” by country’s Tracy Byrd. Speaking
of country success, in 1973 he saw his 1972 year’s hit “Crash
Craddock” by his publishing interests for songs written from 1973 on are represented by his own company,</p>
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 1 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 Elvises was the same. As Elvis Crespo demonstrated, the Latin pop charts are set April 5 at the confab, he—like Presley—is a charisma performer who perk up the ears of the always-tough industry crowd.

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

The gruff-voiced singer, also signed to Sony, is the first merengue artist to create Hot Latin Tracks since Karen/PolyGram Latina’s Juan Luis Guerra 4.14 turned the trick 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 60% 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 “Te Sigo Amando” (Ariola/IMG). Both hits were soap-opera theme songs.

LA MINAS by John Lennert

Sharing Fernández’s hot streak is Emilio Estefan Jr. and Kike Santander. Estefan produced Fernández’s No. 1 album “En El Jardín,” and now his new project “La Minas” 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.”

LIMITED, EL PUMA TOP ACA-PULCO: PolyGram/Latina’s Grupo Limite and Sony Discos’ José Luis Rodríguez are among the big names headlining Festival Acapulco’s 38th edition held May 17-24 in Acapulco, Mexico. Other standout performances include Sony’s Mercurio, Onda Vaseina, Tiranos Del Norte, and Myriam Hernández; BMG’s José Guadalupe Esparza.

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

HAVAS DE ACAPULCO: And while we are on the subject of Acapulco, EMI Latina’s always innovative mariachi ensemble Sol De México and the Beach Boys have put out “Acapulco 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 sassy 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 Randa 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 Latina’s upstart pop bandleader Chris Durán is slated to appear Saturday (6) on Univision’s variety show “Sábado Gigante.” His appearance caps off a monthlong stateside promo trek in support of his eponymous label bow.

ARJONA THE ROMANTIC: Having pondered a variety of sociopolitical topics on his latest album, “No Norte Fuera El Sur,” Mexican-based troubadour Ricardo Arjona is feeling in a more amorous mood with his upcoming album, “Sí A ellos, A Terceros,” due to drop May 26. Moreover, Sony Discos’ talented story weaver is sporting a new look to go with the love-driven muse: His shoulders-length locks have been shorn, and he is now sporting a sculpted physique. Ah, amor.

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 this issue. Also, Sony owns the No. 1 slot on the pop chart for the tenth straight week with Alejandro Fernández’s “No Sé Olvidar.”

The 13 million audience impressions secured by “Suavemente” represents only 4% increase. But seven of the top 10 titles were in flux last week, an issue which helped “Suavemente” ease into the No. 1 slot.

Los Temerarios’ hit “Por Que Te Conozco” (Foro5) 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 Nec, whose WEA Latina single “Laura No Está” already is a hit in several Latin American countries and Spain. Nec is one of five new artists to hit Hot Latin Tracks this year. The others are chart-topping tropical acts Crespo and WEA Latina’s Saratoga Y Florentino; WEA Latina salsa diva Lisette Meléndez, another showcase performer at this year’s International Latin Music Conference; EMI Latin merengue group Nexox; and Sony Music/Epic’s Celine Dion.

CHART NOTES, RETAIL: After two weeks of decreasing sales, Selena’s No. 1 disc “Anthology” (EMI Latin) rebounds this issue with a 116% 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 “Exito Y Recuerdos” (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 artistes made prominent chart debuts this issue on The Billboard Latin 50: merengue star Manny Manuel and Puerto Rico rock group Fiel A La Vega. Manuel’s latest al-

(Continued on next page)
than three decades by the U.S. trade embargos.

"The pioneering phase of bringing Cuban music to the world is over," says Ned Sublette of the New York independent label New World. "American and Latin American artists are now more prominent than before, due to the current Cuban music boom which started in 1992 and has been reissuing records made in Cuba.

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

Cuban labels Egrem, Artes, and Bisc Music released numerous titles during the fair. Cuban Music Institute president Alicia Perea 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.

Carol Wright, VP of marketing for Universal Music Latin America, called her company's distribution deal with Musiquemex, a Spanish-owned label with offices in Havana, "a No. 1 priority in the world." Current projects include La Charanga Habanera, a Salsa band with roots in Cuba, which will embark on a European tour in late spring, and the release of the first dozen titles in the "La Isla De La Musica," a Latin pop/rock label featuring recordings of diverse music from all over the island.

While U.S. labels must still circumvent regulations to work in Cuba, European companies, particularly Spanish, have made firm commitments to the production of Cuban music. Estudio Habana, a recording and music imprint of the Canary Islands-based company Manzana, showcased its artists at the opening night of Cubadisco at the Karl Marx Theater. Spanish flamenco rock group Ketama was a special guest at the concert, which featured artists ranging from Klimax, a popular young dance band from Havana, to traditional high-sounding by La Charanga Rubalcaba. The show was taped for broadcast on Spanish TV.

The same night, celebrated 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 Florida company that produces dance-oriented Spanish and African music in Miami and Havana, has the strongest roster of popular Cuban dance bands, including Los Van Van, NG La Banda, and Manolo V, "El Medico 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 which produces is licensed in the U.S. by the Ahí-Nama label, had a popular booth where videos of its latest releases were shown continuously on a monitor. Ahi-Nama president Jimmy Massey 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.

Tedd Toubota, 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, talked a music and the Internet. Toubota, who has taken an active role in efforts to strengthen the Cuban music industry, gave the government a reason for which the infrastructure necessary for the industry to prosper and to maintain interest in Cuban music.

"We have to develop our skills in learning how to do business," acknowledges Benemeli, who "Cities are the vital issues marketing and distribution, copyright and royalties, and updating technology.

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

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AUGUST 25-28, 1998 MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER, FLORIDA, USA
TRADE SHOW - CONFERENCES - CONCERTS
Spanish, Dutch Shed Light On Sales Gains

By Steve McClure

Sony Japan Reports Rise in Sales, Income

By Jeff Clark-Meads

Sony Japan Reports Rise in Sales, Income

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Sony Japan Reports Rise in Sales, Income

BY STEVE McCLURE

Tokyo—Japan's biggest label, Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) (SMJ), has reported net sales of 114.9 billion yen ($704.0 million) for the year ending March 31, 1998, 11.4% from the previous year. Net income rose 15.7% to $79.1 billion yen ($557.1 million). Those figures contrast with the disappointing results a year earlier.

The label says that despite the harsh conditions prevailing in the Japanese music industry, it was able to achieve solid results by introducing a raft of half-year contracts and strong core music operations, that enabled it to boost its market share.

"SMJ restructured operations, centered on production and promotion, and redefined the decision-making process by strengthening the company's management in order to adopt new ways of thinking," the company says in its annual report to shareholders.

"In addition, SMJ strengthened its ties with leading artists, introduced an employee incentive system based on contributions to the creation of hit products, and advanced the reorganization of its marketing structure through the launch of sales-on-consulting operations and other means," the report continued.

Sales of Japanese repertoire were up 5% to 60.8 billion yen ($430.7 million), thanks to strong sales by such acts as L'Arc-En-Ciel, Puffy, Judy & Mary, Chari, Makoto Kawamoto, Tube, Tamio Okuda, and Dreams Come True, whose greatest-hits set sold more than 2.4 million units.

Foreign repertoire acts such as Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, Oasis, Aerosmith, and the Righteous Brothers reaped a windfall with the "Titanic" soundtrack, helped boost net sales 2.1% to 22.9 billion yen ($193.2 million).

For the half-year ending Sept. 30, 1998, SMJ estimates net sales of 51.3 billion yen ($388.6 million) net income of 2.7 billion yen ($20.5 million).
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Soledad Takes Argentina By Storm

BY MARCELO FERNÁNDEZ BITAR

While Argentina is best-known musically for its tango-rooted sounds, there is now growing evidence that its pop- and rock-action may be the future. The Latin music industry is undergoing a rapid process of change, and as a result, Soledad’s success is an interesting development.

According to Soledad’s representative, the singer has released a new album on the label, “Amor de Mi Vida” (Love Of My Days), which is expected to be released this year. The album features a mix of rock, folk, and Latin-influenced tracks, and is already generating interest among fans.

Soledad’s success is not limited to Argentina. In recent years, she has performed in various countries around the world, including the United States, Spain, and Latin America. Her music has attracted a wide audience, including fans of rock, folk, and Latin music.

Soledad’s talent and dedication to her craft have earned her a reputation as one of the most prominent female artists in the Latin music industry. Her music is characterized by its catchy melodies and engaging lyrics, which have earned her critical acclaim and commercial success.

Soledad’s rise to stardom is a testament to the power of music to transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. As the Latin music industry continues to evolve, it is clear that Soledad’s success is only the beginning of a new chapter for Latin music.

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 blues and soul music.

Blueside is headed by Bob Fisher, managing director of the West End subsidiary of Music Collection International (MCI). He is joined by the dozen of 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 Howlin’ Wolf to British audiences.

The third member of the Blueside triumvirate, agent Alan Robinson 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 label has been designed to be “backed by 10% of the major’s budget,” he adds.

The debut Blueside release, Midnight Doctor, is a compilation of soul/blues artist Willie Clayton’s recent recordings made for Jackson, Miss.-based Ace Records. MCI acquired the Ace catalog in 1997.

Signed directly to Blueside, with forthcoming albums scheduled for release, is Otis Grand, Eugene “Hideaway” Bridges, and veteran Big Lucky Carter. Among the artists who have recorded for the label are Otis Rush, B.B. King, and Howlin’ Wolf.

The label’s plan is to “become a major player in the U.K. market.” The first album, released last year, was a successful debut, and the label has high hopes for future releases.

U.K. REISSUE 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, and 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, effective immediately. Hatcher joins from Universal Music U.K., where he held a similar post.
**Japan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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**New Entry**

New Entry RE-Entry

**Re-Entry**

New Entry RE-Entry

**Hits Of The World** is compiled at Billboard/London by Domino Pride and Alison Smith. Contact 44-171-323-6686, fax 44-171-323-23142316.
BELGIUM: One of the youngest acts in the booming Belgian blues scene is Fred & the Healers, a powerful trio from the south of the country. The 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 artist's 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.

U.K.: 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."

AUSTRALIA/PUERTO RICO: Two of Sony Music’s international stars—Australia’s Tina Arena and Puerto Rico’s Ricky Martin—have teamed up with producer James 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 Hart. The band with Jennings, producers of Celine Dion’s “My Heart Will Go On,” 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.”

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 “Semelin,” was released in the U.S. in December 1998. Despite limited airplay and tours due to a scantily airplay and tours due to a scantily

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 Essex and agreed to hook up after Howlett completes Proligy’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 collaboration, 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.”

GREECE: This month, prominent Greek singer George Dalaras starts a European tour, his sixth since 1981, Dalaras, 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 2½ hours, Dalaras presents his past hits as well as songs by Goran Bregovic (Global Music Pulse, Billboard, Feb. 14, 1996) that are featured on Dalaras’ latest release, “Teslassaloni—Yanna With Two Canvas Slings.” Now a hit through much of the world, the album is also supported by the Tropical label’s release of “George Dalaras: 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.
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 CEO chairman Denis Handlin, second from right, the album was double-platinum (140,000 units) out of the box. Her previous album, "Falling Into You," has 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 November, the 527 staff of Sony Music Australia signed a petition asking the singer to invite the rest of her tour in Australia, 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 are her manager/husband and head of Good Feeling management, René Angélil, left, and Dave Platel, management associate at Good Feeling.

SPANISH, DUTCH SHED LIGHT ON SALES GAINS

(Continued from page 38)

euphoria predicated on the IFPI figures, as NVPI's measuring methods show less spectacular increases. "As IFPI wanted to get Dutch data somewhat quicker than we would normally have provided them, their 12% growth would be only 5% in our own calculations, which we will officially present by the end of May," he says.

SWEDISH DJs, IFPI AGREE ON CD-R COPYING

(Continued from page 48)

Mårtensson, said, "Arranging 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, we consider it 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 faced 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 Linné, and MWM Sweden label manager Patrik Larsson.

Extra Safety

BY LARRY LeBLANC

TORONTO—Canada's broadcasters are reactiving with acrimony to proposals on multiple licence ownership and Canadian-generated music regulations hand-down April 30 by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

The CRTC loosened the rules of multiple license ownership (MLO) and proposed an increase in the amount of Canadian-generated music that commercial radio stations air (Billboard, May 9). The MLO ruling, which allows broadcasters for the first time to own more than two radio stations in a given market, takes effect immediately.

The CRTC's music-content proposal, which would boost requirements of Canadian music content (CanCon) to 35% from the existing 30%, requires a regulatory approach to commercial radio policy before being integrated into regulations. The content proposal is expected to be held for public comment and regulations later this year. The CRTC now has solicited comment from the Canadian public via a public hearing or written submissions.

The proposals resulted from the CRTC's first comprehensive review of Canada's commercial radio regulations since the rules were introduced in 1971. In hearings held last year during that review, the Canadian Assn. of Broadcasters (CAB) requested a number of proposals on the condition that CanCon remain fixed at 30%.

What now has broadcasters most concerned is that the CRTC still expects broadcasters to implement those proposals, which include establishing a marketing and programming fund. Canadian music and setting up an online music store for the purchase of Canadian music through the Internet. The CRTC also expects the CAB to continue the Canadian Radio Music Awards to celebrate new Canadian artists, which were first held in March.

"We're worse off than we were," says Gary Slaight, president/CEO of Standard Radio Inc. here. "At the hearings we kept saying that if CanCon went up, these initiatives are not on the table."

Ironically, when the CRTC review was first announced, Duff Chater, president of the CAB and VP of industry affairs at broadcaster CHUM Ltd. here, predicted that the process would not be marked by the intense skirmishes that have marked previous review groups that hampered the passing of last year's copyright act revisions (Billboard, May 17, 1997).

Revenue concerns increased by the lack of music industry support for Canadian broadcasters. The recording industry lobbied for increased CanCon and opposed MLO.

"The opportunity to work collaboratively with the music industry [in promoting Canadian music together] has now been lost," Chater says. "Why did the music industry stick their noses into the consolidation of radio? They should have had no comment on an industry trying to reorganize for its survival."

Brian Chater, president of the Canadian Independent Record Production Assn., counters that the broadcasters " gambled, and they lost. They were the ones that wanted a review of radio." Brian Robertson, president of the Canadian Recording Industry Assn., says he was "livid" at the move.

The broadcasters got their cookie, the record industry got theirs. Why the hell are [broadcasters] jumping up and down?"

The MLO ruling lets broadcasters own as many as two AM and two FM stations in any given market, or two AM and one or more radio stations. In markets with fewer than eight commercial stations, broadcasters are permitted to own as many as three stations operating in a given language, with a maximum of two stations on one frequency band.

However, many broadcasters are griping that the two-market approach makes it unlikely that there will be buyers in lucrative major markets. "We're all buyers, not sellers," points out Roman.

(The CRTC) only gave us one little thing—allowing us to own four stations in about six [major] markets," adds Slaight. "But nobody is going to sell in most of these markets. Then in [small] markets they say we can own only three stations. That means if you already own two stations and someone has another two, we can only [buy] one. That's crazy."

CanCon Rules Stir Resentment

TORONTO—The most debatable part of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission’s (CRTC) new proposals for commercial radio is the call for an increase in the level of Canadian content (CanCon) music.

The proposal calls for a 35% CanCon level to be maintained during the high-audience daytime period of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and during the evening, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. during weekdays and 30% overall. For the first time, selections must be played in their entirety to qualify as CanCon.

For French-language stations, the regulation for the amount of French-language music played—international or domestic—remains at 50%. Additionally, French-language stations, like their English-language counterparts, must also maintain an overall level of 35% CanCon weekly, including between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays. As with English-language stations, those selections must be played in their entirety to qualify as CanCon.

Bob Mills, PD of album rock CFOX Vancouver, calls the daytime proposal "a big jump from the current level of 35% CanCon weekly. He adds that the 35% daytime regulation gives stations more flexibility for specials or longform programming.

To qualify as having Canadian content, a song must fulfill at least two of the following four conditions: the music was composed or written by a Canadian; the music or lyrics were performed principally by a Canadian; the musical selection was recorded wholly in Canada; or the lyrics were written by a Canadian.

Music industry executives and 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 promotion for Universal Music Canada. "There will simply be an increase in rotations of artists already being played, particularly those currently on the current bestsellers."

Garry Barker, VP of Maritime Broadcasting System in Halifax, Nova Scotia, agrees. "With the increases of CanCon, what are broadcasters going to do?" he asks. "I would assume they will increase spins. They're not going any deeper [adding new artists]."

Several broadcasters are upset about struggling "gold," or older, AM stations, with a limited supply of Canadian recordings, aren't exempt from the proposal.

"All we're going to end up doing is play "Sweet City Woman" by the Stampeders three more times a week," says Barker, referring to the international 1971 hit.

CRTC officials indicate that CanCon 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 Barker, referring to the CRTC.

However, Brian Robertson, president of the Canadian Recording Industry Assn., is skeptical of any further change to CanCon. "It takes the CRTC 27 years to move it 5%," he says.

LARRY LeBLANC
HONG KONG — As the Asian economic crisis continues to smolder, businesses are shuttering on a regular basis, and labels appear to be adopting smarter marketing strategies in order to maintain margins and profile.

"We've made many changes in the way we market or promote during the current economic downturn," says Tim 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."

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.

**Perils & Opportunities**

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**HONG KONG**

By Adam White

**Two Days in May: Reinventing The Future Is Theme Of First Billboard/MTV Confab**

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

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**FAR EAST TURBULENCE:**

By Steve Traiman

The economic conditions in the Asia Pacific area have had significant effects on how U.S.-based importers 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 those who rely on local distributors or retailers. All agree that the recent economic turmoil is cyclical and that 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
How do you view the current state of the Asian music industry from an MTV perspective?

Frank Brown, president of MTV Networks Asia

The Asian music industry is burgeoning in terms of diversity and the development of local, regional and global product, which is also one of MTV’s most important mandates in the region. In addition, despite the long-term outlook being extremely positive, both the music labels and MTV have a terrific future in the Asian region. From a network point of view, it is vital that we remain committed to working with the record companies to ensure ongoing success for both ourselves and the artists.

HAS THE ASIAN ECONOMIC RECESSION HAD ANY IMPACT ON THE GROWTH OF THE CD MARKET?

In terms of our own growth, in the last 12 months MTV distribution has grown from 40 million to 69 million homes—both full-time and partial carriage. Likewise, viewership has also increased over all by more than five times, with India alone multiplying over sixfold. And, in spite of its economic situation, Indonesia is one of the highest rating individual markets for the world. From our point of view, we are looking at the industry to expand in light of the economic slump, but the long-term outlook is extremely positive. Both the music labels and MTV have a terrific future in the Asian region. From a network point of view, it is vital that we remain committed to working with the record companies to ensure ongoing success for both ourselves and the artists.

How much of a role does localization continue to play in terms of music networks in the region?

Frank Brown

Localization continues to be a priority and a key formula. We have flexible VJs who can do both network shows for the region or local shows for individual territories, and our graphics are all heavily localized; those for Taiwan are completely different from those for Indonesia, those for India and so on. We are also encouraging the growth of Asian creativity to a global market. Our VJ Nadya (Hutagalung) is a great example of exportability around the region itself; she was voted one of the top ten stars on television by an Indonesian publication, a Singapore paper named her showbiz personality of the year, and she was also honored at the Asian Television Awards held earlier this year.

In terms of the artists themselves, how much are you involved in the development of domestic repertoire in the belief in local markets, and how exportable is that product?

Frank Brown

MTV has a mandate to showcase talent, be it in the form of local individual artists, bands, shows or productions. We have created a product called "MTV Live And Loud," which is similar to the "Unplugged" concept in certain ways that it showcases artists from countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, among others. We have also produced the more familiar "Unplugged," with the likes of Chage & Aska [Japan], Harlem Yu [Taiwan] and Colonial Cousins [Indonesia], all of which have been exportable and shown on other MTV services globally. In terms of specific video product, MTV presented the global video premiere of Dadawa’s most recent release. Conversely, certain West Coast acts like Michael Learns To Rock and Aqua—have used Asia as a springboard to the market in the West. Basically, the more exposure MTV can give an artist worldwide, the better for everyone concerned.

SAX QUESTIONS

Frank Brown, president, of MTV Networks Asia

From the top: "MTV Alternative Nation," "MTV Most Wanted-Bays"

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 of its source and creates a new 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.

The move to 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.

But Chian Giouw, regional director in Asia for the IFPI, believes that pirate CDs found in Hong Kong today are no longer originating from local plants, 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 45 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 55 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 now meet its own demand. At the end of 1997, China was dependent on legitimate orders coming from China to Hong Kong for pressing; these have dropped drastically. Piracy CD production 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 South East 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 is legitimately then available in a pirated version within two to three days, and the choice is more specifically catering to local tastes. South East 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 sales volume 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. Piracy 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."

PAINS FOR PUBLISHING

From a publisher’s perspective, David Lottenberg, regional
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, con-irms 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 ($18.8 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, Samony 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 Hori, Horipro’s VP of international affairs.

Echoing that comment is Hiroyuki “Holly” Otsuki, GM of Victor’s international division, who notes the lack of

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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 down-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 num-

ber of wholesalers 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 Haentjens, has become one of the world’s largest independent record companies, director of international Annika Meyer-Willkomn 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-Willkomn. “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-Willkomn. “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.
Welcome Leon.

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

Artist: S.E.S.
Album: "S.E.S."
Label: S.M. Entertainment

"Most music videos tend to focus on the female singer's sexiness, but S.E.S.'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."

Melodia: 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.'s second video, "Oh! My Love," was released in March, is still high in the charts.

"The album has been a steady seller since its release, reflecting S.M. Entertainment's strategy of building up S.E.S. slowly. "The album is not the kind of mega-sell 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-Soo, 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. Entertainment 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 for how Korean entertainers can expand their activities abroad," says Hae-Ik. "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
Album: "Radj" (Radj
Label: Sony Music Indonesia

SMI marketing assistant Rudy Ramayya explains: "SMI "discovered" the pop-rock alternative band /ir 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

Bandung pub scene. The fivesome was SMI's first signing in Indonesia, and its debut album, "Radj," released in October 1997, has sold more than 120,000 units, says SMI.

Media: SMI tapped the group to release the title track in mid-September to 300 major radio stations in the country.

MARKETING '98: PERILS & OPPORTUNITIES

Continued from page APQ-11

exposure, but, in order to maximize impact, you need at least three days in each of nine different markets—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 markets and arrange media video-conferencing, which saves a lot of time but still allows us to cover all bases," says Yavanes.

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 as long as possible."

Rubin says that there are a surprising number of releases available, whether import or local, and that focus is extremely important for the artists. Rubin is choosing the right artists, he has 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...
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 APQ-26

**Natalie Imbruglia**, the former Australian soap-opera star who has broken through in the U.S. and the U.K. with the hit single "Torn." Songsian, 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," Duann 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**

Sony is also looking toward breaking new international artists such as Latin act Ricky Martin in the region, through cooperation with MTV. "How committed to [breaking] this artist in Asia," says Yasavas. "We were helped by MTV's selecting him as the first subject of its 'Hot Seat' and are confident that it will help break him in the region."

**KEEPING THE PRODUCT WARM**

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 self-selling-catalog campaigns—to 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 maintain its inventory levels in a smarter way. For Sony, 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 HOMEWARD**

Sony's regional headquarters looks heavily toward its domestic repertoire to maintain growth. "We need strong rosters of local artists," remarks Yasavas. "Our strategy is to develop an organic growth of 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," said last year. "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 Yasavas, "We have to keep moving forward, and we are." Rock also acknowledges that its local artists are key to its continued success. Emil Chou and Wu Bai are examples of Mandarin acts. He cites the 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 promotions."

**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 Tiu says that her company needs to be very 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.

Sony's Yasavas 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 will 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 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 Tiu. With its big Madonna release, "Ray Of Light," Warner in Singapore splits 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 display, the album went platinum [15,000 units] after the first phase. Warner knew exactly what to do, but also tripled its marketing budget to TV advertising, in addition to creating a strong upswing in sales of the popular Madonna album. Approximately 60% of Warner's 1998 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 Fan. "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 song this year is an organic campaign 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 and news, 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."

"In terms of in-store displays, the current tone is to allow the music and the artist to speak for itself on the shelf," says Warner's Tiu. "In all markets, we have been focusing on in-store displays and the need to continue to spend money on these, rather than look to promotional grants."

**AP=61111111**

"We are totally committed to breaking new acts, but we may have to look at [fewer] acts and give them more focus for the time being," he states. "Enterprise heads from the Philippines are an example of a BMG product that is expected to be marketed regionwide through an all-English-language album. It's a matter of picking the right music and making it work across the region," adds Rubin.

**APQ-8**
Hong Kong's not the only great thing Britain's given away recently.

The UK's fastest growing pop sensation. Blowing up on all continents.

Hong Kong's not the only great thing Britain's given away recently.

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.
have been. The challenge of how to protect intellectual property is no easier in the late '90s than it was in the late '70s, when the aforementioned executive, WEA International's then-president Nersi Ertegun, profoundly recognized that technology's spread cannot be halted.

Ertegun was speaking at Kuala Lumpur's Regent Hotel, during the first Billboard Asia/Pacific Music Industry Conference, held in February 1979. Today, another Regent Hotel will play host to a similar gathering, and deleges are certain to discuss... new technologies, artist development and piracy.

The Asian Music Conference (AMC), jointly organized by Billboard and MTV Networks Asia, takes place May 17-18 at The Regent Hotel, Hong Kong. Its theme is "Reinventing The Future." Ertegun, who 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 times, 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 Nersi 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 multiculturual music...is now firmly established." (Continued on page APQ-11)

Asian Music Conference Schedule

May 17, The Regent Hotel, Hong Kong

May 16
Registration
Welcome Address
"The 900-Pound Gorilla"
Panelists include S.P. 8th (EMI), Sam Dunn (Rock), Tom Yoda (Aveco), Lachlan Rutherford (Warner Music)
Conference Agenda (program subject to change)

May 17
Welcome Reception
Conference Agenda
Lunch
"Today's Talent And The Two-Minute (That Long?) Career"
Panelists include Florence Chan (Pan Music), Matthew Paterson (Mushroom), Michael Gudinski (Mushroom), Michael Hocking (Midas Promotions), "Anti piracy: What Have You Done For Us Lately?"
Panelists include Chris Britton (KPS Retail), J.C. Gloow (EFM), John McPherson (Haddanes), Julie Ribbe (IMI)
Keynote Address
Q&A
Closing Party

U.S. BUSINESS

Continued from page APQ-1

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 import-ed, 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 Shin seideo, 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 blind-sided. Consumer purchasing of music is down, and as a music publisher, my perception is that the record compa-

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SHOO KUSANO PAUL MANO YOSHI HOSHINO

KATSUMI KITA SHUICHI HIDEMA NAT KUSANO

APQ-10
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)

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS WORLDWIDE.
It has been reported that $173 million (U.S.) was lost through music piracy in Singapore last year, while a total of 135,000 pirated CDs were seized in 10 raids—more than 12 times 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 Chun Wei, CEO of the Singapore Phonogram and Videogram Association (SPVA), acknowledges the seriousness of the situation in his 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 of 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 another. 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.

**SIX QUESTIONS**

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 to-date 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 Tawain, 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 Tawain, 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
The song quickly went top 40 at several large-city radio stations. Another single, "Bunga (Flower)," climbed up to the top 10 on various radio charts, says Ramawy. SMI staged a promo tour for major markets in Java with live interviews, trivia events and showcases. Music videos were produced for "Radja" and "Bunga," directed by award-winning Rizal Manтовani, at Avant Garde studios in Jakarta. These clips gave the band access to TV time—the real dictator of success here.

"Radja" and "Bunga" both hit No. 1 on the Hard Rock FM charts in Jakarta. "They were an underground band from Bandung, so many listeners already had heard them live," says Hard Rock FM music director Rusti "Sly," who adds, "They were a regular cover band at Hard Rock Cafe before their phenomenal growth."

Retail: Sales are stronger in different urban areas, says Widiana H., marketing director for Indonesia's largest music retailer, Disc Tara. Sales are good in the band's hometown of Bandung and certain areas of Jakarta, with little in-store promotion other than goods displayed on the new-release rack. SMI provided key retail staff with /ri/ T-shirts and a range of promotional material to raise consumer awareness. "With sales of 120,000 copies, /ri/ 's debut album has paved the way for the band's future," says SMI's Ramawy.

TAWAIN
Artist: Shunza
Album: "Shunza"
Label: Wow Music

While homegrown R&B is relatively new to Taiwan, the success of Wow Music singer/songwriter Shunza proves that it can be viable. Her debut album, "Shunza" (Wow Music), released last November, has spent three months on the IFPI Taiwan Local Top 20.

Shunza, who was born in Beijing, took a circuitous route to Taiwan. Her family moved to Berkeley, Calif., when she was 6. "When I got to the States, I listened to the radio a lot and got really into black American music," Shunza says. "I didn't know any English then, so I just kind of memorized the top 20." In her teens, her family headed to Switzerland, where she studied at EJMA (School of Jazz and Contemporary Music) and would later work as a teacher. While in Switzerland, she also performed with Swiss rap group Duty Free. She was signed to Rock Records subsidiary Magic Stone after her mother passed a demo tape to the company at MIDEM. Magic Stone decided to use her as the debut act of its new label, Wow Music.

Media: Peter Hsu, program manager at the Voice Of Taipei radio station, says part of Shunza's success is due to audiences looking for an alternative to the singer idols who have traditionally dominated Taiwan's charts. "She's a very good vocalist, and she writes too," Hsu says. "I think that record companies are seeking new talents from overseas to specialize in new forms of music because people in Taiwan are looking for something new."

Retail: Shunza's eponymously titled debut album has sold an estimated 200,000 units. The singer also is featured on the first single from established star Alex To's best-of-collection, "Timeless Classics" (Rock), in a remix version of "Really Miss You." Released in March, that album has already spent over five weeks on the IFPI charts. Shunza is currently at work on her second album, but says she has ambitions beyond Taiwan. "I need to prove to American people that Asians can sing," she says. "I just want one of us to make it there."

VICTOR WONG

MALAYSIA
Artist: Camelia
Album: "Camelia"
Label: Universal

Malaysian singer Camelia is considered the most media-friendly artist in the country at the moment, so much so that she's entered the Malaysian Guinness Book of World Records as the most-photographed singer. While her fetching looks are a plus, her strong voice has also won her media support.

The 23-year-old singer honed her style via lessons from both Malaysian and Indonesian vocal coaches. Her most recent eponymously titled EP for Universal Music features three songs from her debut album, which came out in early 1997, including "Hatiku," a cover of the Diane Warren song "How Do I Live Without You," with Malay lyrics.

Media: "She's got both the looks and the voice," says Siti Noraini, a producer and DJ with Radio Kuala Lumpur. "Vocally, she doesn't sound like the rest, she has her own style: a little Malaysian, a little Indonesian, Malaysian TV stations RTM and TV3 feature Camelia prominently on their entertainment shows. "She has a strong voice and mature presentation," says TV executive Nik Ramzi. "She appeals to a whole family rather than just teenagers. Her target audience is much larger. There are definitely big things ahead for her."

Universal plans a second full-length album for Camelia this year with a more pop feel, believing that the R&B slant of her debut may have hurt sales. "The market isn't ready for total R&B albums," agrees Camelia, who cites Mariah Carey, Toni Braxton and Shelia Majid as vocal influences. "The next album will have more ballads on it."

"Camelia's second album is a regional project," says Amran Abu Bakar, Universal A&R manager. "It will be released in Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong. Japan is tentative. Camelia's got the rare combination of talent, looks and discipline."

Retail: "Camelia's potential is there," says Herbert Sunil, assistant manager of the Salem Power retail chain, while showing more restrained enthusiasm than the media. "Her vocals are good. It will be interesting to see how the second album fares in the current economic slowdown."

ALEXANDRA HUVICH

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Continued on page APQ-16
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 build her popularity in Asian territories beyond Taiwan.

Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) is aggressively promoting Japanese acts it thinks will appeal to Asian audiences. Last year, 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 Sony has sold some 200,000 units in the region, and pop-rock unit T.M. Revolution. In terms of Asian artists Sony is promoting in Japan, the label has high hopes for Philippine hard-rock band Wolfgang, whose 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 label that has performed best in Asia is indie/dance/pop label Avex. One Taiwan industry source estimates that Avex acts Namie Amuro, globe and t'fli sold a total of 1.2 million albums in that territory in 1997. Tetsuya Komuro, 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 and develop new Japanese 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

Continued from page APQ-8

regional visits to the region by the band, prior to our commitment to support the release,” says Van Dell. Music networks MTV Asia and Channel V were brought into the promotional hoop and guaranteed support for the act. Prior to its March Asian promo tour, Aqua was selected by Channel V as its “Chosen One” in February, and MTV Asia featured the band as its “Artist of the Month” in April. Universal’s plugging of all singles from the album, coupled with the band’s continuous and massive exposure in all trades, on radio, regional and terrestrial TV, through retail and in the press, has branded Aqua in a way that Universal says will guarantee a solid fan base for future albums.

Current album sales have already exceeded 1.9 million units region-wide.

EUROPEANS RETHINK OPTIONS

Continued from page APQ-4

SINO-SWEDISH RELATIONS

In Sweden, MNW Records had—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 Werner, 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 it’s 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 Yorgos, whose Tristar/Sony album has already sold 18,000 units, according to the label. MNW is also proving important both as a market in its own right, especially for MNW indie-pop act Cinnamon and girl vocalist Cam, and as a musical bridge to China. Though, as Hsiao Werner 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 three years ago, and the reaction was excellent.”

DANES ROCK ASIA

In Copenhagen, EMI-Medley international director Thomas Hoehne stresses the need to “support our colleagues in Southeast Asia during what is undeniably a difficult time.” But, despite the slump, for Hoehne 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,” Hoehne is fine-tuning the company’s promotional campaigns in line with the “widely varying” market conditions. EMI-Medley is now readying 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 Hoehne, “we are planning a promo visit with Breeze to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan, 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 in place for former Cut’n’Move lead singer Zindy.

FEARS FOR JAPAN

Virtually across the board, the multinationals 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 in Japan, and Sony, meanwhile, which reported profits in Japan down 38 percent for the year ending March 31, warns it will see the worst of the storm thanks largely to the powerful sales of the “Titanic” soundtrack.

Among U.K.-based promoters, Graham Lambdon, managing director of Lightning 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
In Hong Kong, another highflier 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 badly," says Lambert. "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 20% 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.
THAILAND

Artist: Peter Corp Dyrendal
Album: “Hinpa Ga Darb”

Label: Grammy Grand

Peter Corp Dyrendal—part Danish, part Thai—is the latest success among Thailand’s “native” singer-songwriters used to describe those of mixed Western and Thai descent. At 22, Dyrendal 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. The multilingual singer—he speaks Thai, Danish, English, and German—grew up in Denmark. Travelling back and forth to Thailand, he became familiar with 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. In a recent debut, “Chao Tu Yi Nai (Where’s The Buffalo?),” with released last October and features the upbeat single “Chao Tu Yi 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 Wichit Kwangsawang, the executive producer of Hot Wave 91.5 FM and Green Wave 106.5 FM, the major radio stations of A-Time Media, another company affiliated with Grammy Entertainment. “His singles topped the chart of Hot Wave.” Frequent exposure in the media and in Thailand’s leading magazines also helped. And undoubtedly it helps that Grammy Grand has numerous radio and TV outlets to feature its star.

Retail: It was the release of a melodic ballad, “Chai Kang Sot,” which featured local star Carin of the group Carin & The Noise, that propelled APQ-1 into the top 50,000-unit mark, according to his label. Several months after its release, the album is still selling well, reports Imagine, the record store’s database. The song “Bangkok’s Underground,” unlike other singles who star in TV series and movies, Dyrendal would like to concentrate on his singing career and do one thing at a time. “When somebody is gonna do something new, he says, ‘they have to do it the best they can and put 100% into it.’”

—PENCHON PHOBORISUT

U.S. BUSINESS

Continued from page APQ-15

At Fantasy Publishing, Bill Belmont, director of international copyright and licensing, notes that the heavily jazz-oriented company had a network of licenses in the Far East. These include Victor Entertainment in Japan, Festival in Australia and New Zealand and Rock Records in the other territories. “The situation in Asia is confusing in many ways,” he observes, “and it’s difficult to explain the impact on our revenue.

“We have about 2,000 catalog items, and in Asia have customized compilations that work for each territory,” he adds. “As an example, the Indonesian company had a series of 25 jazz compilations on cassette that did well in a small market. In Taiwan, we developed a four-volume ‘Jazz Encyclopedia’ in Chinese and did the same for Korea with special-language selection. In Japan, JVC came out with 20-bit and XRDC masters tailored for the Japanese hardware. We haven’t gotten royalty payments for sales in the past six months, but up to now we’re still getting fairly consistent orders and steady payments from Korea, which probably took the hardest financial hit. One plus factor for us is that we sell all goods copyright-inclusive, a bonus for local marketers.”

PROPAGANDA AND PAYMENTS

Cherry Lane Music Publishing was the first music publisher to open an office in Beijing more than four years ago, operating with subpublishers in other areas, notes senior VP Aida Gurwicz. “For the first time, he says, “we’ve seen some extraordinary changes [there (China)], and you have to change your entire perspective and reduce expectations on what is reasonable when it comes to China,” she says. “The key music audiencing changes there (China),” Gurwicz adds, “is the transition from 150 million people living in the coastal metropolitan cities. While much of the population is very poor, virtually everyone owns a cassette player and will spend the equivalent of 25 to 50 cents for our tapes.

“Five years ago,” she observes, “no one in the government’s propaganda department that oversees music had any understanding of the concept of music publishing, mechanical rights or copyrights. Today, we’re licensing records and getting payments on masters and mechanical royalties. We recently got an e-mail that our John [Bevel] collection had been licensed to a major label that is paying on both mechanics and masters. Once a precedent like that is set, hopefully the floodgates will open.

“Japan, we haven’t felt the hit at all,” she adds. “Based on mechanical licenses and synch royalties from the sale of our Guitar Magazine Japanese-language edition, we’re doing OK. We were hit hardest in those territories where we’ve never had a strong presence, including here in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Korea.”

Also reportedly unaffected is peermusic, with Else Laut, Asia Pacific regional manager, observing, “The increasing tendency to generalize over an entire region rest on a dark, unjustifiable cloud over the entire region, although only a few territories such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia have had serious economic problems. We’d be foolish not to recognize these problems, but as a company

APQ-16

BILLBOARD MAY 16, 1998
Online Retailers Slash DVD Prices Competition Over New Format Heats Up In Cyberspace

BY CATHERINE APPLEFIELD 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 products) and larger multi-category merchants that have added DVD to their 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, Videoseerve.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 Videoseerve.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 30% 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 the biggest losers.

Reel.com, the largest of the early online DVD retailers, recently announced that it will no longer accept returns on its DVD product.

"People who try DVD are ready to recoup losses and take the chance on their own product," Dubelko says. "The strategy is to focus on the mass market."

Chargers and other electronic accessories are also popular. The main reason for this focus is to gain market share and get into people's homes.

"DVD is not a technology that is easy to buy," Dubelko says. "We are trying to recreate what we would like to see happen with the compact disc: a simple, easy-to-use product."

CCM Contributions 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 a unique way of purchasing new music, but that market share is now being taken by larger mail-order catalogs. CCM has managed to stay on top by offering better paper, superior design, more informed copy, and most important, a product that customers often can't find in record stores. That's where CCM scores big.

Located in Itasca, Ill., on the outskirts of Chicago, CCM was formed in 1989 out of the ashes of music catalog grandaddy Publisher's Central Bureau (PCB), which in its last days, despite a disastrous management shift to Random House, had begun to emphasize collector-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 1998 (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 the early 1970s' era of radio-sponsored music mail order. Import sound libraries were commonplace, and selecting a unique collection of music helped turn a profit.

"We buy into different segments," says Anderson. "But we don't get in where the competition is too thick. We aren't a 'summer of love' CD, or a '60s band.'"
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 $323 million. There were 6,018 video stores at the quarter's end, 590 more than a year ago. For Blockbuster Music, Via- com reports a 5% 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.

In the New York-based entertainment and retail company also reports strong gains for MTV Networks, which includes MTV and VH1, due to higher advertising and affiliate sales. Cash flow (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) rose 16.8% to $133.8 million from $114.5 million a year ago, as revenue climbed 15.5% to $681.3 million from $504.7 million. The greatest subscriber growth was for the joint venture with MTV Asia, which grew to 66 million households from 48.2 million a year ago.

Viscom'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." RENTRAK, the revenue-sharing video distribution company, 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-rental system to its account base of 8,000 video stores, supermarkets, and other retailers. Portland-based Rentrak also says it began operations in the U.K. on May 1, with a joint venture, Rentrak U.K., Ltd., of which Rentrak Corp. owns 25%, Columbia Group plc owns 66.7%, and Rentrak Japan owns 8.3%.

CIGNOW, the online music retailer, reports that first-quarter revenue jumped 28% to $10 million from $2.6 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. Jenkinson, a CIGNOW-based CD now says it added 155,000 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 $9.2 million, or $0.07 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, a developer of online music delivery systems, will provide technology for online music-streaming firm RealNetworks' newest platform, RealNetworks RealPlayer G2.

LIFT® Systems with future.

Visit our website at: www.LIFTonline.com
email us at: usa@LIFTonline.com
or call us at: 1-800-543-8269 for free color brochures.

VIACOM

commits to GENTRIFICATION OF MAIL ORDER

(Continued from preceding page)

the '80s-era Murray Hill label, run by his former boss, Bob Hyde. He says he "saw very quickly that licensing is the only way to achieve the margins you need, as opposed to buying fin-ished 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, before the deal was signed, he told about 6,000 already dead end, he decided to inaugurate a custom CCM label to put out its own reissues. "CCM is pretty much aolist label," he says. "It's no my mission is to 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 any-where else, and we go out and license the material and bring back exactly what they want, I think that is pow-erful. So that's our modus operandi." It also helps that, unlike in the past days of mail order, customers can count on a quality reassurance—the right tunes, the correct master, with good sound quality and knowledgeable liner notes or booklets. If just for those reasons, for hun-dreds of thousands of customers, mostly over the age of 40, CCM's name is self-fulfilling. "I think we're unique and differ-ent," Anderson said. "The people that enter the market are basic peo-ple 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 rep copy catalogs, are often just sending out Daedalus, the literary remain-der book catalog, offer new, front-line or reissued, critically acclaimed jazz, classical, and world music. CCM offers it all, from new classic rock compilations (the Who, the Doors, Procol Harum) to the exclu-sive offerings of artists as disparate as popular '90s vocalist Tony Martin and surf/rock group Astronauts.

Coming soon are 20 new discs, in-cluding one by crooner Kenny Cono. Pro-ductive competitive. Anderson says that his import offerings are cheaper than at other outlets, mark-downs are common, and 15 pages in every catalog feature deeply dis-counted CDs for around $8.

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

Anderson says, "The front of the catalog is for the post-Elvis genera-tion; the back is for the pre-Elvis lis-tener." Hence, the company's own compi-lation of the Lovin' Spoonful's origi-nal soundtrack to "What's Up, Tiger Lily?" and "You're A Big Boy Now" is up front, while a best of the Dorsay 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 listings—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. New Media's J.J. Rosen is named president of Music Boulevard Net-work in New York. He was senior VP/GM at NZK Entertainment.

HOMr M R O I C A l G R O N ~

names Chris Gordon director of promotion, Juliet Herman manager of specialty marketing, and Sheryl Vic-tor manager of children's marketing and promotes Kerry Pedersen to director of sales—sell-through theatrical marketing. They were, respectively, director of national video promotion at Fox Home Entertainment, assist-ant brand manager at Nabisco, brand manager at Viacom Enter-prise Store, and manager of theatri-cal marketing.

EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

NEW MEDIA: J.J. Rosen is named president of Music Boulevard Net-work in New York. He was senior VP/GM at NZK Entertainment.

HOME VIDEO: Michael Burkenbine is appointed executive director of sales at Columbia TriStar Home Video in Culver City, Calif. He was marketing and information consultant at AC Neilson.

New Line Home Video in Chicago promotes Roy Million to executive director of national accounts. He was director of national accounts.

New Line Home Video in New York promotes Suzanne Blach to director of national sell-through accounts. She was manager of national sell-through accounts.

PolyGram Video in New York
BILBOARD MAY 16, 1998

Top Pop Catalog Albums™

MAY 16, 1998

(Continued from page 54)

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 spending out more for. Of those who increased their spending on video games, 16.5% were males aged 12-17, who equaled only 7.3% of the sample.

The survey says the groups with the lowest relative increases in music buying were males aged 35-44 (12.4% of the population and 9.5% of those who spent more on music) and males aged 45-54 (8.2% of the total but only 5.6% 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 females aged 25-44. Females aged 35-44 represented 12.5% of the survey and 14.6% of people who spent more on video (including pay-per-view TV) than a year earlier. Females aged 35-44 equaled 13.4% of the sample and 12.5% 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; 17.1% were spending “a lot more,” and 11.7% were buying about the same. That means nearly three of every four males in that age group said they 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, less than 12% were spending “a lot more,” and 29.4% were spending “more.” For black males, 12.2% were spending “a lot more” on music, and 35% were spending “more.” The results are even more striking for European whites. Of white females, 6.2% were spending “a lot more” on music, while 14.2% of black females were doing just that. Purists, 30.3% 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 music and other home entertainment 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 (9.6%) 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 Southeast and South Atlantic.

What radio formats do the bigger—and as stinger—as spenders listen to? In a finding that squares with the results based on race, 14.9% of those said they mostly listen to R&B radio were spending “a lot more” on music, and 36.8% of all black males 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.”

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BILBOARD MAY 16, 1998

55
Majors Ready To Deal With New Wiz Owner

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: Nobody Beats The Wiz continues to navigate 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 Poly-Gram 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 $100 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)
Dubelko says will be stepped up in the coming months. Still, some companies are not willing to get into a battle of the buck. VideoServe.com, which was launched last October as a hub for self-through 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 95% 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 a very distinct 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 fourth 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 outrank 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 does with video) and will begin offering that service shortly, he says.

Mimicking 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 any 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 owner Douglas Butdor. 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 cyber-space 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.
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RETAIL TRACK
(Continued from page 50)

$136.7 million on revenue of $1.95 billion. But after a required dividend payout, it reported a loss of $1.22 billion. Despite that loss, Cablevision is a cash cow with earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization of $801 million.

However, its balance sheet is what gives the major's credit community pause. The company's long-term debt totals $4.65 billion, of which bank and other senior debt is $2.4 billion; subordinated debt is $1.2 billion; senior notes are $900 million; and subordinated notes payable is $151 million. Last year, the company paid $303.2 million to service that debt. Total liabilities at the company are $9.05 billion, while total assets are $5.6 billion, which means that the company had a negative net worth of $450 million. And when you add in goodwill of $1.6 billion, the negative net worth totals $2.65 billion.

But large debt loads and negative net worth apparently are a way of life for high-flying cable companies, because Wall Street isn't even blinking at it; snaps up Cablevision stock. On May 4, the stock closed at $63.313, which is a lot closer to its 52-week high of $85.75 than it is to its 52-week low of $15.35.

Since the six majors are taking a more conservative approach with Cablevision, the company tried to address those concerns by offering the labels one of three options: a corporate guarantee for the Wiz's payables; Uniform Commercial Code agreements whereby the inventory, or the value of that inventory, can be reclaimed by the vendor in the event the chain files Chapter 11; and a letter of credit, which would cover 75% of the credit line that a manufacturer is willing to supply to the chain. In the Cablevision 10-K, which the company filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the company notes that it has set aside $50 million.

Tasso Koken, executive VP of Nobody Beats the Wiz, declines to comment on negotiations with the majors, other than to say that the chain has resumed doing business with five of the six majors. Koken says that the Wiz, which operates about 80 stores, has been assigned to the Madison Square Garden division of Cablevision. He says that the new management team, which includes Carl Landeck, executive VP of finance, and George Meyer, VP of music and movies, is working hard to get the chain back up to speed and that management will keep music as a main ingredient in its offering and its marketing efforts.

TO OUR READERS

Declarations of Independents will return next week.
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.
Indies Find Strength in Numbers

Adapting Bands and Cooperating With Colleagues: Coalitions Get a Bigger Say and Do Better Business

BY DON JEFFREY

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.”

WEN IT BEGAN

The seed for CIMS was planted at the National Ass’n of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) convention in San Diego in 1993, when Currier met with Gellen 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.

When we agreed to work with the Wallflowers, they were scanning a couple thousand units a week,” says VanCleave. “I was an indie-store businessman for some time, and I never had dialogue with other indies.”

There were about 15 companies that formed the core group out of that meeting.
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A s independent rock dis-

tribution has developed

over the last two de-
dcades, it has been asso-
ciated with certain genre
categories and business

A

concepts: punk rock,

lots of imprinting, non-exclusive

representation of dozens of labels and an

indie-store sales base.

However, while all of those factors

continue to play a role in the indie-rock

field, indie-rock distribution is chang-

ing. Just as traditional regional dis-

tribution has undergone a wave of con-

dsolidation and nationalization over the

last five or six years, independent rock

wholesaling has gradually begun to

take on a new face.

Even some of the newer players in

independent rock distribution seem to be

a bit more of the old rules remain in

order. For instance, the Northwest

Alliance of Independent Labels (NAIL),

founded in early 1995 in Portland,

One, and operated by the

owners of the Schizophrenic Records

label, has grown rapidly from its regu-

larly based roots. "Our retail sales last

year grew 300% over 98's retail sales," says

GM Alicia Rose.

**SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST**

While NAIL still main-

ains a healthy list of 350 labels and acts, it is both a

one-stop and a sub-

distributor. Rose says, "We just trimmed about 50

labels off from that total number, and we're going to

trim probably another 50 in the next few months." NAIL also han-

dles some 35 exclusive or semi-exclusive labels.

Rose adds that NAIL, like other indie-rock distributors, is getting increas-

ingly selective about what it handles—a must in a cli-

te in which 30,000

records are being released every year.

She says, "We get solicited by anywhere from 20 to 55 labels a week. Most of

these are just people putting out a CD, because putting out a CD is about as

hard as breathing your teeth. When it costs $1,400, plus whatever it costs to

record it, to make 1,000 CDs is easy."

Dirk van den Heuvel, VP/GM of

Cargo Records America Inc. in Chicago, notes that indie rock distributors once

tried to carry as much as they could, but now are increasing-

ly focused on exclusive labels: "One day about three years ago, we

woke up and realized that if we just kept acting

like a one-stop, we were just gonna get

killed by the small boutique distributors, who

could kill us on price, and the big distributors who had all these

big labels that people had to buy from them. That was when we started going,

'Look, a small label comes on and they've got 10 distributors, we're just

going to pick em up anymore. It's just too much work.'"

Alicia Rose, NAIL

**GENERAL GENRES**

Punk rock's move into the main-

stream during the '90s has forced a

shift in the styles of music some long-

running indie rock distributors are han-

dling. Jack Shoehy, VP of sales and market-

ing for 19-year-old Dutch East India

Trading in New York, reflects, "When I

was doing this 13 years ago, I was on

the phone selling Slayer, because none

of the majors had picked up on Slayer

yet, and those stores were able to sell it. Everybody was selling Poison and

Slaughter, but only a few stores were

selling Celtic Frost and Slayer. We're

doing the same thing all over again.

We're selling the underground product. It's all come back full circle. Our good

customers are doing it all over again, whether it be techno, black

metal, underground hardcore, underground ska, all that stuff."

Dirk van den Heuvel says, "We've seen in the last few years a real dramatic increase

in the amount of dance prod-

cut that rock stores buy. It's almost to the point where the lines have blurred so much

that, when you start thinking of the kind of archetypal records for an indie distribu-

tor, half of them are dance. The kids who, 10 years ago,

were buying new-wave rec-

ords or punk rock records—a

lot of them are buying elec-

tronic or hip-hop records.

Continued on page 80

**UK Indies Open To Major-Label Influence**

Market-By-Market Marriages And Long-term

Commitments Give Small Labels Bigger Exposure

BY PAUL SEXTON

**LONDON—What becomes a U.K. inde-

pendent most? Selling solo around the

country world? Selling the shop to a major?

Or perhaps entering marriages of conve-

nience, market by market?

In 1998 in Britain, the message is one of different strategies for
different indie labels. And, however they do their business, there's little doubt

of the health of British labels that are inde-

pendent in spirit or in constitution. The U.K.'s two best-sell-

ing albums of 1997 were released by a

label that combines domestic independence with the international marketing muscle of

Sony Music (Columbia, with the

Oasis album "Be Here Now," dis-

tributed in Britain by BMG/RCA) and a label with its own inde-

pendent structure within the framework of Virgin Records (Hut, purveyors of the

Verse's "Urban Hymns").

Further, last year's list of Britain's
top 100 singles included 18 indie

releases, a record total.

Among the indie acts on that coun-

ted down were Joe's

Backstreet Boys, Big Life's Gala and Bel-

gian DJ Sasha,

Divine Comedy

whose first three singles raced up collective sales of seven figures in the U.K. alone for the Multiply

label, owned by longtime indie compulsion-specialist company Tel-

The puzzle is that the punk/new-wave explosion and the sover-

gainty of the very word "independent" brought some stigma to the concept of major-label affiliation. If some key players from indie backgrounds are to be

believed, the British music business is now in a more pragmatic climate in which majors are welcomed wherever they can provide market utiliza-

tion that would otherwise be lost for reach for an indie.

One British label that has the best of the three worlds—inde-

pendent status at home, blanket licensing for interna-

tional release in most

markets, and act-by-

act deals for North

America—is Echo.

Home of such acts as Babyshambles and Moloko, as well as George

Martin's "fave labels" album productions "In My Life," Echo retains inde-

pendent status in the U.K., with distribution by

Parsley. It also has a series of
tional licensing deals in place, with Pony

Canyon for Japan and

Southwest Asia, Mushroom for Australia and New Zealand, and Universal for

**INDIE DISTRIBUTORS ROCK ON**

Being Selective And Staying Underground, Distributors Stay True To

Rock Roots While Adapting To Natural Evolution

BY CHRIS MORRIS
stronger since signing its label to Epic in the U.S., and the notion of "sellout" 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's kind of suits the culture. But there was a point where the headache of having other artists on your label and arguing about who was worth spending 10 pounds to send a bike across London or whether you posted it and kind of wasted time. It diversified us away from what we were doing. It was at that point getting more ambitious." Continues Noko, "In Marshall McLuhan's global village, there's no excuse for not wanting to make the biggest gesture possible and get as many people as possible. So we figured the only way we could do that was to have 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
INDIES

BILLS SPOTLIGHT

BY GEOFF MAYFIELD

Upon further review, we mistook last year when we stepped 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 CEMA, had long shared Priority’s product. But after EMI brought 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, as before, to include Priority and its distributed imprints in our independent Label chart recaps.

Aside from the Priority issue, sorting the hybrid indie labels from the majors is easier now than it was a few years ago, when a company like Time Warner-owned Tommy Boy might decide to run some of its titles through an affiliated major. However, since then, such companies have been termed “IndieMurf indies” by one attendee at last year’s NARJ (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 product was sold through independent distribution are used to determine the recaps. 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 11 issue. Most of the recaps in this spotlight are based on sales charts. Because the methodology for Hot Latin Tracks changed from detection to audience impressions during the 12-month period for each week spent on the corresponding weekly chart.

Recaps for the Hot 120 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.

What Makes An Indie An Indie

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

The Hot Latin Tracks and Billboard Latin 50 recaps are new to this year’s indie spotlight.

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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.

As a result, a handful of independently distributed titles charted in those categories during the past year.

In preparing this article, we were provided Anthony Colombo, The recaps were prepared by Colombo and Michael Cusson with assistance from Geoff Mayfield, Alex Woluk, Keith Caufield and chart managers Ricardo Companioni, Datu Faison, Steve Gaylord, Wade Jensen, Theda Sandiford-Waller and Marc Zuberkin.
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Indies

WORLD MUSIC
Continued from page 71

TOP INDIE WORLD MUSIC IMPRINTS

Pos. IMPRINT (No. Of Chrted Albums)
1 ST.CLAIR (4)
2 RETRO (1)
3 BIG BOY (1)
4 PUNAHELE (1)
5 PUTUMAYO (4)

TOP INDIE REGgae IMPRINTS

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 Reggae Gold 1997—Various Artists—VP
2 MANY MOODS OF MOSES—Beannie Man—Shocking Vibe/VP

"Reggae Gold 1997" is the No. 1 Indie Reggae Album.

3 INNA HEIGHTS—Buju Banton
4 STRICTLY THE BEST 19—Various Artists—VP
5 YARDCORE—Born Americans—Delicious Vinyl
6 BEST OF BOB MARLEY—Bob Marley
7 STRICTLY THE BEST 20—Various Artists—VP
8 FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN 2—Reggae Celebrates The Grateful Dead—Various Artists—VP
9 PASSION—Lady Saw—VP
10 RIGHT ON TIME—Hepcat—Hellos/Epiphany

TOP INDIE REGgae IMPRINTS

Pos. IMPRINT (No. Of Chrted Albums)
1 VP (10)
2 SHOCKING VIBES (1)
3 GERMAIN (1)
4 POW WOW (2)
5 DELICIOUS VINYL (1)

TOP INDIE REGgae IMPRINTS

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 LIFE IN GENERAL—MxPx—Tooth & Nail/Diamante

TOP INDIE REGgae ALBUMS

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 COME WALK WITH ME—Oleta Adams
2 Still Standing—The Williams Brothers
3 BOLD—Angie & Debbie Winans
4 ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD—Vanda Nero Butler
5 TESTIFY—Darre Peoples
6 LIVE ON THE EAST COAST—Let Every Ear Hear—The Williams Sisters
7 I'LL SEE YOU IN THE RAPTURE—Mississippi Mass Choir
8 GREATEST HITS—The Georgia Mass Choir
9 THE KING IS COMING ANY DAY!—Barn Crawford's Purpose
10 HATTIE B'S DAUGHTER—Dorothy Norwood

TOP INDIE GOSPEL IMPRINTS

Pos. IMPRINT (No. Of Chrted Albums)
1 HARMONY (5)
2 MALACO (4)
3 ATLANTA INTL (5)
4 BLACKBERRY (1)
5 ATF (1)

HARMONY

Oleta Adams: "Come Walk With Me" is the No. 1 Indie Gospel Album.

"Jock Jams Vol. 1" is the No. 1 Indie Pop Catalog Album.

TOP INDIE POP CATALOG ALBUMS

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Imprint/Label
1 Jock Jams Vol. 1—Various Artists—Tommy Boy
2 Christmas In The Air—Mannheim Steamroller—American Gramaphone
3 ME AGAINST THE WORLD—2 Pac—Interscope/Priority
4 A Fresh Air 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—Ruthless/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

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Reggae Gold 1997

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Buju Banton

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BILLBOARD SPOTLIGHT
15 CHRISTMAS TRIBUTE TO MANHEIM
STEAMROLLER - Westwind Ensemble—Brentwood
16 NUTCRACKER CHRISTMAS—Various Artists—Intersound
17 CLASSIC DISNEY VOL. 1 — 60 YEARS OF MUSICAL MAGIC—Various Artists—Walt Disney
18 IT’S CHRISTMAS TIME—Crosby/Sinatra/Cole—Laserlight
19 WHITE CHRISTMAS—Bing Crosby—Laserlight
20 MONSTER MASH—Various Artists—Holly

TOP INDIE POP Catalog IMPRINTS.

15 American Gramaphone (3)
16 Walt Disney (4)
17 Tommy Boy (1)
18 Fantasy (2)
19 Laserlight (3)
20 No Limit (2)
21 M&McArdle (1)
22 Ruthless (1)
23 BRENTWOOD (1)
24 INTERSOund (1)

TOP INDIE POP Catalog LABELS

15 American Gramaphone (3)
16 Walt Disney (4)
17 Tommy Boy (1)
18 Fantasy (2)

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Billboard Spotlight

Billboard May 16, 1998
### Top Indie Kids Audio Albums

1. Disney Children's Favorite Songs Volume I - Various Artists - Walt Disney
2. Disney's Christmas Collection - Various Artists - Walt Disney
3. Classic Disney Vol. I: 60 Years of Musical Magic - Various Artists - 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 II - Various Artists - Walt Disney
10. Winnie the Pooh: Take My Hand Songs From the Hundred 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

### Top Indie Kids Audio Imprints

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

1. Vivir - Enrique Iglesias - Fonovisa
2. Zephyr de Jefes - Los Tigres del Norte - Fonovisa
3. Marloth - Marco Antonio Solis - Fonovisa
4. Así Como Tu - Los Tigres del Norte - Fonovisa
5. La Ultima Huella - Bronco - Fonovisa
6. Enrique Iglesias - Fonovisa
7. Como Te Recuerdo - Los Temerarios - Fonovisa
8. Recuerdo Especial - Michael Salgado - Sony
10. El Latin Mix '97 - Various Artists - Beast/Similar

### Top Indie Billboard Latin Imprints

1. Fonovisa (32)
2. Fofo (3)
3. Beyl (1)
4. LUNA (1)
5. Astor Place (1)

### Top Indie Hot Latin Tracks

1. Solo En Ti - Enrique Iglesias - Fonovisa
2. Debeseradamente Enamorado - Jaro - Fonovisa
3. Ya Me Voy Para Siempre - Los Temerarios - Fonovisa
4. La Venia Bendita - Marco Antonio Solis - Fonovisa
5. Miente - Enrique Iglesias - Fonovisa

### Top Indie Hot Latin Imprints

1. Fonovisa (9)
2. LUNA (5)
3. CAIMAN (4)
4. EMD (1)
5. TROPIK (2)

### ENRIQUE IGLESIAS:

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- "Solo En Ti" is the No. 1 Indie Latin Track.

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an era where eyewitness-tinged programs such as the KROQ Portland Ore.'s legal TV pay-to-play program and Capitol Nashville's "pay-to-say" initiative keep gathering headlines, it seems that the gap between indie labels and big-hitters 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 undertow. "It's like turning your head into a wall." Still, few express sympathy and instead talk about loopholes and alternative courses of action.

In 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 Wawazat! are making headway at mainstream rock with their acts, Van Zant and DJR Band.

KLRQ Kansas City's, PD Steve Stevens mentions here's such as TVT Records and

Rear & Tie as models of credibility and excellence and alludes in the

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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 Razo & Tie national director of radio promotions Liz Ochoa, 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 Myer says that his label has found success with turnkey promotions for its veteran rock and jazz artists. "Live concerts and giveaways launched during artist visits are pivotal," he says, for engaging programmers.

"All the formats are overcrowded and fairly tight," says Myer. "Sure, if you're in the game you can get at [programmers], but we go in with value-added promotions and other things that help the stations look good in the market. Instead of just coming in and saying, 'Play our record,' we have something running. Those things are important to doing, especially as an independent."

Meeting with Myer's suggestion that labels use a selective targeting approach, Dean Corinates, PD at country station WASP-FM in Pittsburgh, Penn., says indies would do well to limit their releases and spend more time and money on each project. Even then, he says, Indies are at a disadvantage.

"It's tough, and here's how [indies] can beat the game: have better music," says Corinates. "If you're going to put Phil West on Comstock Records up against Shemt Austin on Arista, Phil West better be 10 times better than Shemt. It better be something spectacular."

Some indies, however, view airplay as a non-entirely-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 Leeve, president/founder of electronic label Moonshine. One such act is Robik, 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 is a different marketing value for us than it does for a larger label," says Jeff Marlow, owner of the Epitaph-distributed Crank! "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 to each 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 Whistler, who does radio promotions for punk/indie label Sneak Records, say that, while commercial radio is welcome, it bores 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 Whistler. "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 Snarck's promotions that helped generate interest for his label's Juggins was a teaser campaign for "The Winter Song" single. The promotion, which cost the label a fraction of what most majors spend on postage, included a deputy's gift certificate in the mailing of the single, which focused on 40 key stations.

Even 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 to key commercial stations.

One of the way Sherman Oaks, Calif.-based, multi-genre label Ark 21 has revealed its radio-promotions strategy to build around such as singer-songwriter Maia Sharp is by focusing on major-market non-commercial stations, such as KDIR Los Angeles, WNPN Philadelphia and WPLJ in New York.

"Indie is an attitude and lifestyle," says Karen Lee, Ark 21 VP of promotions. "It doesn't mean you're always right, but it doesn't 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 and we’ve got this business plan.

SINE OF THE TIMES

If Apollo 4 Forty-four’s marriage of indie creatives and major-label muscle sounds almost accidental, another part of the Sony empire has been highly businesslike in embracing either leading off-line 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 Independents, Ignition, Shiny Loaded, Lakota and, for several years, Scanimation. European labels represented by SINE are Double T and Yo Mama. These indices, all adept at achieving hits on their own terms in their home markets, thus return local autonomy while tapping into Sony’s international marketing wherewithal.

The strong tendency for cutting-edge dance labels to accept major back-up outside their home territory was underlined in February, when Julian Palma, long recognized as a leading light of U.K. Metal for his work at Island with Musique, Sterling and others, signed a partnership agreement with SINE for his new label, Volcano. British singer Samiessa is the start-up imprint’s first signing, and announcements of other acquisitions were being anticipated at press time.

Scanimation’s roster of 10 acts includes U.K. modern-rock veterans Edwin Coil and Guy Chadwick, as well as British chart regulars the Divine Comed-}

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Still Skanking

Indies Still Skanking

Major Jumps 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 echelon of The Billboard 200, tracks like "Sell Out" or "Doberman" 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 stickin' to the beat throughout 1998.

"Alternative rock and grunge made a big statement and made stature popular; but things got too heavy," says Paul Burgess, VP of marketing for TVT Records, home of Rock-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 retro/ ska/rock mixture since its beginning in '80s Jamaica. Companies like Moon Ska, HeartBeat, Beloved Entertainment and Triple Crown churn out ska albums and compilations every month, as opposed to the sake one-band-per-label theories of majors like Capitol, MCA, Epic or Mercury.

 ska into waves. "I don't understand all this talk about a third wave, because ska never left," says King Django, owner of SkaTown records and member of New York City's Subtones 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 Car Capnigilo, president of Qoqo Entertainment, which released "Take Warning: Songs Of Operation Ivy" and is working with Blockbuster on an exclusive ska compilation called "Suburban," Indies are usually ahead of the major game when it comes to supporting upstart talent.

"Indies are willing to take a few risks and promote what they believe in, as opposed to pushing just what will sell," Capnigilo 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 is so much out there to listen to. People from coast to coast are experimenting with other music and ska."

They all look forward 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, with an epicenter in New York City, which is exemplified by bands like The Slackers, the Alstonians, the Skafflaw and the Toasters."

"We sell a lot more of the deep-rooted..."
Jersey—based newcomers drinking it’s about and Mighty enough and ska Gurewitz

“Billboard Skacore...” There That general, there aren’t exceptions to the rule, but in general, the East’s hands 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 7. “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 sold-out clubs and selling up grungy trade like “The Impressions That I Get” and “Someday I Suppose” for more than a decade from Boston. Capitol Records’ newcomers Less Than Jake (LTJ) turned Gainesville, Fla., 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’re 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 ska swing, 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 Ryloside in July) and Skavonnie & the Epitones.

Other ska projects can be linked to religion. Christian bands like The Insiders and Sarathel’s Five from 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 willingly.” 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 Aquahats, a self-described “crack unit of doritos” from Aquabath 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 & Rude” next fall with new ska acts and old ska legends performing 70s soul covers.

“We try to stay in tune with the young, hip community to reach and educate 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 upshoot, insiders whisper about the inevitable backlash and fall from fashion.

This is the first time the mighty merchandising 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 cats follow, everything gets promoted to death until people move on to the next big thing,” says Rob Hingles, member of the Toxants and owner of Moon Ska. “The lucky thing is that it isn’t an industry-created trend. The majors may drop out, but the indie’s 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.”
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**“We get solicited from anywhere from 20 to 99 labels a week. Most of these are just people putting out a CD, because putting out a CD is about as hard as brushing your teeth.”**

- Jack Sheehy, Dutch East India Trading

significant amount here at all, it's done on an exclusive basis. Because of that exclusivity, we're able to either get a return allowance or offer them at a price that's a little closer to domestic.

- Van den Heuvel says, "The only imported titles that we offer to big accounts are returnable are labels that we have return rights on. So our exposure is pretty controlled. We don't sell anything as returnable that we can't in turn return to our vendor."

**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.

- "I love indie stores," Van den Heuvel says. "I think indie stores are going to be here for a long time. But they could be less and less of the number. I mean we all have our ways of doing business. You're going to see some retailers go into some of the cooler labels, and the towers, the record accounts like Newbury or things like that. Otherwise, you're never gonna get to those numbers."

- Sheehy says, "Independent stores are huge for us, and then there's the mid-sized-to-small chains, your Streetsides and Exclusives and Virgins, those are key for us."

- Rose says, "I was looking at a Borders order this morning, and the stuff that they're ordering is nothing like what I would expect a Borders to be stocking. They're getting tons of stuff that I think is great—really cool records, experimental jazz records, some strange avant garde records, some punk records. They take more chances, almost, than an indie store."

- Still, many would probably also agree with the old-school note struck by Ashby: "I think smaller retailers have shown that it's like what Robert Cray said to call small, mobile and intelligent operations. They can react quicker; they can do returns quicker; they can pay for this stuff as they see it going out the door. There's a lot to be said for centralized buying, but there's a lot to be said for decentralized buying as well."
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Continued from page 60

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 promotion, other internal displays and mandatory in-store play.

For the exposure, labels pay each store $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 Fingertips store and a LINCS organizer. CIMS 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 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 Ingleside, Calif.

It was SoundScan that brought the urban retailers together. At the time, when the Billboard charts were being changed to reflect actual sales at stores. Daniels says RB retail stores 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 more at obtaining dollars for developing artists, as CIMS 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 do the labels try to get in? We're hoping to add it and include these stores in some of our promotions."

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.

The Coalition of Independent Music Stores (CIMS)

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Tenacious Records

In the Los Angeles area, several stores have banded into the Local Independent Network of Cool Stores (LINCS), although remaining within the larger coalition.
BIRTHS
Girl, Erin Shea, to Ginny Shea and Matthew McCormick, April 4 in Providence, R.I. Mother is owner of publicity/promotion company Mixix Media.


Girl, Claire Boone, to Kay and Kyf Brewer, April 27 in Bucks County, Pa. Mother is a former staffer in the marketing division at Mercury Records. Father is an entertainers' music group recording artist and does voice-over work for VH1.

Girl, Miranda Erin, to Lisa Brauns- toms in Gimsburg 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 Epiphany 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.

MELODIC MIRACLE: Smash Mouth, the Posies, Gary Busey, John Taylor Terrorist, and John Eastdale Group will donate their talents to Miricle 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: Mar- cee Rondan at 818-380-0400 or Janet Newcomb at 760-361-1844.

ROCK FOR A REASON: The grand finale of a seven-city unsigned band competition, RockK’n Mania, will be held Thursday (14) at New York’s Wetlands. The show—sponsored by HMV, Prime CD, ASCAP, BMI, Nationwide Insurance, Ibanez/I- banez/Laney, AT&T, JAMtv, and UBL—benefits Juvenile Diabetes. Contact: Richard R. Vel at 914-791- 2011 or Kyle Oler at 212-263-6268.

BY THE BOOKS: Pearl Jam matched the $75,000 raised by the Alliance for Education for the Stanford Fund 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.

ACADEMY AWARD WINNERS
Maryann Sheehan and Marianna Aver, to Marilyn and James Sheehan, May 16th in Chicago. Sheehan was named Associate Director, Marketing, New York City, 305-296-1552. Sheehan was formerly with Universal Records, New York City. 212-258-8030.

Another CD, “MusicMakers: Assistance Program,” was presented to Suzanne Montgomery, director of the MusicMakers Program, by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, at the 1998 NAB Show, April 27-30, Las Vegas, Nev. The CD features music by 14 unsigned bands from around the country, including one from the Chicago area.

MAY
May 9, Eurovision Song Contest, National Indoor Arena, Birmingham, England. 44-1-817-566- 0557.
May 15-17, Key West Songwriters Festival, Key West, FL. 305-296-1552.
May 18-19, European Audio Engineer- ing Society Exhibition, RIAA Exhibition Center, Ams-terdam. 41-18-975-8219.
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 City. 212-245-9000.
May 22-25, Northwest Folkfest, Festival, Seat- tle Center, Seattle. 206-584-7327.

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 catalogs of the Brothers Johnson, Michael Been, Siedah Garrett, Ivan Lins, Marc Kinchen, and Glenn 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-
PolyGram Takes Swing At Baseball
Scamardo To Utilize Part Of NFL Playbook For MLB Titles

BY SETH GOLDSTEIN
NEW YORK—Sal Scamardo is a two-sport executive. Now senior director of specialty programming for New York-based PolyGram Video, Scamardo began by toting the pigskin for the NFL label. Thanks to PolyGram's deal-making prowess, he's since started pitching for Major League Baseball (MLB).

It was a significant lineup change for MLB, which had been a fixture on the Orion Home Video roster. Orion, distributed by MGM Home Entertainment, worked the line hard, but with limited success, Scamardo says.

During the PolyGram negotiations, MLB executives were "very candid," he recalls. "The World Series did well. Everything else fell flat." PolyGram, which Scamardo says pursued MLB "aggressively," expects to make it a front-runner, based on the supplier's experience with the NFL. Seven years ago, pro football limped along with a 7% slice of the sports video pie.

Under PolyGram's tutelage, that share has jumped to 25%, according to Scamardo, quoting VideoScan's point-of-sale reports. The NBA, even with Michael Jordan, is second at 18%. Baseball's a distant third, stuck where the NFL was in 1991.

However, Scamardo anticipates a quick turnaround. MLB could jump to 15% in the first year, giving PolyGram 40% of the pro sports business, worth several million tapes, he predicts. "From the reaction of the marketplace, I think it's an achievable objective. We're in a good spot."

Nevertheless, Scamardo admits that "it's more difficult to wow retailers," many of whom are re-signing special-interest shelf space to movies. Different outlets are needed as well. "Our challenge is to better exploit the grocery channel," he adds. As part of the new approach, PolyGram is de-empha-

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 marketing this year.

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 supermarkets. 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 overnight during the broadcast of its "Merlin" miniseries and sold 100,000 cassette tapes.

The direct-response response was sufficient to draw the attention of The New York Times, which gave it front-page coverage. Thereupon, Walt Disney television 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 cable networks started grabbing 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 Sale auction, to be held 6-10 p.m. May 19 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. Galerie Michael in Beverly Hills is assembling the auction, which includes works by Cezanne, Manet, and Rembrandt. Admission is a $50 donation.

DVDINGS: MGM Home Entertainment bonded with "Tomorrow Never Dies," shipping 170,000 copies of the latest 007 caper. Record stores should get 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 signage 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 "Conspiracy Theory," "Gumming's White Tiger," and "Wheels, Heels, And Hot Licks."

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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 channels 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 bluffs from recent film clips.

Follow a lead from A&E Home Video, BMG will try to tie in Discovery product to event movies opening this summer, such as TriStar Pictures' "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 "Rise Of The Predators," to coincide with the release of "Godzilla" over Memorial Day weekend.

The June 2 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 airdate. As an example, "The Egyptian Giants II" will be in stores May 18 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 "Bolshoi's Swan Lake" and "The Kirov Ballet's Nutcracker" have shipped more than 400,000 and 250,000 tapes, respectively. In addition, "John Cleese's How To Irritate People" and the "Ernie 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 balk ing at the $34.95 price point. The set is also available in three packs priced at $39.95 each or single tapes at $24.95.

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 Evel Knievel 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 increase by 4% to 6% 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 set ups.

Specialized sales staff are on hand to demonstrate the equipment and to help customers design their own home theaters and 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.

by Eileen Fitzpatrick
Yes, when it comes to building your video sales to new heights!

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BMG Video is proud to announce a new distribution agreement with the Discovery Channel and TLC. Call your distributor about our exciting May/June 1998 releases and make sales history today!

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"Little Men" To Get A Large Video Push

by Moira McCormick

Child's Play previewed "Little Men," produced by Los Angeles Family Entertainment, 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 marrying her professor, sweetheart, Fritzy Bher, 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 Mariam 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 we would play just as well on the big screen." Warner Bros. is so enthusiastic that "we're positioning it as the lead title of our 75th-anniversary third-quarter promotion," he adds.

The clamshell package includes a Warner Bros. 75th-anniversary savings book that contains $15 worth of coupons for merchandise, theme parks, music products, pop music, 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 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 our 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.

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"Little Men" is also among the best family movies of the year, particularly by 14-year-old Ben Cook as the troubled orphan Jack.
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 turned a pretax profit of approximately £100,000.

The company has a library of 300 programs either acquired from licensors or produced by the label itself. In addition to the traditional wholesaler 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 main 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 Foundation 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 foothold.

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.”

PolyGram Takes Swing at Baseball

(Continued from page 82)

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 NPL 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-titie 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. “A.C.C.E.S.S.”, which specializes in offering free issues of the magazine and a reduced subscription rate to consumers who buy any baseball or football video this year.

PolyGram’s television division has already signed a deal with South Beach Sports Entertainment, which plans to produce a series of shows that will be released as VHS and for broadcast on cable networks. The shows will be based on the university sports programs at several prominent colleges and universities throughout the country.

Child’s Play

(Continued from preceding page)

The company has started a new line of children’s videos that will be distributed to big-box chains and other mass distributors. The line will include titles such as “Dickinson County,” “The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron,” and “The Wild Thornberrys.”

The company is also looking to expand its line of children’s videos to include more family-oriented programming. This includes a series of videos based on the Disney Channel show “The Magic School Bus” and a series of videos based on the Nickelodeon show “The Backyardigans.”

Meanwhile, the company is working on a series of videos based on the popular children’s book “The Berenstain Bears.” This series will be produced in conjunction with the publishing arm of the company, which will also be releasing a line of books based on the show.

The company is also looking to expand its line of videos for children with the release of a series of videos based on the popular children’s book “The Berenstain Bears.” This series will be produced in conjunction with the publishing arm of the company, which will also be releasing a line of books based on the show.
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nab urges fcc to drop microradio plan

by bill holland
washington—the national association of broadcasters (nab), in april 27 testimony to the federal communication commission (fcc), said it would be “foolish” for the commission to establish a new, lowpower “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 hundreds of microradio stations between 1 and 10 watts that could fulfill community needs and promote diversity.

the fcc, however, continues to crack down on so-called pirate broadcasters, 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 microwatt stations that would only increase the problem.”

besides citing possible interference, the nab comments pointed out that the fcc wouldn’t have adequate resources to monitor such small stations and added that the commission shouldn’t create a new service “in order to curb the proliferation of illegal pirate stations.”

the nab filing added that microradio “will create small islands of usable coverage in an ocean of interference.”

live christian-music show slated for summer bow

by deborah evans price
nashville—rennaissance communications, the dupree co., and the lamb’s church in new york are joining forces for “live from the lamb’s,” a weekly two-hour nationally 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 feature top contemporary christian music artists performing live “unplugged” concerts in the 350-seat venue.

thomas nelson publishers will be the program’s title sponsor.

airing sunday evenings from 5:7 p.m. edt, the show will be carried on morningstar radio network’s 125 affiliates and other christian outlets.

the show’s title 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 wwdj 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 1990. “the list goes on and on, and they all have fond memories of the kind of venue it is.”

dupree thinks a christian music show like this will fare well in the big apple. “there are wonderful church communities in new york that would embrace this type of venture, and there are a couple of retail stores that are thriving that sell christian materials and music.”

(continued on next page)

chancellor forms new marketing group

chancellor media corp. has formed a new division, chancellor marketing group, to enhance the revenue it derives from sales promotions activities.

the new division, which will spearhead chancellor’s marketing effort, comes from the company’s purchase of global sales development, a richmond, va.-based consulting firm.

global president/founder alison glander is named president of the new chancellor marketing group and senior vp of chancellor media. chancellor coo jim de castro

comments that the acquisition demonstrates the company’s “commitment 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

DE CASTRO REBUFFS PAY-FOR-PLAY CONTRACTS. chancellor media coo jim de castro has rebutted a report by equity researcher bear, stearns & co. that claims the company had already written $25 million in pay-for-play contracts (billboard, may 9). the report was based on an interview with tom hicks, but de castro says that while “we are in the process of working with the record companies” on attempts to increase label revenue in a way that “will be win/win for everyone,” no such pay-for-play deals have been written.

CHANCELLOR NAMES NEW PREZ. jeff marcus has been named president/CEO of chancellor media corp., following the recent resignation of scott ginsburg. marcus joins the company with little radio background. he was most recently chairman of marcus cable, the nation’s largest privately held cable TV company. that résumé is in line with tom hicks’ vision to expand chancellor from its radio base into other media. marcus has been on chancellor broadcasting’s board since 1996.

ARBITRONS TO SURVEY PUERTO RICO. arbitron has announced it will measure puerto rico as a market twice a year. the island becomes market No. 11. the first book to report puerto rico’s ratings will be summer ’98; the commonwealth will thereafter receiving ratings twice a year for fall and spring books only. this move bumps miami to market No. 12, with all subsequent markets moving down a notch. in other arbitron news, the company has purchased the radio station, advertiser/agency, and international assets of tapscan, which develops software for broadcasters, agencies, and advertisers.

Sun, fun, and vonda. those guys at KKLQ (Q106) San Diego have it all. here, they show off their latest acquisition, newly signed 550 Music artist vonda shepard, whose theme from Fox Television’s “ally mcbeal,” “sevin’ my soul,” is an out-of-the-box smash hit top 40, ac, and adult top 40 radio. pictured, from left, are music director “doctor” doug dodds, shepard, and kevin curtis of sony 550.

Newsline...

DE CASTRO REBUFFS PAY-FOR-PLAY CONTRACTS. Chancellor Media COO Jim de Castro has rebutted a report by equity researcher Bear, Stearns & Co. that claims the company had already written $25 million in pay-for-play contracts (Billboard, May 9). The report was based on an interview with Tom Hicks, but de Castro says that while “we are in the process of working with the record companies” on attempts to increase label revenue in a way that “will be win/win for everyone,” no such pay-for-play deals have been written.

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## Winter '98 Arbitrons

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**Notes:**
- The table above lists the Arbitron Arbitron Ratings market share for the week ending May 16, 1998.
Fugueole Sittai, 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-intellectuals.

"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 without realizing 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 hipocrite.

"We explain it as a rant against consumption and the media. But that's a little bit self-indulgent, since the music industry is all about consumption, and that's how we pay the bills. Not to mention I've used 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 A. Lin, drummer Evan Sull, and bassist Aaron Huffman actually ran in the opposite direction from fame. "We aren't self-promoters," he suggests. "We don't want to be. 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 confident with our music so as to create simple meaningful pop songs that literarily arrived.

Luckily, KNDD (the End) Seattle championed the song, and Sushi/London picked up the band's album "Where Have All The Merchymakers 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."
For Chicago, The Life Of A Working Band Remains A Hard Habit To Break

by Chuck Taylor

CHICAGO

On the surface, Christmas albums can be a bit of 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 a 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 retroactive offered 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 Parazsider. “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 1967-1998 Volume II” are such nuggets as “Feelin’ Stranger Every Day,” “Love Me Tomorrow,” “Odd Days,” “Tell Me The Truth,” and “Don’t Wanna Live Without Your Love.” The first single, “All Roads Lead To You,” was first presented in demo form, produced Hittin’ and the band started building the rhythm section, then added horns. (The band members refer to this as being “Chicago-ize.”)

“It was built, the song just came alive,” says Parazsider. “We listened to it with vocals, the rhythm section, and horns, it came out not as much jazzily as it did having an edge on 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.”

This band will back the album with a 33-date summer shell tour with Hall & Oates, beginning June 17. Both acts agree that the pairing is an appropriate match. Says Parazsider, “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 would be, “We share a certain musical outlook. They’re pretty soulful people. They come from a different region, but it’s the same kind of vibe.”

In the meantime, the guys are in the studio recording the Christmas album for holiday release. “Thirty years ago,” says Parazsider, “we said that a Christmas album would be something that’s a legacy, something that could return every year.”

“I 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 from the “The Little Drummer Boy,” “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful,” “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town,” and the like, the album, produced by Hittin’, will contain one original song, “Chicago Christmas,” says Parazsider.

The band members are Lee Loughnane and John Dullaj.

We looked at a lot of other Christmas albums over the last few 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 Chicago, the band intends to re-enter the studio in October to begin recording its next studio album.

“Ahh, we’ve got quite a bit to chew on most of the year,” admits Parazsider. “‘We just finished ‘Ain’t No Sunshine’ on the record. That one was really good.”

The band members refer to this as being “Chicago-ize.”

“Yeah, we’ve got quite a bit to chew on most of the year,” admits Parazsider. “‘We just finished ‘Ain’t No Sunshine’ on the record. That one was really good.”

BOWEN’S TOP 40 SAVVY TAKES STAR 94’S RATING SKYWARD

I’m NOT SURE anybody 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 1.5 share—a fairly respectable 12-plus number, given today’s post-Telecom climate. Fast forward to April 1998, then the really good news delivered: WSTR’s 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-winter Arbitron.

With that, Star 94 has become the market’s No. 1-ranked music station, says Bowen.

To most industry observers, Star 94, with adhering to the “top 40 for the market” thesis, nearly never fit the rhythmically accelerated mass-appeal top 40 template. On paper, some said, the station should be slamming near AC. “One has to have that kind of America that has been proved not to work here time and again when music from that rhythmic side,” 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 WAPM) Power 99 would still be here.”

“We’re very disciplined about the types of records that fit our sound, which really only translates into top 40 for Atlanta,” adds Bowen, who works with Jefferson-Pilot VP of programming 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 a 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 WKQS Denver, which had just finished the transition from mainstream Mix 107.5 to rhythmic KZ 107.5. “When I first met Dan, ‘Don’t f–k with my format, tell me,’” Bowen says. “Don assured me that KS 107.5 needed a solid thinker and a marketing machine. 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 Peterson had exited Star 94, and Bowen came calling on Bowen’s 12 years of station experience as WNCI’s assistant PD, music director, and promotions director.

“The philosophies and marketing were already in place,” Bowen says. “It just came out of the music. We know our strengths.”

Those include an already successful relationship with a station with a powerful sales staff. “I wanted to be able to enhance that heritage without stepping on it,” Bowen says. “We just took the stations that we’ve put all elements to the test, just to make sure everything was as good as we thought it should be. Over time, we’ve added to 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. It has to be done on a regular basis, because over time we’ve added this and this and this, and we want to make sure it’s all valuable.”

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 when in crises, but he never sets any mandates for Star.”

VPGM Mark Kanos has been at the station for 30 years. Operations manager/director of marketing Alan Hennes is an eight-year-station veteran. And music director Ammons “has developed a very keen programming sense, but at his own pace,” says Bowen.

So, what about the conventional wisdom that those 35-somethingers 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

BILBOARD MAY 16, 1998

94
**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 (which are still unnamed) 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 hip-hop. BET Sound will also include BET on Jazz. The launch date for BET Sound has not yet been determined, but it is expected to be sometime during the current year, according to BET.

BET National VP of Advertising Marketing, Lee Chaffin 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 performance footage. “But that may evolve,” adds Chaffin. “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, Chaffin says, “We believe all of these channels can fit into the marketplace.” He also notes that even though world music and gospel audiences may be marginal 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 observed that there just isn’t enough room for BET and other national networks to play all the hip-hop and rap videos out there. “This spinoff channel plan is great thing for urban music.”

Mark Weinstein, president of independent video promotion company F’N R 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.”

**VIH! STORYTELLERS’ NEWS:** Rod Stewart rocked New York’s Supper Club for a recent VH1 “Storytellers” taping. Some of the best moments, when the audience spontaneously joined him onstage, Stewart, who was confident and jovial throughout the show, performed songs such as “Rocks,” “Cigarettes And Alcohol,” and “Ooh 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 “Have I Told You Lately.”

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 20), and Bonnie Raitt (July 12).

**BET PLANS ROLL OUT OF 4 SPINOFF CHANNELS; ROD STEWART ON VIH!**

**IN OTHER NEWS:**


- BET plans rollout of 4 spinoff channels; Rod Stewart on VH1...
both view “Heavy Love” as perhaps the musician’s most important album since his 1991 Silvertone bow, “Damn Right I’ve Got The Blues,” which re- ceived the 1991 Billboard Century Award as the nonparole blues guitarist of his Chicago-bred generation.

Michael Teledeschi, 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 Buddy 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 nine years, you only see it continuing to grow, and hopefully this year, this record, this round of touring, are going to increase that audience even more.”

To be sure, straight-up blues remains prominent on the album, in such performances as the burning “Hard Times,” a crisp re-ar- ranged cover of the Muddy Waters classic “I Just Want To Make Love To You,” the stellarc acoustic “Did Someone Make A Fool Outta You,” and the out-turned homage to Jimmy Reed, “Let Me Show You.”

R&B LEANINGS

But Guy also bows R&B territor- ies, with the funked-up “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 be open 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 don’t see that on any of your radio stations in that genre programming blues.”

The R&B flavor of “Heavy Love” is even more pronounced in the presence of ex-Booker T. & the MG’s guitarist Steve Cropper, who joins the basic lineup of guitarist Jack Holder, bassist David M. Smith, drummer Richie Hall (Little Feat), 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 around $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 RMG Digital Entertainment company I Launch," says Waitt. "I'd love for him to be involved." There also has been speculation that the two might chase 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.

For Blackwell, combining the music and film companies under the Palm umbrella only made sense, as he sees DVD as the carri¬er of the future. "Several years ago, I wondered why Palm wasn’t promoted more, and I was told it was because it would have such a short life span, because soon they would be able to be played on (insert TV) 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 format for original material."

“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 is 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 Senegalese-Ghanaian Baaba Maa, both of which will come in the U.S. July 14 and in Europe July 20. A week later for the 97 are Sly & Robbie’s "Doom & Bass Strip To The Bone" and a soundtrack to "Six-String Samurai," which Palm acquired at Slam Dance, the edgy alternative festival that runs concurrent with the Sundance Film Festival. It will arrive in theaters in September, distributed by Manga.

In keeping with Palm's release policies, Palm will release, through Manga, "The Basketball Diaries" and "Mandela: Son Of Africa, Father Of A Nation." Gleich says Mango will also release on DVD the jumapimation films "Ghost In The Shell" and "Ninja Scroll," the latter of which has already sold 275,000 videos in the U.S.

In terms of developing movies, Burg says, Palm's goal "is to find new, young filmmakers to make smaller, more unique movies, the earlier films, we would self-distribute (through Manga). We hope to stay in business with them as they develop," says Blackwell.

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 ‘Diamond 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 3,800 copyrights. The 33-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 will not reveal the licensees.

With all of Blackwell’s companies under one umbrella, Blue Mountain chairman Alistair Norbury says his goal is to integrate his division with the other entities. For example, developing artist Marlena was signed to Blue Mountain more than a year before she was signed to Palm Pictures.

Blue Mountain’s administration deal with PolyGram Music is up in June, 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. "They’ve got an excellent job with the publishing.”

Regardless of the company that Blue Mountain aligns itself with, the promise will be to increase its U.S. presence, says Norbury. "We’re thinking about having a dedicated Blue Mountain person work at the sub-publish¬ing company, working out of Palm in New York, so he can get more active in the U.S., more in the covers market and more in the synchrono¬nization market."

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Reissue Of Marley Box Is Being Planned


The four-CD set, one of the top-selling albums in reggae history, was issued as a limited edition of 1 million copies six years ago. Since those units sold, the collection has become a highly sought item among marley collectors.

Island is awaiting final approval from the Marley family and Bob Marley Music, an Islandlfe company, before setting a release date, although the set is expected to come out by the end of the year.

"Bob Marley is one of the few artists who is continuously redisco¬vered by new generations. To do a limited edition that ran out of stock within a year worldwide was not enough to meet the demand for subsequent generations," says Hoeman Majd, senior execu¬tive at Islandlife. "When Island put out a million of the initial boxed set, they thought it would meet a demand, as the while thinking there might be a time in the future when we’d need to readress it."

The 77-song set, originally released in a display box (packaging the size of a longbox that opens like a book) will be released as a double jewel box or a slipcase and will contain the same liner notes. It will not be a limited edition.

While no plans are firm, Island and Islandlife are looking at poten¬tial promotions to push the set. According to Islandlife representa¬tives, one idea would be to hold a drawing for boxed set holders—the initial sets were numbered—through a mainstream outlet such as MTV. The prize has yet to be determined.

Island chairman David Siger¬son declined to comment on the project.

MELINDA NEWMAN
The document contains a variety of text, including news articles and features. The key points include:

- An interview with industry leaders discussing the impact of piracy and the strategies to combat it.
- Discussion of the budget and its implications for the industry.
- References to conferences and events, such as the IFPI Meeting to Focus on Budget, New Leader.
- Mentions of specific individuals and companies, including Roger Berman and the RIAA.

The text appears to be a mix of interviews, industry analyses, and discussions on the state of the music industry.
IT’S CLOSE: If the race to top the Hot 100 were a NASCAR event, you’d need instant replay to determine the winner this issue. At No. 1, Next’s “This Is How We Do” (Arista) manages to hold off the advance of No. 2 title Mariah Carey’s “My All” (Columbia). The difference between No. 1 and No. 2 is a mere 576 chart points, which factors into 57,600 audience impressions or 5,760 SoundScan points.

Carey does, however, top Hot 100 Singles Sales with 160,000 units vs. Next’s 140,000 units. “Too Close” has 42 million audience impressions from airplay at 92 top monitored stations, while “My All” has an audience of 25 million from airplay at 175 stations. Incidentally, with five weeks logged atop the singles chart, “Too Close” is the longest-running No. 1 of the current chart year. There have been eight No. 1 singles so far, compared with four No. 1’s by this time last year and three No. 1’s by this time in 1996.

ON AIR: 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-improved songs on Hot 100 Airplay are Sparkle’s “Be Careful” (Rock Land/Interscope) and Natasha Bedingfield’s “Unwritten” (Elektra/EEG). “Be Careful” is the first song from R. Kelly’s co-venture with Interscope/Rock Land Records, posts a 67% improvement to leap 68 to Hot 100 on Airplay.

Sparkle has 178 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 “dearlyus,” leaps 75-81 due to a 69% increase in audience impressions. The song has 16 million impressions from airplay at 147 stations. The song is considered 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 Get 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 Get Lonely” would have been mandated to bow No. 1 spot 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 premiere debut at No. 37 on Hot R&B Singles Sales and at No. 6 on Hot R&B Singles. After a full week of scans, “I Get Lonely” ought 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.

Bubbling Under Hot 100

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### TITANIC” HITS 10 MILLION MARK IN APRIL RIAA CERTIFICATIONS

(Continued from page 10)

Sam (Epici), and Jac Velasquez (Word).
A complete list of the RIAA sales awards follows.
MULTIPLATNUM AWARDS
Various artists, “Great Ball Era,” Reader’s Digest Music, 9 million.
Various artists, “Raitt, Luck Of The Draw” Capital, 7 million.
Bonnie Raitt, “Nick Of Time” Capital, 5 million.
Natalie Merchant, “Tigerman,” Elektra, 4 million.
Various artists, “Great Original Hits Of The ‘70s & ‘80s,” Reader’s Digest Music, 3 million.
Yes, “90215,” West, 3 million.
Marilyn Manson, “The Love,” Reader’s Digest Music, 2 million.
Ring Crosby, “Sings Ring’s,” Reader’s Digest Music, 2 million.
Various artists, “Then Sings My Soul,” Reader’s Digest Music, 2 million.
Various artists, “Till The End Of Time,” Reader’s Digest Music, 1 million.
Various artists, “Quiet Music For Quiet Listening,” Reader’s Digest Music, 1 million.
Various artists, “Bing Crosby, Bing Sings,” Reader’s Digest Music, 1 million.
Various artists, “Celtic Harp,” Reader’s Digest Music, 1 million.
Gold albums
Willie Rose, “Row To The Grind,” Atlantic, 2 million.
Platinum albums
Willie Rose, “Row To The Grind,” Atlantic, 2 million.

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### LUTHER ALLISON HONORED AT HANDY AWARDS

(Continued from page 10)

year-old Delta blues luminary David “Honeyboy” Edwards and a climactic duet that paired Ronnie Baitt and Memphis R&B legend Rufus Thomas. Port Smith, Ark.-based soul luminary Chuck Cameron, alumni of the foundation’s International Blues Talent Competition, was also showcased during the ceremony.

Other 1998 Handy Award winners included the following:

Contemporary blues female artist of the year: Marcia Ball.
Soul/blues male artist of the year: Little Milton.

Traditional blues female artist of the year: Rory Block.
Blues instrumentalist/rocker: John Lee Hooker.
Acoustic blues album of the year: “Fish ‘n’ Chip,” Randy Brown.
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**The Top-Selling Albums Compiled from a National Sample of Retail Store and Rack Sales Reports Collected, Compiled, and Provided by Billboard.**
The next revolution is taking place in music marketing. To learn more, call 203-323-7382.
## Billboard 200 Chart - May 16, 1998

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### Top Albums (Listed by Artists)

#### 1. Fiona Apple - "Songs About Jane"
- **Peak Position:** 1
- **Release Date:** July 1, 1997
- **Label:** Columbia
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 2. Erykah Badu - "702 Soul"
- **Peak Position:** 2
- **Release Date:** April 20, 1997
- **Label:** EMI/Capitol
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 3. Saints ofdamnation - "The Weekender"
- **Peak Position:** 3
- **Release Date:** December 31, 1997
- **Label:** RCA
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 4. The Devil's Advocate (Soundtrack) - "The Devil's Advocate"
- **Peak Position:** 4
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** Columbia
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 5. Vowel - "Vowel"
- **Peak Position:** 5
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** Geffen
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 6. Oingo Boingo - "Dead Man's Party"
- **Peak Position:** 6
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** EMI/Capitol
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 7. Fugazi - "From a Broken Window"
- **Peak Position:** 7
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** Epitaph
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 8. The Offspring - "Smash"
- **Peak Position:** 8
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** Epitaph
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 9. The Breeders - "Pod"
- **Peak Position:** 9
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** Matador
- **Format:** Cassette

#### 10. The Black Crowes (self-titled) - "The Black Crowes"
- **Peak Position:** 10
- **Release Date:** January 29, 1999
- **Label:** Atlantic
- **Format:** Cassette
NEW CHAMP: After an impressive 16-week ride at the top, the "Titanic" soundtrack, one of this decade's most dominant albums, finally bows to a new chart topper, as the Dave Matthews Band pouces in with an impressive opening-week haul of 422,000 units. That sum is the biggest first-week figure so far this year—exceeding the 375,000 units that Madonna tallied in the March 21 issue—and the biggest opener. The Billboard 200 has seen since Garth Brooks' "Sevens" galloped in with 897,000 units in the Dec. 13, 1997, issue.

"It's kind of one of those, 'The Streets of Deepland' crowded the aisles at most chains, with RCA reporting that the set was the top seller for the Musicland Group, Best Buy, Trans World Entertainment, Target Stores, Camelot Music, Blockbuster Entertainment, Tower Records, Borders Group, Circuit City, National Record Mart, Virgin Megastores, Spec's Music, and Newbury Comics. For Newbury, Matthews had the largest first-week tally in the New England chain's 20-year history.

There were, in fact, only two music chains where Matthews' crew did not come out on top. Los Angeles-based Wherehouse, where West Coast rap act WC (No. 9 on The Billboard 200) was No. 1, and Carteret, N.J.-based Nobody Beats the Wiz, where another rapper, Big Punisher (No. 5), edged out Matthews.

This is, to say the least, the biggest week in the band's career. Its previous high came in 1996, when "Crash" debuted at No. 2 with 254,000 units, just a hair behind Hootie & the Blowfish's second title, "Fairweather John." The last Matthews album, 1997's "Live At The Greek," got off to a very strong start (No. 3 with 165,000 units), the group's first outing, "Under The Table And Dreaming," peaked at No. 11 during the 116 weeks spent on The Billboard 200; its biggest sales week came during Christmas week of 1995, when it moved 122,000 units.

NIPPER BARKS LOUDLY: The aforementioned Loud artist Big Punisher (136,000 units) is distributed by RCA, which, with the Dave Matthews Band's chart-topping honk, gives Nipper two of the big chart's top four spots. (The Imbruglia, who holds at No. 12, and the label has the top of the 15.)

The new good give RCA a 9.7% market share in current albums, first this week among all labels. What a difference a week makes;velvet those, big debuts, the label only held a 2.21% share on the previous chart.

CELLULOID: It turns out that even without the splash of the Dave Matthews Band, the "Titanic" album's reign would have ended anyway, as it gets overtaken this issue by the soundtrack to "City Of Angels." The latter sees a 5% gain (No. 2, 165,000 units), with most of the gain coming from mass merchants, while "Titanic" sees a 10% decline (No. 3, 153,000 units). Spikes are still high, with Spike Jonze's "Gardening Game" debuted at No. 1 at the box office, the first chart-topping film of his career (although "Malcolm X" pulled in more dollars in its first week). The new Lee Flick is represented by two soundtrack from two labels on two genre charts—one by Public Enemy (Def Jam/Mercury), which debuts at No. 1 on Top R&B Albums and No. 26 on The Billboard 200, and the collection of Aaron Copland compositions (Sony Classical), mentioned here last issue, which holds at No. 6 on Top Classical Albums.

This is not the first time that a Lee movie has scored such a triple double. In 1992, a Quest/Reprise/Warner Bros. soundtrack for "Malcolm X" peaked at No. 23 on Top R&B Albums, while Terence Blanchard's original score to the same movie (40 Acres and a Mule/Columbia) reached No. 11 on Top Jazz Albums.

BOX SCORE: Stevie Nicks' three-compilation, which bows at No. 5 with 14,500 units, becomes the second boxed set to chart in 1998, following "Anthology" by the late Selena, which debuted at No. 144 with 20,000 units. Both represent impressive feats, as boxed sets often fail to chart, but both will pale compared with next issue's debut by Garth Brooks’ "The Limited Series." Based on early retail reports, Brooks seems to clinch the debut to the top slot. On the first week, the former #1 box hit "That's the Way (I Like It)" to the #10 slot since Bruce Springsteen's live box bowed at No. 1 in 1986. One chain that is not typically considered a country account, Wherehouse Entertainment, predicts that its use-CD offer could help make the choices set. best-seller. The set includes the four albums: "NEED YOU NOW," "COUNTRY ROAD THAT YOUNG NORTHERN STREETS" and "MIDNIGHT HOUR."

Law says he expects most, if not all, of the company's 150 employees to remain.

---

TICKET-BUSINESS RAMP-UP

Calling the SFX purchase "a perfect fit," Law says the acquisition will let his company grow its ticketing and facility interests. Next Ticketing is the second ticket operation purchased by SFX; the St. Louis-based Contemporary Productions, purchased in 1997, has been a significant ticketing operation.

The sophisticated Next Ticketing operation offers much more than ticket distribution, Law says. "The business is probably best described in terms of a high-speed, high-tech system," he says. "Clearly it is a strong asset for SFX to expand upon. For example, they have a system where, in this case, you can sell 60,000 tickets in an hour and a half and at the same time capture everyone's name, address, and telephone number."

Unlike the St. Louis system operated by Contemporary, which is still largely based in retail outlets, Next Ticketing is an in-house system, he adds. Law says, adding that Next's system is based on phones and high-speed Internet connections.

Speculation is that SFX could eventually take all of it's ticketing in-house, adding yet another source of income from its growing list of assets. If so, Next Ticketing might be a key to SFX's future in an in-house SFX ticketing system.

"Don has built a great ticketing company," Ferrel says, "It's tomorrow's system, whether it's voice response or Internet."

Ferrel says Ticketmaster contracts at SFX venues "begin to expire in 1999, a roll-over contract year," he adds. Whether we become a national ticketing company or not depends on numerous factors, including the outcome of conversations with Ticketmaster."

VENUE SYSTEM

The newly acquired Oakdale Theatre and the 20,000-seat Great Jones Hall in the Metropolitan Opera, Manhattan, N.Y., (owned and operated by Don Law) are more pieces of a growing venue puzzle. With the addition of these operations, SFX-controlled positions will include 46 venues either directly owned or operated under lease or exclusive booking arrangements in 22 of the top 50 markets. These venues include 12 amphitheaters in seven of the top 10 markets.

The Oakdale Theatre includes a new 4,800-seat facility specialized in concerts and live theater, as well as an original dome facility that has held concerts in the round for many years. The new theater, which opened in mid-1996, was designed to emphasize ancillary revenue opportunities with luxury suites, platinum-club facilities, and sponsored suites. Initial theatre attendance was approximately 385,000.

As for EMi, the merchant has long-term agreements with 29 North American amphitheaters, among them PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, N.J.; the Hollywood Bowl; Jones Beach, New York; Wa- tags, N.Y.; the Irvine (Calif.) Meadow Amphitheater; and 13 other SFX-controlled venues.

"Adding the expertise and market of EMi to SFX and we now look forward to further strengthening our relationship with them and extending their reach in the important merchandising area."

WHAT NEXT?

Sillerman has already made overtures to the Marquee Group, a sports marketing company that he helped found in regards to SFX.

Marquee Group now has a strong entertainment component headed by QBQ's Dennis Arfa. All indications are that SFX is showing no signs of slowing down its aggressive strategy.

"We will continue to broaden our entertainment network and develop key relationships with content providers," Ferrel says. "As we have and demonstrated to those that were skeptical, we intend to continue to expand our entertainment and venue footprint.

"Industry observers, meanwhile, continue to warily watch the SFX buildup, unsure of what its ultimate impact will be.

"We're obviously seeing the consolidation of two businesses—the live entertainment and sports agent businesses—happen simultaneously, being driven by the competition between Don Scher, head of New York-based Metropolitan Entertainment Group, a firm with interests in concert promotion, artist management, venue ownership, and theater production."

"Time only will tell whether this is a good or a bad thing for the industry at large."

SFX Entertainment or SFX-owned subsidiaries have eight tours on the road this summer: the Ozfest; the George Strait Country Music Festival; Michael Crawford; Wynonna and Michael Bolton; Stevie Nicks and Bob Scaggs; Rod Stewart; Chicago and Hall & Oates; and the H.O.R.D.E. Festival.

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by Paul Verna in New York.
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 bands 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 duplicates; a band directory; a booking and A&R directory; listings of music industry Web sites/online services, information on equipment rental/repair, 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 to: Musician’s Guide, 1515 Broadway, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Refer questions to Joan Masella at 212-565-5184.

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 are also songs from Hollywood and Broadway, by artists such as Nelson Riddle, Judy Garland, Stephanie Mills, 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 6x9 blister pack cassette version. For further information call Cindy Lautati 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), Next’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 45-48 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” and “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.

H’OW NOW: Continuing its slow descent on the Hot 100, “How Do I Live” by LeAnn Rimes slips 28-31 in its 48th chart week. In an earlier day that easily would 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 Rio (66 weeks) and “Foolish Games”/“You Were Meant For Me” by Jewel (66 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 bulks 34-27 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 DeWeyn Boone’s “You Light Up My Life,” which fell off the chart a few months back.

4S 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 33rd consecutive week. According to Canadian chart columnist Nanda Lain, 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 the 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 swiped every Canadian chart life 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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Back to his roots.

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