BY BRADLEY BAMBARGER
NEW YORK—As recently as three years ago, RCA Records was the butt of some old, not wholly inaccurate, gibes.

Brian Vander Ark, front man of the Verve Pipe, recalls, “When we first started thinking about signing with RCA, the cautious joke people always told us was, ‘You know what the difference is between RCA and the Titanic? The Titanic had at least one good band.’ Well, I guess that might have been funny then, but now it’s just not true.”

The truth is that RCA has shepherded a string of international hit acts in the past couple of years that would make almost any label seasick with envy, including the Verve Pipe, SWV, Robyn, La Bouche, Rome, Sylk-E. Fine, and ‘N Sync.

That’s not to mention multi-platinum Local/RCA rap group Wu-Tang Clan or its labelmates Raekwon, Mobb Deep, and Big Punisher.

And then there’s pop phenomenon Natalie Imbruglia, whose hit single “Torn” has pushed her “Left Of The Middle” debut to No. 16 this issue on the Billboard 200—making her one of the fastest-moving new artists in RCA history. And last but not least, the Dave Matthews Band’s fourth album, “Before These Crowded Streets,” had the distinction last issue of knocking the “Titanic” soundtrack off its 16-week perch atop The Billboard 200. The Matthews disc is No. 2 in its second week, with some 623,000 copies sold to date, according to SoundScan.

This success has been enough to yield record revenue for RCA two

(Continued on page 86)

BY AUJUDREX

Island Targets R&B Market With New Album From Kidjo

BY ELENA OUMANO

“Oremi,” which Island/PolyGram is releasing in various international markets beginning this month, suggests that if music can heal the world’s ills, Angélique Kidjo has the remedy.

The album, whose title means “friends,” is Kidjo’s fifth (and her fourth for Island; she is signed to Island Records U.K. for the world). It bows May 25 in continental Europe, in the U.K. (Continued on page 83)

Taylor To Get Century Award

BY PAUL VENA

NEW YORK—An artist whose confessional, acoustic songs defined the singer/songwriter movement of the '70s and '80s, James Taylor has had a profound influence on generations of artists, from like-minded tunersmiths to others whose art bears little resemblance to his.

Unlike some living legends, Taylor is an active and popular today as he ever has been, and the quality of his work has not diminished with his stardom. His latest album, “Hourglass,” has garnered heaps of critical praise and won two Grammys, including one for best pop album.

In what promises to be the crowning achievement of a banner year, Taylor will receive the 1998 Century Award, Billboard’s highest honor for distinguished creative achievement. The previous recipients of the award—presented annually during the Billboard Awards, which will be globally telecast in December—are George Harrison, Paul Simon, and Michael Jackson.

(Continued on page 89)

Industry Is Abuzz With Implications Of Possible P’Gram Sale

BY DON JEFFREY

NEW YORK—Although an acquisition of PolyGram by Universal Music parent Seagram remained the likeliest scenario at press time, the outcome is uncertain as other possible bidders, including one linked to Hollywood power broker Michael Ovitz, have emerged.

If Seagram did purchase PolyGram, the merger would create the world’s largest record company; it also could result in massive consolidation of labels and distribution operations and affect the fortunes of new artists, observers say.

(Continued on page 87)
“Godzilla - The Album” In-Store, May 19th.

“Godzilla - The Movie” World Premiere at Madison Square Garden, May 18th.
Opens in over 3000 Theaters, May 20th.

Ultrasound Special “Godzilla Rocks” Debuts May 17th.

1st Track & Video: The Wallflowers “Heroes.”

Ready to Attack: Puff Daddy featuring Jimmy Page “Come With Me.”

World Premiere Coming Soon.
THE ALBUM

All New Recordings By

THE WALLFLOWERS
PUFF DADDY featuring JIMMY PAGE
JAMIROQUAI
RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
BEN FOLDS FIVE
DAYS OF THE NEW
MICHAEL PENN
FUEL
FOO FIGHTERS
GREEN DAY
silverchair
fuzzbubble
JOEY DeLUXE
score by DAVID ARNOLD
3,125,722 Shares

N2K

N2K.COM

Common Stock

Price $33.00 Per Share

PaineWebber Incorporated
Allen & Company Incorporated
Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc.
Boenning & Scattergood Inc.
Ladenburg Thalmann & Co. Inc.
Hambrecht & Quist
Sanders Morris Mundy

Wheat First Union
A Division of Wheat First Securities, Inc.
**BY CRAIG ROSEN**

**LOS ANGELES—**In a move designed to more effectively utilize its partnership with Warner Bros. and bring its A&R more in line with the tastes of owner/ founder Irving Azoff, Giant/Revolution Records has streamlined its operation.

Simultaneously with the changes, Giant/ Revolution Records has trimmed its U.S. partnership with Warner Bros. through 2002 (Billboard Bulletin, May 12), the label will continue to be distributed by BMI International.

Although Azoff says the restructuring will “evolve over the next two to four weeks,” a number of issues has been delayed at press time. The label has dismissed senior creative executive Missy Worth, head of promotion Ritchie Bloom, head of alternative promotion Sean Renet, New York-based A&R executive Dave Walters, and its entire field promotion staff.

“You can’t go out with eight or 10 field people and expect them to work four states now that radio formats have become so narrowcast,” Azoff says. “I’m betting that we will be better served by having partial time of a larger field staff [at Warner Bros./Reprise], than full time of a smaller one [in house].

“It’s no secret that Warner/Reprise has streamlined their roster and the number of releases that they are putting out, so we think they will have room to work our stuff,” he adds.

In addition, it is expected that head of business affairs Larry Jacobson will be promoted to GM.

Giant Nashville will not be affected by the changes, and such senior staffers as A&R head Jeff Aldrich, head of marketing Mindy Esy, and CFO Larry Silver will remain with the label, Azoff says.

It is unclear what will happen to a number of acts signed under Worth’s tenure, including Agnus Gooch, Lucky Me, Super Deluxe, Closer, the Cunningham, and Alien Crime Syndicate, as Azoff says he will evaluate the company’s agreements with those acts.

Letters To Cleo split from the label last month (Billboard Bulletin, April 21).

**ED CHRISTMAN**

**NEW YORK—**If Wherehouse Entertainment is anything like the Blockbuster Music chain, the recently reported year-end financial results show that its new management team is capable of turning around troubled Wherehouse Entertainment.

In the year that ended Jan. 31, Wherehouse reported a net income of $7.1 million, or 74 cents per share, on sales of $874.4 million, according to the company’s 10-K filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

More important, the 220-unit, Torrance, Calif.-based company posted $243 million in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) on an adjusted basis.

Last year the company posted $1.9 million in EBITDA on an adjusted basis. (Video rental chains include amortization of rental title costs in its income statement, and its analysts usually subtract that to get a cleaner read on EBITDA.)

Chairman/CEO Tony Alvarez says the company has met its revised expectations both in terms of the revenue opportunities that we chased and in the expense reductions we achieved. He also points out that last year was the most profitable year from operations that the company has had

(Continued on page 97)

**Lifet ime Achievement.** Composer Michael Legrand was recently awarded the Henry Mancini Award for Lifetime Achievement at the 13th annual ASCAP Film & TV Music Awards. The event was held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. Pictured at the event, from left, are pianist Alan Bergman, Legrand, ASCAP chairman/president Marilyn Bergman, Quincy Jones, and director Sidney Pollack.

**Ending 1st-Qtr. Dry Spell, Trans World Posts Profit**

**NEW YORK—**For the first time since 1992, Trans World Entertainment has turned in a first-quarter profit, posting $54.5 million, or 12 cents a share, on revenue of $415.1 million for the period that ended May 2.

That compares with a loss of $88.8 million, or 19 cents a share, on sales of $109.5 million in the same period last year.

John Sullivan, senior VP/COO at the $302-million house, says, “We were greatly pleased with the first quarter, and the outlook for the second quarter is also very positive. We will make money in the second quarter as well.”

The stock market reacted positively to the results, announced May 12, after the end of trading, with the share price closing May 13 at $33.875, up $3.50 from the stock’s previous day close.

In the 1980s and into the early ’90s, music chains typically, but not always, lost money in the first quarter and then made money in the subsequent three quarters. But since the CD, which carries a lower gross margin for retailers, emerged as the dominant album configuration in 1992, music retailers have had a much harder time posting a profit in the first quarter and generally have been experiencing losses in the first three quarters of the year.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization more than doubled, with the company posting EBITDA of $9.2 million in the first quarter this year, vs. $3.9 million in the same period last year. Gross profit increased from 36.9% in 1997 to 36.2% this year, while selling, general, and administrative expenses decreased from 32.3% to 29.8%.

In addition, Trans World’s balance sheet is particularly strong, with long-term debt at zero and shareholders’ equity valued at $162.9 million. Also, the company has been funding its inventory requirements through cash flow; at the end of the quarter, the drawdown of the firm’s $100 million revolver was zero. Sullivan projects that the chain probably won’t have a balance from its revolver for the rest of the year, as he expects cash flow to support product purchases.

**ED CHRISTMAN**
**No. 1 IN BILLBOARD**

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**GUEST COMMENTARY**

**Australia Does Not Need Parallel Imports**

By Denis Handlin

It's approaching crunch time on the parallel importation issue in Australia. The conservative government wants to push ahead with its legislation to repeal the exclusive "parallel import rights" to allow open import of music products into Australia. This is simply an untenable policy that must be defeated.

We fought the previous government for five years before it ultimately came to its senses and conceded that parallel importation of copyright products, music in particular, would bring major negatives and no certain offsetting benefits.

In 1996, there was a change in government, and the issue was reigned. The main reason is that this issue is, regrettably, seen as a symbol the government can use to show how different it is compared with the last government. The merits of the case and the damage that parallel importation would cause are largely irrelevant in this sad but complex political game.

"Maintaining parallel import rights is vital to our ability to invest in new music for our customers and our artists."

Denis Handlin is chairman/CEO of Sony Music Entertainment (Australia)

Underlying the government's claim is the economic rationalist zeal of the government's self-appointed engine room— the Treasury. This department has pursued a ruthless and largely unchecked program of open importation and deregulation for more than 15 years across all sectors of the economy. But the economic rationalists' approach does not make sense to me or the majority of Australians. Let me explain.

The Treasury's policy is that other countries in the "global village" make more music than Australia, and thus Australia should buy from those (supposed) cheaper, more prolific sources. If Australian music culture is desired, then it can be subsidised by the taxpayer if it is not "profitable" for the industry to invest in. That is, Australia should be a mere importer and appropriator of foreign music.

Yet the Australian industry and public (Continued on page 78)
THE X-FILES: THE ALBUM

BETTER THAN EZRA
BJORK
THE CARDIGANS
THE CURE
THE DUST BROTHERS
FILTER
FOO FIGHTERS
NOEL GALLAGHER
SARAH McLACHLAN
SOUL COUGHING
STING AND ASWAD
TONIC
WEEN
X

PLUS HEAR THE TRUTH REVEALED AT 10:13

ORIGINAL SCORE ALBUM BY MARK SNOW ALSO AVAILABLE

FILM OPENS JUNE 19 BOTH ALBUMS IN STORES JUNE 2
Columbia TriStar Goes Green With Henson Distribution Deal

BY EILEN FITZPATRICK

Columbia TriStar’s Muppet division, led by Jim Henson’s The Muppets, is teaming with Fox Home Entertainment to roll out new distribution deals for the company’s catalog—both within new distribution networks and to online retailers such as Borders. The new deals signify the increase in standalone DVD labels—such as Muppet and the new distribution deals for the company’s catalog—both within new distribution networks and to online retailers such as Borders. The new deals signify the increase in standalone DVD labels—such as Muppet and the entire Muppet family can now be found at Borders and online at www.borders.com.

Fox integrates its video, interactive, and merchandise units

BY SETH GOLSTEIN

With the acquisition of 20th Century-Fox Filmed Entertainment, which released home video in from the old. Earlier this month, the studio announced it had integrated the domestic activities of 20th Century-Fox Home Entertainment and now has Fox Licensing and Merchandising divisions under a single executive.

Patricia Wyatt, who had been acting chief executive of the division where the last day of president Bob DeNelis, was named president of the newly created Fox Consumer Products. She continues to report directly to Fox Filmed Entertainment chairman/CEO Bill Mechanic, who says the realignment lets the studio better “leverage our presence” among stores.

Wyatt oversees three product groups: video, interactive, and licensed merchandise. Her group, which includes home video and interactive, is grouped under the Home Entertainment umbrella. At a time when retailers are being asked to expand their product categories, “we think it makes sense to have a singular vision,” says Wyatt. “In effect, this is one-stop shopping for retailers.”

Wyatt predicts the consolidation will help video outlets become “full-service entertainment stores.” A way to stand out in a “very cluttered market.” Wyatt also hopes Fox Consumer Products’ arsenal can open new retail channels. Sell-through is expected to significantly benefit as well.

“This gives us huge marketing muscle,” Wyatt says.

Several years ago, Fox Home Entertainment, which had estimated sales of $1 billion, was customers of the new distribution agreement. The company is designed to bring the film’s catalog to the online marketplace and to expand the reach of the film’s home video. The agreement will also help the company to expand its product line. The music retailer CDNow began selling home videos in 1997, and early this year the world’s largest online music retailer, Amazon.com.

Borders Enters Online Retailing Chain Prepares Site Selling Music, Books, Videos

BY DOUG REECE

LOS ANGELES—Borders Group Inc. has crossed into the online world with the launch of www.Borders.com. The site, which officially began selling books, music, and home videos May 7, will be serviced mainly by Borders’ in-home fulfillment center, but it will also work with one store. Among other features, Borders.com notifies users of each new album’s release in the format “ships immediately” or “special order.”

The company is employing “hundreds” of employees who will work exclusively or primarily on the site, according to Rick Vanzura, senior VP of e-commerce and fulfillment for Borders Group.

Vanzura expects that the site’s wide product offerings will help it differentiate itself from its more entrenched competitors.

“While it’s true there are established book or music or video sites, there really isn’t a firmly established book, music, and video provider,” says Vanzura. “In the same way that we have pioneered selling these products in our physical stores, we really feel we’re breaking into new territory by blending these categories on one site.”

Meanwhile, online-exclusive retailers are not the only ones aggressively expanding their product lines. The music retailer CDNow began selling home videos in 1997, and early this year the world’s largest online music retailer, Amazon.com.

(Continued on page 97)

Bankruptcy Bill Raises Concern Musicians’ Unions Decry RIAA Move On Contract Breaking

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) has agreed to negotiate compromise language for a provision in pending House bankruptcy reform legislation that would prevent a recording artist from using a declaration of bankruptcy to break a recording contract.

The RIAA decision follows a barrage of criticism from musicians’ unions, such as the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) and the American Federation of Musicians (AFM). The RIAA quietly inserted the provision into the reform legislation this week (Billboard, May 15).

Recording artists are the only group singled out for this treatment in the pending bill; in all other cases, courts would have the authority to make exceptions to bankruptcy filings to reject burdensome contracts.

At press time, the bill, H.R. 3190, is expected to be passed by the Judiciary Committee in its present form and then sent to the House floor. Passage could come later this month.

In a markup session May 14, several Judiciary Committee members spoke out against the provision. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., says that “it smells like a very, very special-interest provision.” She adds, “They said they didn’t sneak it in . . . Well, they didn’t talk to me about it.”

Waters and other opposing committee members alleged that they did not participate in the RIAA negotiations over the language of the provision. A spokeswomen for Waters told Billboard that they would not comment on the provision taken out of the bill.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is also considering bankruptcy reform.

(Continued on page 90)

JAY BERMAN CONFIRMED AS CHIEF OF GLOBAL LABELS BODY

BY ADAM WHITE

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Jay Berman, president of MCA International, has been confirmed as the new chief of Universal Music Group’s International division.

Berman has served as president of MCA International since 1998 and will continue in that role.

(Continued on page 90)

RIAA Piracy Raids Highlight CD-R Concerns

BY JOHN LANNERT

Steve D’Onofrio is generally pleased with a massive raid on video and music counterfeitters that took place May 5 in New York. But the RIAA executive could say its anti-piracy is concerned that the bust, which yielded 43 arrests, revealed the increasingly illegal use of a relatively new and inexpensive method of reproducing CDs using CD-recordable (CD-R) bear.

“You’re talking about equipment that can take blank CD discs you can buy at an office supply store and re- recording onto them,” says D’Onofrio, who notes that the May 5 raid conducted with the New York Police De- partment (NYPD) and the Motion Picture Assn. of America (MPA) closed down the biggest CD-R factory to date.

The police seized the bust, police seized four CD-R machines worth $30,000 each. Each was capable of manufacturing 10,000 CDs per hour. Also confiscated were two computers with software that could burn an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 bootleg videos with a street value of $8 each. The CD-R plant allegedly produced illegal CDs worth $19 million annually.

When asked how the RIAA plans to combat the expanding threat of piracy, D’Onofrio replies that CD-R is “definitely a very real threat.” Blank (CD-R) discs can be turned very easily into counterfeiters without going to a CD factory and having someone special order them. “They’re not going to be attacking it at the retail, distribution, and manufacturing levels, and this raid is one sign of what we are doing,” he concludes.

D’Onofrio says the RIAA already has been trying to address the CD-R piracy problem through advisory talks with manufacturers of CD-R machinery and manufacturers of the raw materials for CD fabrication.

(Continued on page 90)
In 1967, the conservative BBC allowed The Jimi Hendrix Experience on television and radio - thus changing broadcasting and music forever.

Available here for the first time in their entirety are the legendary radio sessions and most of the memorable TV appearances that The Jimi Hendrix Experience recorded for the BBC from early 1967-1969. Digitally remastered from the original archive tapes, BBC SESSIONS is available as a double CD with 24-page booklet, double cassette or audiophile limited-edition triple album.

This priceless archive - including thirteen previously unreleased songs and most of the group’s classic hits - captures the incendiary magic of a band destroying musical boundaries.

IN STORES JUNE 2
Atlantic/Decca To Issue 3 Tenors’ Third Concert

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

NEW YORK—Atlantic Records and Decca Records are teaming to release the third effort from Three Tenors concert. RCA Records in New York, Placido Domingo, and José Carreras. The Three Tenors are performing their third concert, produced by Niki S, for the World Organization, in conjunction with the World Cup. The album and video recordings of the event, slated for July 10 in front of 100,000 fans at London’s Wembley, will be released in North America by the Atlantic Group and by Decca Records/PolyGram Video in the rest of the world. This marks the first of the three collaborations by the opera singers to be split among two record companies.

The CD and cassette formats were released worldwide in mid-August, with the home video release potentially on the same day. DVD and laserdisc releases will follow.

The first recording, released in 1990 and recorded during the World Cup in Rome, was put out by Decca. Atlantic Group’s Niki S, founder of Pavarotti Records worldwide, “The 3 Tenors In Concert ’94,” recorded at the World Cup in Los Angeles, was released by RCA and distributed through Warner Music International in the rest of the world.

With the singers having ties to both companies, the decision was made for the two entities to partner in the release.

“The scope of the project and the very close cooperation that exists between Atlantic Group co-chairman/co-CEO Ahmet Ertegun and us, it made much more sense to not be at odds and split the release,” said Chris Roberts, president of PolyGram Classics & Jazz. “Obviously, from our point of view, having an exclusive relationship with Pavarotti is extremely important in our strategy as a record company. And there’s no point in having exclusivity if you don’t act on it passionately in a project involving two of, if not the two, most successful classical projects ever made.”

According to industry sources, the first two albums have sold more than 23 million units worldwide. The Recording Industry Assn. of America has certified Pavarotti’s second album “Placido” with 2 million units sold in the U.S., and the 1994 follow-up at 1 million copies.

Similar to the previous two releases, the new album will be a mix of operatic arias and standards performed in six languages.

“But because the project is in France, we’ll have several French songs,” said Ertegun. “We’ll have quite a bit of Latin music in Spanish and Italian. But it will be a Three Tenors concert with arias and a few medleys where the three sing together.”

Pavarotti tells Billboard that two “brand-new” medleys are being recorded. “For me, the most beautiful and enjoyable moment is when José, Placido, and I sing these medleys together,” he says of their incredible response, “I always think that is one of the best moments for the audience as well.”

He adds that the songs the trio will sing is “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” which, oddly enough, has become an international football anthem.

In fact, according to Roberts, the trio will record a single version of the song, which will be released to radio. “We’re planning to do a studio version which is a bit more contemporary and which may play better to radio as a true promotional vehicle,” he says.

Heather Kudler to associate director of record of business and legal affairs and director of media and artist relations. They were, respectively, VP of press and artist development at Elektra Entertainment Group and national director of publicity at Ignition Records.

RCA Records in New York names Nick Cucci VP of marketing. He was director of product marketing at Columbia Records.

Tommy Boy Records in New York names Beth Jacobson head of media relations and Hilary Siskind media relations rep. They were, respectively, VP of press and artist development at Elektra Entertainment Group and director of media and artist relations. They were, respectively, VP of sales and field marketing/VP of marketing for associated labels: attorney and national director of publicity at Way Cool Music.

RCA Label Group in Nashville promotes Paul Barnabee to VP of finance. He was senior director of finance.

Geffen Records in New York promotes Bill Burrs to modern rock/ AOR promotion director, East Coast, and named Ben In Gandhi as A&R rep. They were, respectively, Chicago regional promotion manager and director of A&R at Columbia Records.

Design Records in Los Angeles promotes Ross Zapino to head of rock promotion and names Ronda Call A&R rep. They were, respectively, modern rock promotion director, East Coast, and an A&R exec at Atlantic Records.

DreamWorks Records in New York names Laura Curtin rock promotion “insult” and VP of rock and triple-A promotion at Epic Records.

Josh Lerman is promoted to associate director of international product development at Atlantic Records. He was manager of international product development.

Sony Wonder/Sony Music Video in New York names Robert Wescott associate director of finance and administration. He was manager of joint venture accounting for Sony Music.

The Controversy Behind Israel’s Newest Diva

BY BARRY CHAMISH and FRED BRONSON

TEL AVIV—Viewers of the Eurovision Song Contest may have embraced transsexual artist Dana International (see story, this page), but the demand of opposition in her own country has grown even stronger in the wake of the 26-year-old singer’s victory with “Diva” in Birmingham, England, on May 10.

After she was selected to represent Israel in the annual competition, International was denounced “both by those who have never heard of her and by those who see the buzz of the modern pop movement” by orthodox Rabbi Shlomo Ben-Izri.

Traditionally, the winner nation hosts the next year’s competition. Israel was one of the few parliaments who voted to hold in Israel next year, politicians are adding their voices to the fray.

“A such shameful event will not take place in Jerusalem,” proclaims the city’s deputy mayor, Rabbi Haim Miller. “It will be better to stage it in a country of gods.”

Continued opposition and security issues could cause the Israeli Broadcasting Authority to decide to host the 1999 contest. In Birmingham, the Israeli delegation stayed at the Hyatt Regency because it was the only hotel with bulletproof glass. But not all religious forces are opposed to the artist who was once a man.

“I found a quote in the Bible about castration,” offers Rabbi Marvin Antelman. “God says those who cut off their genitalia will be accepted if they choose to become God-fearing.”

What is amazing about the passage is that the name ‘Dana’ is spelled out, and the word ‘international’ appears.

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A&M’s Patty Griffin Heats Up
Singer Sheds Acoustic Tag With ‘Flaming Red’

BY DYLAN SIEGEL
NEW YORK—Patty Griffin caught the nation’s attention in the late spring of 1996 with her striking collection of sparse acoustic numbers, “Living With Ghosts.” With the release of the radically different “Flaming Red,” due June 23 in the U.S. on A&M, Griffin’s musical vision catches fire with the help of a full band, and her label is clamping to harnessing the resulting randomness.

While the fiercely emotive and lyrical “Living With Ghosts,” recorded in one take mainly in a kitchen, met with critical acclaim, Griffin’s advocates feel it isn’t getting enough attention. So A&M positioned the artist as a folk singer.

Griffin’s manager, Michael Baker, says “Living With Ghosts” seemed like a good way to introduce Griffin to the world. “But we ran into a glass ceiling at radio,” he says. “They couldn’t wrap their heads around voice and guitar being so natural. So A&M ballyhooed enough to . . . let Patty make ‘(Flaming Red).’ She didn’t know where she’d end up. But when the dust settled, it holds together. I hope for the rest of the world it has the emotional impact that it does for us.”

“Flaming Red” is a diverse collection, drawing on the granddaddy of Griffin’s influences—the Beatles—as much as the other singers Griffin has listened to over the years, such as Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight, Etta James, Erma Thomas, and Whitney Houston.

About her decision to make a studio-produced album with a full band, Griffin explained: “I just thought it was time to take the plunge. And [producer] Jay Joyce was willing to work on it for many months. I thought it would be really good for me to grow. And the only thing that really has held me back in the past has been my own fears.”

The collection “Living With Ghosts” was homogenously raw and beautiful

(Continued on page 90)

BMI Awards Note Songwriting Success
Crow, Babyface, Kelly Honored

BY CARRIE BELL
LOS ANGELES—Sheryl Crow, Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds, R. Kelly and Jeffrey Trott shared songwriting of the year honors here May 12 at the 46th annual BMI Pop Awards.

The win marked Edmonds’ seventh songwriter trophy; he won in ’85, ’89, ’91, ’94, ’95, and ’97. He also took home awards for three songs—“Every Time I Close My Eyes,” “Last Night,” and “Not Gon’ Cry.” These wins bring his BMI total to 48.

Crow and Trott also took home awards for “A Change Would Do You Good,” “Everyday Is A Winding Road,” and “If It Makes You Happy.” R. Kelly was also a triple winner for “I Believe I Can Fly,” “I Can’t Sleep Baby (If I),” and “Don’t Want To.”

“It’s All Coming Back To Me Now,” written by Jim Steinman, published by Lost Boys Music and Songs of PolyGram International, and taken to No. 1 on the Hot 100 and Adult Contemporary charts by Celine Dion, was named song of the year.

The BMI college song of the year was “Distance,” recorded by Cake and written and published by Greg Brown. It received the greatest number of American college radio performances.

A new songwriting award was made to writer Richard Addis because “Never My Love,” a song he wrote with his brother Don, reached the 7 million broadcast-performances mark. It knocked the Beatles’ “Yesterday” out of the No. 1 spot.

Crow and Trott also won BMI’s most prestigious award, the Golden Note Awards, for “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’,” written by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, and Phil Spector, which has won 12

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Western Jubilee’s Edwards Bows Autry Tribute

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE
NASHVILLE—With a singing role in the new Robert Redford film “The Horse Whisperer,” a greatest-hits package, and the new album “My Hero Gene Autry,” which streets in the U.S. Tuesday (10), veteran cowboy crooner Don Edwards is riding high in the saddle these days.

The Autry tribute is being distributed to Western and alternative retail outlets by the Colorado Springs, Colo.-based Western Jubilee Recording Co. According to Western Jubilee co-owner Scott O’Malley, the project will also be marketed to mainstream music retailers nationwide. The Newton, N.J.-based Shanachie label via its distribution deal with Koch International.

“My Hero Gene Autry” was recorded late last September at two shows at the Wels Fargo Theater at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage in Los Angeles. The shows were part of a celebration of Autry’s 90th birthday. The album features Edwards and special guest Peter Rowan, along with the Time-Warp Top Hands—lead guitarist Rick O’Brien, acoustic bassist Mark Abbott, fiddler Bob Boa tright, trumpeter Dave Alexander, and Tom Morrill on steel guitar and dobro.

Edwards says he was honored when Jostine Halle, the director of Autry’s museum, asked him to perform at the birthday festivities, and he was thrilled that they were allowed to turn their performance into this new record. He says there have been so many tributes to Autry that the challenge was to deliver something unique.

“I was looking for more of the earlier, more exciting, but he changed and had big productions,” says Edwards. “Gene used to be a friend of Jimmy Long. They co-wrote ‘Silver Haired Daddy Of Mine,’ which was a monster hit . . . I wanted to make it sound as close to the original recording as I could.”

Edwards says he chose the Marty Robbins-penned “My Hero Gene Autry” as the title cut because Autry once heard him perform the song and thrilled Edwards by telling him how much he liked his rendition.

According to Edwards, there were some songs he felt he had to be done because they are so associated with Autry. Yet he also wanted to give fans a taste of some of Autry’s more obscure gems. “‘Dear Old Western Skies’ is from the movie ‘Old Sudden’—that is on a 78 record but was never put on an album or CD. I love that song,” Edwards says. “I tried to do the most obscure stuff I could find, as well as the obvious.”

Autry is pleased with Edwards’ tribute. In fact, the album is stickered with an endorsement from Autry. “In the new Don, I will always treasure the wonderful gift of music you gave me on my 90th birthday. Your beautiful tribute album brought back many memories for me, as I hope it does for your listeners. I’m proud and honored to be riding the same trail as you.”

Edwards has been riding that trail for many years. He worked ranches in Texas and New Mexico as a teen. In 1961, he began working as an actor, singer, and stuntman at the

(Continued on page 90)

Country Vet Rabit dies

BY CHET FLIPPO
NASHVILLE—Eddie Rabit was one of the unsung pop-hybrid singer/songwriters who moved country music closer to a fusion with the pop and rock genres.

The Brookly, N.Y., native, who died of lung cancer May 7 at Baptist Hospital here, came from the generation of songwriters who found their way to Nashville starboard after success with Elvis Presley and other lesser lights of the ’70s. Although he garnered only one major award—top new male vocalist by the Academy of Country Music in 1978—Rabbit charted 17 No. 1 singles on Billboard’s Hot Country Singles in the ’70s and ’80s, frequently crossed over to the pop charts, and as a writer remained a potent influence on emerging generations of songwriters. He said that he was as influenced by Bob Dylan, Elton John, and Steely Dan as by Presley or Ness Leroy Wilson.

He was born Edward Thomas Rabit to Irish immigrant parents Nov. 27, 1941, in Brooklyn and raised in East Orange, N.J. Although Rabbit’s father played accordion and fiddle, it was his scotsmaster—what he called Bob Randoll—who taught him guitar and engendered a love of country music.

Rabbit said he became a walking encyclopedia of country music as a child. After his parents divorced, he dropped out of high school (later earning a diploma in night school) and worked a series of day jobs while pursuing a musical career. He cut an album in 1964 for 20th Century that went nowhere.

He decided to give Nashville a try in 1968, Return with $1,000 and a Cadillac that died in arrival. Rabbit signed as a song writer with Hill & Range for

(Continued on page 90)
Artists & Music

Bragg Plays Tunesmith for Guthrie
Elektra Collection Features Lyrics From Folk Singer’s Archives

BY CRAIG ROSEN

LOS ANGELES—When Nora Guthrie decided to open the archives of her father, Woody Guthrie, to a contemporary singer/songwriter, she also opened them to Billy Bragg. Bragg is a natural choice to write music and record songs with the legendary folk singer’s lyrics. After all, Bragg chose to title a song—featured on 1991’s Don’t Try This At Home—You Woke Up My Neigh-

bourn.”

“So, in 1996, he sent Billy a copy of the painting and said, ‘Isn’t that strange. You both came up with the same title.’ He called me back a week later and sheepishly admitted that he had seen the book and loved the title so much, he ended up writing a song with Woody’s title. So, the collaboration began even before I knew.”

“Mermaid Avenue,” Bragg’s official collaboration with Woody Guthrie, which also features Wilco and Natalie Merchant, is due June 23 on Elektra Entertainment in the U.S. and East-West in the U.K. The album, credited and produced by Bragg and Wilco, features 16 songs with lyrics written by Guthrie (published by Woody Guthrie Publications) and music composed by Bragg (BMG Songs/ASCAP), Wilco’s Jeff Tweedy and Jenny Bennett (Warners-Tamerlane/Words/Amperands Music/BMI/Titanic Majesties Music/ASCAP), and Bragg, Wilco, and blues musician Carey Harri-

son (for future Songs/500 Ft. Toe Music/BMI).

“Mermaid Avenue” takes its title from the street in Coney Island, N.Y., where Guthrie lived with his family in the 1930s. Bragg recalls the day in 1996 when Nora Guthrie asked him if he would consider writing tunes for some of the hundreds of Words/Writing songs in the archive with completed lyrics but no music. “I was rather daunted by it, frankly,” Bragg admits. “My reaction was, ‘Don’t you think that this is Bob Dylan’s job?’ and also, ‘I’m not an American. I don’t know enough about Woody to do this.’”

Although he was initially reluctant to take on the project, Bragg changed his mind once he saw some of Guthrie’s lyrics. “Nora was very clear,” he says. “She began to send me photocopies of the manuscripts. Once I saw a few, I was interested. When I realized that there were 1,000 full manuscripts, I thought to

(Continued on page 21)

Crowded House’s Neil Finn Tries His 1st Solo ‘Whistling’

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—As one door closed on Crowded House, another swung open in the eventful career of Neil Finn. The frontman/songwriter of the erstwhile antipodean band, which split in 1996, takes a solo bow June 16 with the album Try Whistling.

The release marks a change of labels for Finn, formerly signed to Capitol in the U.S. For the world outside North America, he continues to be allied to EM1 companies, as Parlophone U.K. oversees the making of the album, which Parlophone & Rør director (U.K.) Keith Wozencraft calls “a classic songwriting album.” For North America, however, he is signed to the Work Group/Sony. “I negotiated with Capitol to be re-

leased from the contract,” says Finn, who was shot in the head with a hatful of songs, “but we want to find a new audience as well. Therefore, even though we’re going to triple-A, we’re going to college and, down the road, for alternative play.”

Finn also plans to send key radio programmers and retailers a sampler featuring music from throughout Finn’s career: “Subcon-

sciously we all know these songs, but charted four albums,” says Strato. Reawakened familiarity allowed Crowded House to bow out on a high in Europe—especially in the U.K., where the retrospective ‘Recurring Dream,’ released in June 1996, is now certified quadruple-platinum (1.2 mil-

lion units). The compilation also performed well in Spain and Ireland.

In the U.S., however, the group lost sales momentum after its 1986 plat-

inum self-titled debut, which contained two top 10 singles, “Don’t

DREAM It’s Over” and “Something So Strong.” Crowded House’s predeces-

ors, Split Enz, of which Finn and brother Tim were members, had charted four albums on the Billboard


For Work Group co-president Jeff Ayeroff, working with Finn signifies a reunion. “I was Split Enz manager at A&M; I’ve been presi-

dent of Neil Finn’s fan club for 18 years,” he says. “I honestly believe this is the best record we’ve put out at this company.”

Finn, who continues to be pub-

lished by EM1 Music Publishing,

(Continued on page 21)

STUFF: Just weeks before the May 26 release date of its fourth album, Australian group You Am I has split with its U.S. label, Warner Bros, and is expected to announce an affiliation with a BMG-distributed label shortly. According to the band’s manager, Todd Wagstaff, the band, which is signed to BMG in the rest of the world, was unhappy with recent staff cuts at Warner Bros. “Warner fired 100 people on the eve of the release of our third album, and they just let go another 40 people on the eve of the release of our new album. We thought it was going to cost us a great deal. The band has made a great record that doesn’t deserve indifference,” he says. Wagstaff adds that the new Warner team, headed by Phil Quarataro, was great about the split. “In a very good, spirited way, they made it a very clean release and returned our catalog and the masters to this new record.” Warner had no comment by press time.

At press time, it looks like Elton John and his longtime manager, John Reid, are splitting (Billboard Bulletin, May 12). Luther Vandross’ Virgin Records debut, “I Know,” will come out July 28. At the end of June, the label will ser-

vice the two singles, the title track to AC and “Nights In Harim” to R&B radio ... In one-off deal, Restless will release a live album by They Might Be Giants, “Severe Tire Damage,” in August. The collection will include one new studio track, “Dr. Worm.”

Nikon Encoded Music has entered a three-year deal with Rhythm Records to distribute and jointly mar-

ket releases from the Dallas-based pop/alternative label ... Ringo Starr’s return to New York’s Shea Stadium to film his new video was curtailed by rain (Billboard, May 25). However, he was able to shoot a segment in New York’s Times Square, where he was joined by Mer-

cury labelmates and current teen heartthrob Hanson.

JOURNEY’S END: “Journey was one of the more powerful, emotional parts of my life, and I’m not ready to talk about it yet,” says lead singer Steve Perry of his split with the band, officially announced May 7 after weeks of speculation. However, Perry did want people to know that the health issues that contributed to the parting are not life-threatening. Contrary to reports, he says he is not working on a solo album; however, his song “The Quest For Camelot” soundtrack, the prophetically titled “I Stand Alone,” has just been released to AC radio. The remaining members of Jour-

ney, Neal Schon, Ross Valory, and Jonathan Cain, along with new lead singer Steve Augeri and drummer Dean Castronova, plan to tour Japan this summer. The new lineup has also cut a tune, “Remember Me,” for the “Armageddon” soundtrack.

Genesis Box To Make Long-Delayed Bow; You Am I Parts With Warner Bros.


lection was originally slated for release in late 1996, but publishing issues contributed to its postponement, as did the band’s reluctance to allow the band to write new songs. We realized we were going to have a new Genesis studio album and Phil Collins had a record, and we didn’t want the box set to clash with these,” says Tony Smith, who manages the group and Collins.

Additionally, the band members, including Collins and Gabriel, reunited to record a new version of an unnamed tune from “The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway.” “We went in with producer Trevor Horn and cut the track,” Smith says. “We’re still working on it. It’s still waiting for Tony Banks (to do) some more key-

board overdubs and for Peter to do new vocals.” With recording of the single having taken place three months ago, Smith says with a laugh, “It may well hold the record for being the longest time ever spent recording one track.” The tune, which is not on the box set, may yet appear on the collection or for another project. The bulk of “Genesis Archives” is devoted to “Lamb,” the band’s 1974 masterwork. The first two CDs are a recording of “The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway,” taped in its entirety April 24, 1974, at Los Angeles’ Shrine Auditorium. The other two discs contain previ-

ously unreleased live material, rare singles, demos, rough mixes, and BBC recordings. As the title would indicate, future volumes are on the drawing board. “We were loosely planning ‘Volume 11’ for autumn of this year,” Smith says, “but I think it will probably come out around this time next year. Obviously, there’s a lot to think about because it’s a 19-year period. It will cover all the Phil years as lead singer.”

As far as the current Genesis lineup, Smith admits he was deeply disappointed in the U.S. reception to last year’s release, Calling All Stations, the first with new lead singer Ray Wilson. “We ended up selling 1.2 mil-

lion copies worldwide,” Smith says, “not bad for what is, in a sense, a new band. We did very well in Europe, but radio killed them in the U.S. Radio didn’t even give the record a look. Genesis will return to the studio after Mike Rutherford records a new Mike & the Mechanics album.

Meanwhile, Collins will bring his big-band tour to the U.S. in June. The tour will feature Oleta Adams on vocals, with Collins opting only to drum and not sing.
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YOU'VE CAMP THAT I CAN'T SEE
(12th Award)
PD

YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT
(7th Award)

ZAPPA
Steve Potts
Peter Boy Music
Robert Goff Music
Third Story Music, Inc.

ZAPPA
(12th Award)

ZAPPA
(12th Award)

BML
A&M Rounds Up Existing Fan Base For MxPx’s ‘Buffalo’ Set

BY DOUG REECE
LOS ANGELES—MxPx’s “Chick Magnet,” a single from its last album, “Life In General,” turned out to be a major-label magnet.

As a result of the song’s success, the band signed a worldwide multi-album deal with A&M Records, which will release the young punks’ fourth album, “Slowly Going The Way Of The Buffalo,” June 16 in the U.S. and Canada.

However, it’s not the first time MxPx has worked with the label. As part of its negotiation with the group’s former label, Seattle-based Tooth & Nail, A&M signed on to co-market “Life In General” several months after its 1996 release (Billboard, Aug. 9, 1997).

According to A&M chairman/CEO (U.S.) Al Cafaro, the continuity afforded by working the new album continuously bodes well for the set.

“That last situation was something we sort of cobbled together in order to sign the band,” says Cafaro. “That’s not saying it wasn’t fruitful for everyone concerned, but it will be easier this time around for us to help the band implement and elaborate on its vision from start to finish.”

“Life In General” has sold more than 89,000 units, while the act’s first two albums, “Pokinatcha” and “Teenage Politics,” have sold more than 50,000 units combined, according to SoundScan.

A&M is seeding this fan base by randomly picking 1,000 people from MxPx’s 10,000-name mailing list and sending them an unmastered demo CD single of different songs from the album once a month from April through June.

The label’s price and positioning program will focus on the band’s two strongest markets, Seattle and Los Angeles, in addition to 10 other major markets, such as Tampa and Philadelphia, according to A&M VP of A&R (U.S.) Larry Weintraub.

A&M has also begun preparing loyal followers with an Internet awareness campaign.

What fans can expect are 16 cuts of the group’s familiar-sounding punk/pop, only two of which clock in at more than three minutes. Greg Hetson of Bad Religion guests on “The Downfall Of Western Civilization.”

MxPx vocalist/bassist Mike Herrera says the songs—published by What’s Mine Is Mine and Thirsty Moon River (ASCAP)—have the grittier feel of the band’s earlier work.

“The second album was a pretty clean, straightforward pop album, and we were happy with that, but this time around we dirtied things up a little,” says Herrera. “We didn’t wring out some of the noises that, by themselves, don’t mean a lot but add to the overall feel. We didn’t want it to sound like it was produced in a lab.”

In spite of the band’s impressive fan base and solid retail track record, Weintraub says the label is approaching the new project with modest expectations.

“We never put any pressure on the band other than to make the next step,” says Weintraub. “We figure it will be easy to do 100,000 [units], and anything else we get from radio airplay after that will be a bonus.

“The fan club, advertising, a snipe campaign in 12 major markets, and just getting the music out there to people—we’re doing all this without even thinking of radio,” he adds. “So if we do get it, that’s what will take us to the next level.”

The first single, “I’m OK, You’re OK,” was shipped to modern rock radio May 6.

Herrera says he appreciates the label’s cautious approach, adding that it mirrors the act’s history of slow growth.

“Hopefully, our core fans will buy the record regardless of what happens, but obviously—and what happens with most records—is that the label will try to get a big break,” he says. “I’m not naive enough to think that A&M isn’t going to do the same, but they are showing signs of actually caring about our career. We don’t necessarily want to have a hit right away. We’re more into a gradual building, which is what we’ve been doing all along and what makes fans real, not just radio fans. I think A&M understands that if you hype it huge, it will die huge.”

The band, which is booked by Los Angeles-based Bandwagon Entertainment and managed by Creighton Burke in Seattle, will also be touring internationally. “Going Slowly” will have a staggered release in territories outside of North America throughout the summer.

MxPx opens for Bad Religion during European dates in May, returning to the U.S. for the first five weeks of the Warped tour, beginning June 30 in Phoenix. A&M will distribute samplers and coupons directing consumers to local retailers during the tour. On Aug. 4, the set begins a tour supporting Blink 182.

Todd Meehan, manager at Tower Records’ Sunset Boulevard location in Hollywood, says he is hopeful that A&M’s deeper involvement will help the new album, but qualifies his optimism with a concern about the demand for MxPx’s type of music.

“I think there’s going to be a much better setup since A&M has already been involved with the band and knows a little bit about them,” he says. “And there will always be an audience for this kind of music, but looking at the performance of the last few Green Day albums, people seem to be looking for something a little more original. I think that’s why artists like Beck are so huge.”
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Artists & Music

12 Rounds Fire Off Their Debut With Nothing/Interscope’s ‘Hero’

BY CARRIE BELL

LOS ANGELES—For 12 Rounds, the deliciously dark duo of Claudia Sarne and Atticus Ross, their first release in the U.S. is a homecoming rather than an invasion.

Determined to live in London for the last several years and dabbling in music projects like Bomb The Bass and Barry Adamson, Sarne was born in the U.S. and Ross was raised in Los Angeles by a father who owned a roller disco.

“Americans view us as a British band coming to invade the country, and sell the children weird records,” Ross says referring to the band’s Nothing/Interscope release, “My Big Hero,” slated to infiltrate U.S. stores June 30. “In actuality, we are native and identify with American rock.

And we are moving back to L.A. soon. We even have a 45-year-old American guy playing cello, who played bass for Lydia Lunch before fleeing to join an English orchestra because there was no future in punk.

There are no plans yet for an international release.

Although the twosome’s music is still a few steps away from apple pie, Trevor Reamer’s label is eager to cultivate a following in the homeland.

“12 Rounds have a sophistication unique to this day and age,” Nothing president John Malm says. “They don’t come out of some movement. It’s not about fashion, making it difficult to pigeonhole.

Sarne and Ross pride themselves on their ability to elude definitions and prefer to call their work “music/rock.” Ross fumbles with triggers, synthesizers, and samples for an electronics edge. The six-piece touring band adds a rock feel that caroms toward industrial at moments. Church bells, strings, and windy percussion paint a gothic picture, filled with fantastical, dreamy lyrics. Sarne’s vocals mix the punk angst of Courtney Love, the sultry sexuality of Dracula, and the innocence of a dark fairy tale.

“We wanted to defy labeling and make a record that we approved of,” Sarne says. “Making music is about continually breaking the mold. There is so much out there to experiment with. There’s no excuse for being boring.”

Jeff Anderson, the Nothing/Interscope A&R representative who signed the act for its brilliant mixture of genres, also says that originality will make “My Big Hero” tough to break.

“All the record’s elements come together in one wicked cohesive melodic machine,” Anderson says. “It was a hard sell in an industry hooked on homogenized sounds. But we’re going to fight the good fight.”

That battle commences with a limited-edition 12” by Sniper and members of the Nothing Collective (Reznor, Keith Hillebrandt, Charlie Cleusser, and Clint Mansell). It is shipped to college radio, commercial progressive dance shows, clubs, record pools, and press May 8. Within a couple of weeks, a wider list, including modern rock stations, will receive a CD version with two extra remixes. At press time, there were no plans to commercially release the single.

“Pleasant” defines both the record and the band, and we think it is the best way to introduce them,” Anderson says. “It’s essential for a new band to be heard at a street level.”

Two videos and a tour, booked by Alex Kochan, are also in the works. “Where Fools Go,” which utilizes a sample from Nick Cave’s “Red Right Hand,” will be the follow-up radio and video track and has already won some fans.

“I was drawn to them because they incorporate guitars, alternative energy, and punk angst into techno music,” says Maverick A&R executive and DJ Jason Bentley, who spins electronic shows for Los Angeles’ modern rock KROQ and public KCRW. “It rotates it with some regularity and have gotten good feedback from listeners. It’s nice when you hit a song for radio but know that the album offers so much more if people give it a chance.”

Retailers will be provided with in-store copies and posters. Layne Feldman, a buyer for the Kansas City, Mo., store 7th Heaven, confirms that Nothing is on the ball with “My Big Hero.” He serviced the advance two months before the release date.

“I don’t even have Lenny Kravitz [album], and it comes out in five days,” he says. “It really helps to get buyers the info early because we pass it on to the customers and play the album early to generate buzz, especially for a company that has a devout following. Everyone knows Trent and trusts him to pick up good new talent.”

Reznor’s reputation encouraged the duo, which is managed by Neule Easterby and Richard Ramsey at Empire Management U.K., to sign on the dotted line. “Indies on the whole are more attractive. We had a lot of offers, but if you look down a roster and see 100 bands as opposed to 10, you know where you will have more freedom and attention,” Ross says. “Nothing gets its shit done, but still asks how we’re holding up. There is a marriage of indie mentality with the financial backing of a major. They have done a great job so far.”

12 Rounds also marks the label’s first signing with a female artist. But for a label that skewes male in terms of its roster and its audience, Anderson isn’t worried. “I prefer to think of the Nothing fan as an open-minded, intelligent person thirsty for new voices, plus, Claudia’s an attractive girl. Wouldn’t she know that to work the testosterone-raging fans of her labelmates?”

Sarne feels privileged to be Nothing’s “first rocker minus a penis,” but doesn’t plan on wild nights of bra-burning. “I was made aware I was the only woman just recently, and I don’t want it to make an issue. I love women and have fantastic female friends, but I have no need to say, ‘Look what I’m doing and I’m a girl!’ I’m not a Spice Girl.”

BRAGG PLAYS TUNESMITH FOR GUTHRIE

(Continued from page 14)

myself. ‘It’s not like it’s the last few scraps. If I mess it up, anyone can have a go at it.’ I was honored to be asked to have a go at it first.”

As Bragg delved into the Guthrie archives, he realized the fact that he isn’t an American may have been an advantage. “I didn’t grow up with Woody,” he says. “I came to Woody through Bob Dylan, which was good, because Nora didn’t want us to make a tribute album—they wanted a collaboration.

For Tweedy, the prospect of composing music for and recording songs with Guthrie’s lyrics was unbelievable. “When Billy asked us the first time, our reaction was, ‘Sure, sounds great.’ We believe it when we see it,” he says. “It didn’t really actually hit home until we got to meet with Billy and actually go to the archive and take some lyrics home to work with.”

“They really made it their own,” Nora Guthrie says. “There’s some songs that I can’t believe Woody wrote, because it sounds so much like Billy and Jeff.”

In working on the album, Bragg came to realize that he had more in common with Guthrie than he realized. “The obvious [similarities] are that we are both solo and both political,” he says. “We both are very firm believers in the do-it-yourself ethic that my generation refers to as punk.”

Bragg is also optimistic that the project will help expose record buyers to another side of Guthrie. “I think the audience we know is quite a one-dimensional figure,” he says. “He is someone who is seen as being synonymous with the Depression, the Dust Bowl, and the 1930s, but Woody Guthrie didn’t die until 1967. And his greatest work was done in New York. He certainly wouldn’t have written ‘Bound for Glory’ if he didn’t come to New York.”

Bob Reamer, a music buyer for the Ann Arbor, Mich.-based Borders Books & Music, says he is eagerly anticipating the album. “Being a fan of Billy Bragg and Wilco, I’m excited,” he says. “I can’t say I’m a super fan of Woody Guthrie, but this will be a way of introducing him to a whole new audience who only know him as someone who inspired Bob Dylan or as Arlo Guthrie’s father.”

The duo were on May 12 Elektra shipped the track “California Stars” to triple-A, roots, and college radio, as well as specialty shows. The track will also be included on the Album Network’s “Totally Adult Sampler,” due June 5.

“We feel that the music on this record is contemporary, and we want to get it out there and give it a shot,” says Dana Brandwein, senior director of marketing for Elektra (U.S.).

The label also expects a big boost from an appearance by Bragg and Wilco on the “Late Show With David Letterman” June 20. In mid-June, the artists are expected to appear together at Gilman House, a San Francisco, Calif., venue. While “Electric Ladyland” is labeled as a “Billboard” concert, it adds to the earlier, more intimate, but still small, venue at the New York City venue.

In addition, Bragg (managed by Peter Jenner and booked by the Agency Group) and Wilco (managed by Tony Merpergh and booked by Monterey Peninsula Artists) may play dates together in July or August. If Wilco isn’t available, Bragg will enlist another band: “I’m not going to do [the songs] solo or even with just me and Jeff Tweedy, because I don’t want to miss this to be a folk thing. The whole point is that we want this to be Woody like you haven’t heard him before, with a proper-in-your-face band.”

The project will receive some additional exposure via a documentary commissioned by BBC 2 Television. Bragg says the program will likely air in the U.K. in December. He hopes it will be picked up by PBS in the U.S.

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by Nigel Williamson in London.
FINN
(Continued from page 11)

took some time off after Crowded House’s last hurrah in November 1990 at the Sydney Opera House. The break helped him affirm that music remains in his blood. “The trepidation about going solo was that you get used to the comfort zone with a band,” says Finn, “but making that break was very liberating... When I started making the album, I was basically left to my own devices. I wanted to be able to work on it until I was satisfied.”

Finn worked on “Try Whistling This” in various New Zealand locations, including Kauriakere Beach (where Crowded House’s 1984 album, “Together Alone,” was made) with Jim Moginie of Midnight Oil. “He’s an old friend of mine, and we had a great week writing songs together,” he says. Four of their collaborations are on the record, including the title track.

While Ayroff acknowledges that Finn may not be a household name except to die-hard Split Enz and Crowded House fans, he says, “I think the cognoscenti of record buyers and people in record stores know who he is. I liken this record to when Peter Gabriel left Genesis.” A sticker on the album will remind consumers of Finn’s Crowded House affiliation, but Strate stresses that the artist is by no means trapped in the ‘80s. “What we tried to do was hook Neil up with some more contemporary people,” she says, noting the contributions of Soul Coughing bassist Sebastian Steinberg; Marius De Vries, an drummer of dance producer Nellee Hooper; who produced some tracks; and Nigel Godrich, producer of Radiohead’s “OK Computer,” who remixed some songs.

“Neil is very highly respected in the industry,” says Parlophone’s Wezzoncroft, “and this is the type of album that will appeal to Crowded House fans but will also cross many barriers.”

In the UK, the “She Will Have Her Way” single will be commercially released. The compact international rockers, let Virgin Radio began playing it early. PD Geoff Holland says, “Crowded House have always done really well for the station. The stuff Neil’s doing now is not dissimilar; but I don’t think that’s going to hurt. Crowded House were a band that performed Neil Finn songs.” U.K. retail interest also looks strong, especially in the value of “Recurring Dream.” Phil Jump, co-owner of Halfords, an independent retail and mail-order store in Cheltenham. Gloucestershire, says, “Crowded House [had] a massive fan base; from my experience, people seem to buy any of their related product. We expect to do really well with it.”

Finn will spend time in the U.K. and Europe in the coming weeks doing promotion, including acoustic radio appearances. “It’s true that the band has already visited Sony’s nine U.S. branches, performing acoustically. Live work begins in late June in Australia and New Zealand, followed by a six-week U.S. tour starting in mid-July. Booked by William Morris Agency, Finn will also be making press and radio station visits.

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Artist & Music

EDITED BY CATHERINE APPLEFELD OLSON

TAI SPINS: With the Wallflowers’ cover of David Bowie’s “Heroes” already a radio hit in the U.S., the soundtrack to “Godzilla” looks like it’s on its way to achieving success of monstrous proportions. The Sony Music Soundtrax/ Epic Records hit US (19) and stores Monday (18) in most major international markets, for which Sony Music has readied a series of highly targeted marketing blueprints that involve several singles, including Jamiroquai’s “Deeper Underground” and Puff Daddy and Jimmy Page’s “Kashmir.” “Come With Me.”

“It is a territory-specific choice,” says Brummam, executive VP of Sony Music Soundtrax. “We are looking at what’s right for the individual countries, and they have single options based on what they feel will work best in their country and based on the release dates of the movie.”

Meningers around the globe might notice that only about half of the songs on the soundtrack are actually featured in the film. Brummam says Sony decided early on to create a “compilation album” more than a straightforward soundtrack, along the lines of Columbia’s “Men In Black,” the only song from which was in the movie is the Will Smith title track. “The idea here was similar to ‘Men In Black.’ We have an event movie, and [it] seemed like a perfect opportunity to have a companion album that would be an event in its own right,” Brummam says. “We set out to make an album that should be an event in its own right so many artists got a chance to talk with [director] Roland Emmerich and [producer] Dean Devlin and see footage and trailers.” He adds that so many artists wanted to participate in “Godzilla” because the monster is a “rock’n’roll icon” in its own right.

CREATURE COMFORT: Reloading the score from a feature film as a commercial album can be difficult enough, but doing so for a severe album from a TV miniseries won’t be done any easier. Not so for John Van Tongeren, whose score to the ABC miniseries “Creature,” based on the Peter Benchley novel, will be in stores Tuesday (19) on Intrada Records.

Van Tongeren, who cut his teeth as writer, arranger, and producer for pop and rock acts ranging from Chicago to Bobbye Neil to Chris Thompson, segued into a mixed bag of Hans Zimmer and has worked extensively with Mark Mancina on “Speed 2” and other projects. Aside from his theatrical work, Van Tongeren scores the TV series “Bottlegeist; The Legacy” and “Outer Limits.” He says he was drawn to “Creature” because the true-to-production enabled him to dive deeper into the body of music than is supported by an average-length film and because it offered him a chance to write “elegant” music. “They have all these great exterior shots of the island and the ocean; it’s exciting to work on a project with all of you guys,” he says. Van Tongeren himself played a key role in getting “Creature” the album produced. “I did some groundwork after I had some of the main music writers and sent it to a couple of the soundtrack labels. I have relationships with them. They take an interest in soundtracks and lend a hand for a yet-to-be-determined label and a Thompson solo album.

FROM THE VAL I TS: “Taxi Driver” and “Funny Lady” are the latest additions to the “Music Masters” series of digitally remastered music. The albums will be in stores Tuesday (19) and follow the April 28 release of the 20th anniversary expanded-edition CD of “Close Encounters Of The Third Kind.” “Taxi Driver” contains 25 minutes of previously unreleased music, including all the cues composed and recorded by composer Bernard Herrmann. The four-cue version of Herrman’s compositions arranged and conducted by Dave Blume. “Funny Lady” includes nearly a dozen Barbara Streisand vocals, more than half of them standards from the ’30s and some co-written by Billy Rose. Both sets have been re-sequenced to reflect the actual order in which the music occurs in each film.

PRODUCTION NOTES: Rhino Records is out to prove there’s plenty of rocking’n’rolling going on in Cleveland. On Tuesday (19), the label will release Cleveland Rocks—Music From The City’s Independence Festival Tour. The compilation comprises 24 tracks, including two versions of the title track—the original version by Ian Hunter and a cover by the Presidents Of The United States Of America—plus full renderings of the signature music snippets from the movie, including “Five O’Clock World” and “What Is Hip.”

And speaking of TV, TVT Records’ Tee Vee Thoms is raking out an album to complement the retrospective “CBS: The First 50 Years.” TVT is working with the network to collect theme music from a half-century of series from “Mary Tyler Moore” to “Murphy Brown,” from “I Love Lucy” to “Everybody Loves Raymond.” Also included are “Mission: Impossible,” “The Dukes Of Hazard,” “Peabody,” and “All In The Family.” The album will be in stores Tuesday (19), the day before CBS airs its two-hour special.
**Billboard's Heatseekers Album Chart**

**The Heatseekers chart lists the best-selling titles by new and developing artists, defined as those who have never appeared in the Top 100 of the Billboard 200 chart. When an album reaches this level, the album and the artist's subsequent albums are immediately eligible to appear on the Heatseekers. All albums are available on cassette and CD.**

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<td>EDWIN MCCAIN</td>
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**New Entries:**
- SUNRISE: MISGUIDED ROSIES
- BILLBOARD'S WEEKLY COVERAGE OF HOT PROSPECTS FOR THE HEATSEEKER CHART • BY DOUG REECE

**Upcoming Albums:**
- CREEPING UP ON YOU: With the release of Creeper Lagoon's latest album, "I Become Small And Go," May 19 on adventurous indie Nickelbag and a DreamWorks contract tucked in the guitarist/keyboards/vocalist, Sharky Laguna, Creeper Lagoon is looking forward to improving its profile.

"Indie credibility and a nickel will buy you a nickel's worth of food," observes Laguna. "Over the years we've played with everybody from Pavement to Guided By Voices—anybody that's ever been called indie. I feel two things about the idea of credibility. One, it's a dime or a nickel just rocks need to get over.

Considering the act's funky aesthetic—lit a Big Lighter and oxygen oscillator as instruments, and lead vocalist Ian Sefchick builds its amplifiers from scratch—it's no wonder there was a meeting of the minds with Nickelbag, which is helmed by part of the Dust Brothers. They're very open-minded to trying different things with their music," says Dust Brother John King, who remixed Creeper album cuts "Wonderful Love," "Empty Ships," and "Dear Deadly." "They're not strictly rock-'n-roll or dance or analog or anything. It's just about making music that they love.

Creeper Lagoon's Laguna says the band's low-fi reputation says nothing about its willingness to experiment.

"I feel like we're building a Rub Goldenberg machine," says Laguna, referring to the artful known for building whimsical but complicated mechanical contraptions. "Sometimes I think music has a similarity in that I don't know if it has any function, but it has a lot of beauty and emotion and intimacy."

**International Approach:** Catatonia's album "International Velvet" is No. 3 on the UK albums chart this issue and will be released stateside May 26 on Vapor Records. Following a promotional appearance May 28-29 in New York, the act will hit the road July 30 on the H.O.R.D.E. tour.
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**ARTISTS & MUSIC**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**NATASHA GOLDFINGER**

PRODUCER: Alexander O’Neal

**ALEXANDER O’NEAL**

Lovers Again

PRODUCERS: Alex Pitts, A. Benjamin, Robert "Roz" Dei, and Carol Harper

ilio\|h\|v\|w Word 1512

Alexander O’Neal sings the same type of music that has helped to maintain his career, but that isn’t necessarily a good thing today. Older listeners get bored sooner than they used to. While his earlier hits, such as “Saturday Love” (1986) and “Baby Come To Me” (1987), contrasted with the public, “Lovers Again” lacks the fire to stir up the romantic impulses of the following decade. Although it contains an air of inanity, its tracks, such as “Carry On,” “Our Love,” and “Baby Come To Me” (a duet with Cherelle), seem geared to radio programs on R&B adult stations. Otherwise, this mediocre project will probably be passed over when it comes to top 40 and mainstream R&B airplay.

**LATIN**

**VICTOR MANUELLE**

PRODUCER: Fernando Sánchez, Victor Manuelle

Sony Disc 872

Victor Manuelle, a nuyorican, gravy-drenched, soulful, yet rauco
goofy rauco y from Puerto Rico, follows up by the popular and
d’lent, but the very last. In addition, the
to commercial success. A lot of the
catchy tracks will be a hit or miss
to the music lovers.

**CLASSICA**

**J. B. BACH, CANTATAS FOR ALTO**

Andreas Scholl, countertenor; Orches
t der Kol
gion Voices, Philippe Herreweghe

PRODUCER: Jean-MartinŽ

Harmonia Mundi 901644

Andreas Scholl’s Bach program on the Gramophone Awards ceremony last year in London and caused quite a stir with his Teutonic
good looks and the disarming purity of his
counter tenor voice. His Gramophone Award winning album of Vivaldi’s Stabat Mater on Harmonia Mundi is something of a
contemporary classic, and he has also put out a great collection of
erman Baroque leader and one of old English
gongs, besides singing in acclaimed
ensemble recordings of Handel, Schola
t, Caldara, and Bach. Here, Scholl offers a
set of Bach’s soulful cantatas for alto
to the rather prominent. He has also
dicated a number of Bach’s cantatas for the
cangiography on a disc panel. Also new on
Harmonia Mundi: Herreweghe has added to the impressive number of Bach
which ranges from Monteverdi to
to the mellifluous take on Bach’s B Minor Mass.

**CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN**

**CHRIS EATON**

What Kind Of Love

PRODUCER: Chris Eaton

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**REVIEWS & PREVIEWS**

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

Godzilla—The Album

PRODUCERS: Various

Epic/Sony Music Soundtrack 69358

The star-studded soundtrack to the long-
avivated monster flick that promises to be
summer blockbuster features enough new
and noteworthy tracks to warrant attention
as a likely big hit in the summer.

**ARTISTS & MUSIC**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**NATALIE MERCHANT**

Ophelia

PRODUCER: Various

Rhino 62196

Throughout her career as the front
women of the alternative folk band
her solo work since she left the Maniacs in
1986, Natalie Merchant has
demonstrated an innate ability to write
music that is as delightfully beautiful as it is
commercially successful. Her magnetic
voice is evident on “Come With
the Second Solo” and one that
seems destined to confirm her as the new
one of the industry’s boldest, most
vital music creators. From the Alluring
title track (involving instrumentation and
spoken passages in various languages) to the folk
standard “When the Thieves Left Belovin’”
to the irresistibly catchy first single, “Kind & Generous,” this
is a nicely followed in the face of the
that showcases Merchant’s skills as a
sound sculptress in the Brian Wilson
tradition. As with her solo debut, “Tigermas,” this album has tremendous
frooform potential.

**SPOTLIGHT**

**LENNY KRAVITZ**

Virgin 45605

With an artistry as musical as Lenny
Krautz, one learns not to expect
consistency but, rather, to revel in
the flashes of genius that each new workrings. On his latest endeavor,
these brilliant moments are plentiful,
starting with the full length “Jimi,” “Love,”
and culminating with the Soul-like “I
Belong To You”—a pop gem that could
turn Krautz into a crossover phenom-
emon. Until now he has been predomi-
nantly a rocker who has effortlessly
drawn to other discogs; this
brotherly embraces pop, R&B, and funk in the manner of Prine at his
cost. His new album highlights some
of the previous milestone on three
counts. First, Robert Freedman’s
arrangements are even more
astonishing this time around; second,
the “real time” recording imbues the performance with an
immediacy long missing from
dated disks. Finally, Marsalis’ playing here is
crystalline, his alums and grows lend the
the horn an expressive power that’s
very nearly
together and Hart
Extensive
Awards
Marsalis’
37203.
Terry Clark

PRODUCER: Keith Stegall

Mercury 314 558 211

Terry Clark is coming more meshing
more focused and in selecting materi-
al for her strong voice. She’s
also effectively making the translations
from tough-but-vulnerable chick to a song
stylist.

**VITAL REISSUES**

**JOHN WILLIAMS**

Close Encounters Of The Third Kind

PRODUCER: John Williams

MCA 2484

Jeffrey Chapman

Amira Masters 9004

When it was released theatrically in
1977, Close Encounters of the Third Kind
and Star Wars, “Close Encounters Of
The Third Kind” restyled Steven Spiel-
berg’s reputation as a ground-breaking
director and special-effects pioneer.
The movie also marked another successful
connection between Spielberg and
score composer John Williams, who in all
three of the movie, did what a
gift writer for themes that have
remained as indelible in our minds as
the security of a bike and the
title track, sung by Power Women (Froen’s
brother’s singing with.

**R & B**

**VOCES OF THEORY**

H.O.L.A. Records 519 941 016

Upon first glance at Voices Of Theory, one
expects to hear some more picturesque
grooves. But looks can be deceiving, espe-
cially when the group, whose debut was
produced by Jellbymen and 
as
and "Soulful Anger."

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**ALBUMS:**

**SPOILFIGHTER:** Releases deemed by the movie editors to deserve special attention on the basis of musical merit and/or Boardwalk chart potential. **VITAL REISSUES:** Reissued albums of artistic, archival, and commercial interest, and outstanding collec-
tional merit.

**CRITIC’S CHOICE:** New reissues, releases of chart potential, highly recommended because of their musical
merit.

**MUSIC TO MY EARS:** New releases deemed Picks which were featured in the “Music To My Ears” column as being among the most significant records of the year. All albums commercially available in the U.S. are eligible. Send review copies to Paul Verbe, Billboard, 1515 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036. Send country albums to Chet F Tulsa, 48 Market Square W., Nashville, TN 37203. Send Latin albums to John Lannert, 1614 Ferry Road, Louisville, KY 40213. Other contributors: Iri Lichtenstein (Broadway/jazz/rap), Brad Bamberger (classical/jazz), Steve Krabbel (jazz/r&b), Deborah Evans Price (contemporary Christian/N.Y.), Gordon Ely (gospel), John dibbles (new age).

**NEWSPAPER:** An indies

**SUMMARY:** Reviews of albums by one or more artists. **PICKS:** New releases predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format.
**Reviews & Previews**

**COUNTRY**

**MICHAELE PETTERSON** When the Bartender Cries

**REVIEWERS:**
- **ROBERT O'DONNELL**
  - On air 3/7/93

**PUBLISHERS:**
- **NEW CONCEPTS**
  - Full page

**SYNOPSIS:**

Thedéedispersesthelegendofapopstarinatabletalkingviaameetingwithcombinedpopandsoulthroughtheeyesofaconfusedyoungwoman.

**SINGLES:**

- **NEW**
  - *Johnny Depp* (MCA 47740)
  - *Foolish* (MCA 47741)
  - *It's Only Love* (MCA 47705)

**DANCE**

**SHAWN CHRISTOPHER**

**Sweet Freedom**

**REVIEWERS:**
- **JULIET CANTER**
  - On air 3/7/93

**PUBLISHERS:**
- **NEW CONCEPTS**
  - Full page

**SYNOPSIS:**

Slow jam with a sexy vibe that features a working female vocalist and pulsating beats.

**SINGLES:**

- **NEW**
  - *Let Me Love You* (MCA 47742)
  - *Think of Me* (MCA 47743)

**R&B**

**ED HARDY**

** lil' Suzanne**

**REVIEWERS:**
- **ANDREW ROBERTS**
  - On air 3/7/93

**INSTRUMENTAL:**

- **NEW**
  - *Lil' Suzanne* (MCA 47744)

**SYNOPSIS:**

Hard driving R&B with a female vocalist that features hard-hitting drums and a strong bass line.

**SINGLES:**

- **NEW**
  - *Lil' Suzanne* (MCA 47744)

**NEW & NOTEWORTHY**

**REISS**

**Boon Bye Yee**

**REVIEWERS:**
- **ANDREW ROBERTS**
  - On air 3/7/93

**PUBLISHERS:**
- **NEW CONCEPTS**
  - Full page

**SYNOPSIS:**

Release of the London nightclub sensation that features a catchy R&B hook and sultry vocals.

**SINGLES:**

- **NEW**
  - *Boon Bye Yee* (MCA 47745)

**DANCE**

**SHAWN CHRISTOPHER**

**Sweet Freedom (CD)**

**REVIEWERS:**
- **JULIET CANTER**
  - On air 3/7/93

**PUBLISHERS:**
- **NEW CONCEPTS**
  - Full page

**SYNOPSIS:**

Delightful slow jam with a female vocalist and pulsating beats.

**SINGLES:**

- **NEW**
  - *Sweet Freedom* (MCA 47746)

**R&B**

**ED HARDY**

** lil' Suzanne**

**REVIEWERS:**
- **ANDREW ROBERTS**
  - On air 3/7/93

**INSTRUMENTAL:**

- **NEW**
  - *Lil' Suzanne* (MCA 47744)

**SYNOPSIS:**

Hard driving R&B with a female vocalist that features hard-hitting drums and a strong bass line.

**SINGLES:**

- **NEW**
  - *Lil' Suzanne* (MCA 47744)
score of electronic trance music from indie label Waveform Records. In July, the label will release the "Ancient Alien" soundtrack, and Odyssey plans a host of Internet and in-store promotions for the video and album.

SOUTH PARK
Warner Home Video
6 minutes, $16.95
The animation is as crude as the jokes, but this Comedy Central sleeper hit is bound to be a hit with the Miller family. The adventures of foul-mouthed youths Stan, Kyle, and Cartman, as well as the often dead Kenny, are now legendary. And creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone are the hottest animators since Matt Groening of "The Simpsons." Woody, Warren, and other theme-episodes from the series to capitalize on the millions of people who have heard about "South Park" but don't get Comedy Central. In "Cartman Gets An Anal Probe," aliens abduct Kyle's baby brother Ike and leave Careening on a problem that would make even Mulder and Scully of "The X-Files" chuckle. The resolution is as ridiculous as the plot, but it's hilarious. In terms of adult-driven animation, "South Park" takes up were "The Simpsons" left off. Also available are "Volcano: "Weight Gain 4000," "Big Gay Al's Gay Boat Ride," "An Elephant Makes Love To A Pig," and "Death."

THE MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW WITH JOHN LENNON AND YOKO ONO
R rally Home Video
Approximately 373 minutes, 5 tape set, $99.95
From Feb 14-18, 1972, John and Yoko co-hosted "The Mike Douglas Show," and daytime television has probably never seen a more eclectic group of guests. On day three, the couple booked a macabre cook, a biofeedback expert, the director of the Peace Corps, and Chuck Berry. Beatles fans expecting an all-out jam session will be disappointed, but Berry and Lennon performing "Johnny B. Goode" and "Saturday Night Fever" are great. The show note is Yoko singing "Sisters O Sisters," and there is a laughable spoken-word performance by Douglas. There's also a music video of "Crippled Inside" from the "Imagine" album, featuring a cameo by the late Andy Warhol. The music portions are entertaining, but the talking-head guests are pretty dull. Still, the interaction between John and Yoko offers a lot of insight into why their marriage worked so well.

ROCKTOONS
www.rocktoons.com
This compact prides itself on being "non-productive" and having "no real purpose in the world." Rocktoons is quite entertaining. An image library focusing primarily on original artwork of rock bands and their sites features selections of today's most popular bands drawn by both site maintainers and fans. Other features include a gallery of older cartoons, a "Bulletin board" through which users have a forum for "publishing their meaningless thoughts," and the opportunity to vote for their favorite submissions. Rocktoons boasts a design philosophy of "crackling apples, no problems." But don't let that fool you. The design is slick and imaginative, even though the only software requirement is "any browser written with HTML in the last few years." Laced with just a tinge of sardonic wit, Rocktoons is a humorous and entertaining site worth checking out.

MB 99
Sony Entertainment
Sony PlayStation
"MB 99 is the latest fix for baseball junkies, packs an addictive, adrenaline-soaked wallet. Even before users get to their first exhibition game, they have the option to compete as a major league hopefuls. This new feature tracks players' progress, and if they have the right stuff, they get called up to the show. Don't get too comfortable, though, or you could find yourself back riding pine in spring training. Of course, there's a lot more to "MB 99."
The improved graphics are more than just hype, and Sony has applied its "total control" feature for highly advanced batting and fielding options. This game chews up and spits out the dirt gaming games like Electronic Arts' "Triple Play 99."

BLASTO
Sony Entertainment
Sony PlayStation
Console game fans can't get enough smart aleck superheroes these days, and the latest member of the blaster bunch Blast-o (voiced by "Saturday Night Live" alumna Phil Hartman) is perfectly suited to come to the rescue. In many respects, the game answers the call and is full of silly surprises, with an array of zestfully animated villains with weapons that are wonderfully destructive. The biggest downside of "Blast-o" is its reliance on the "ALIEN" formula, which—though challenging—are repetitious and frustrating. As a result, it takes some digging to get to the heart of this title.

AUDIO BOOKS
By TRU CLIF MILLER ROSENBAUM
STILL ME
By Christopher Reeve
Read by the author
Random House Audio Books
3 hours (unabridged), $18.95
ISBN 0-735-0208-0
It's no overstatement to say that Reeve's autobiography is among the most life-affirming audio experiences published. Best known for his "Superman" role, Reeve had an active life outside of acting and was widely known for his advocacy for the disabled. Such a man suffered an injury that left him physically dependent on others for his care is tragic beyond belief. In this riveting audio, Reeve honestly and courageously details his accident and his aftermath. When he first learned the extent of his condition, he briefly considered turning off his life support. But his wife, Dana, told him she was with him for the long haul. "You're still you," she said, with no hint of hesitation or obligation. Reeve says if he had sensed any, he might not have been able to go on. Instead, he battled back from despair. He says he didn't know what kind of life can I have?" But "what kind of life can I build?" From his ongoing struggle with physical therapy—which gradually let him breathe for short periods without his ventilator—and his activism and directing debut, Reeve is a shining example of a person who has refused to be defined. This audio book also covers details of his troubled childhood and life before the accident. After overcoming the trauma of his parents' divorce, Reeve attended Juilliard, where one of his classmates was Robin Williams. Reeve has appeared on television, where he eventually made it big in Hollywood. This intimate audio format is perfect for Reeve's listeners. But just as it is for any true fan, truth will suffer against the sad news of the ventilator in the background is powerful indeed.
Forte Stakes Out His Own Camp
Ruffhouse/Columbia Artist Looks To Establish Own Identity

BY SHAWNEE SMITH

NEW YORK—Though he gained notoriety for collaborating on various Fugees projects—the group's "Cowboys," Wyclef Jean's "We Trying To Stay Alive," and Lauryn Hill's "Sweetest Thing" remix—Forte's solo deals with who he is as an artist. "I want people to hear me as me," says Forte. "It's my music and my sound, my arrangement of voices, a different sound from anything they've heard before, with a little bit of R&B, a little soul, a little bit of funk, and a little bit of hip-hop," adds Forte. "I want people to hear me as an artist of my own." 

"Of course, people are going to assume that because I'm in the Refugee Camp, ("Poly Sci") is going to be in the same vein...light but serious, danceable and commercially accepted," says Forte. "But lyrically I've always kept my ear to the ground because that's what I relate to." 

Raised in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, N.Y., listening to the likes of Nina Simone and Sarah Vaughan, Forte was educated in New York public schools before attending Eneter, a preparatory high school in New Hampshire, where he was trained as a classical violinist. He titled the set "Poly Sci" to speak to the balancing act he often performs between his street background and academic training. "I've got the science, the math, the people involved. It's like the whole album is a mixture of dual personalities. He's got the DMX track ("We Got This"), "Hot," and the Fat Joe track ("They Got Me") that's bumping for the streets, and on a whole other level he's got 'God Is Love Is War,' which we can market to rap alternative and R&B [audiences]."

The album's first single, "Niney Nine (Flash The Message)", was serviced to radio the first week of May, interpolating the chorus of the '80s hit "99 Luftballons" by German group Nena. The chorus on the album version is sung by fellow Fugees affiliate Jeri Fajita, but, according to Julie Borchard, VP of international at Columbia, per Sony Germany's request, Forte is slated to rerecord the song with a more authentic vocalist for higher visibility.

The single received 133 spins for the week ending May 10, according to Broadcast Data Sce. Helen Little, operations manager at WUSL FM Philadelphia, put the single in light rotation and says she is excited about the artist's success at the station. "I saw [Forte] perform at a showcase, and he is a very compelling artist. 'Niney Nine' is very unique. The Nena hook he uses brings a whole new flavor to hip-hop." 

Clyde Ragland, manager at Mixter Music in Mechanicsville, Va., also expects "Poly Sci" to do well at retail. "We've been selling the 12-inch of 'Hot' pretty well," he says of the single Columbia released to mix-show and mix-tape DJs to garner an underground buzz on Forte. "Because he's a member of [the Refugee Camp All-Stars], there's a demand for the product. They have a broad appeal, so I expect [the album] to do very well.

"We want to capitalize on his involvement with the Fugees, but we want to highlight the talents that are unique unto himself," says Chris Schwartz, CEO of Ruffhouse, about the marketing strategy for Forte.

Forte has been on tour internationally with the Fugees for the last two years—first in support of "The Score" and currently for "Wyclef Jean Presents...The Carnival." 

In late 1997, the labels released the freestyle-flavored "Hot" and the brief interlude "Riddle Of Steel" to DJs via street teams to ready audiences for his solo debut. (Continued on next page)
In April, Forte embarked on a two-week black college and spring break tour with Ruffhouse labelmates Sparta Thiev$. The tour was performed for radio, retail, and press across the U.S. as part of the Columbia black music department's Street Soul campaign. The video for "Ninety Nine," which was serviced to video outlets May 12, will also be rotated with other Street Soul artists in 165 Foot Action show retailers.

"We want to focus on our core hip-hop audience, who we believe are about a million active record and concert ticket buyers, first," they said. And hopefully "Ninety Nine" will cross over.

Forte will continue dates with Jean throughout the summer, with the Puges' annual Harlem benefit concert Saturday (16) being webcast at www.johnforte.com. He will also perform during the upcoming Soul Train Grooves tour and during Lilith Fair as part of Queen Latifah's set. Forte is managed by Latifah's Flavor Unit Movement.

Internationally, Forte used Jean's two-week European promo tour to do international press and make TV appearances with Jean. He will perform at various international summer events, and Borchardt expects to book international promo dates in the late summer and early fall.

Forte's music is published by Nuytta Babce/ASCAP and he is booked worldwide by the William Morris Agency.
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SHE'S BACK: In the last issue, “I Get Lonely” by Janet Featuring BLACKstreet (Virgin) scored Hot Shot Debut at No. 6 on Hot R&B Singles. Most times, a record has lost its bullet. Billboard will look for increases of 10% or more in sales and airplay for two consecutive weeks before the track can earn the bullet back. However, “Song For Mama” (Motown) by Boyz II Men re-bullets in its 24th chart week, moving 47-27, and it also earns the Greatest Gainer Sales & Airplay distinction. “We saw this as the perfect Mother’s Day song, so we wanted to take advantage of the opportunity,” says Steve Shannon, singles buyer for the Dallas-based Blockbuster chain. When Motown cut out the single, the chain stocked inventory for use in Mother’s Day promotion and it benefited from Motown and distributor PDI; price and positioning were placed a week before the holiday. According to Shannon, sales shot from 400 to 4,000 units for that week. The total increase at retail was 107%, hoisting the track 42-25 on Hot R&B Singles. At radio, listeners increased by 2.1 million as 13 additional stations spun the record for the BDS tracking week that ended May 12. Some individuals spent a little more on Mom and had a choice of two albums that featured the song: Boys II Men’s “Evolution,” which saw a 40% gain on Top R&B Albums, rising 78-66, and the “Soul Food” soundtrack, which saw a 50% hike and rose 73-68.

BLOWING UP: A few weeks ago I mentioned how the Sparkle track “Be Careful” (Hock Land/Interscope) was one of the fastest-growing R&B songs at radio. That tune stands at 51.3 million listeners after just six weeks at radio. Now “The Boy Is Mine” (Atlantic) by Brandy & Monica follows in that tradition, as 87 stations bring 39.4 million listeners to the party. Based on airplay alone, the song would rank No. 1 on Hot R&B Singles; it’s No. 5 on Hot R&B Airplay after four weeks at radio. Unlike Sparkle, who ships a self-titled album that hits stores Tuesday (19) without ever having a commercial single, there will be a commercial single on "The Boy Is Mine" also hitting Tuesday (19). That single will ship 600,000 units.

GRIFFIN

(Continued from page 13)
tiful, “Flaming Red” fused beauty and power, placing Griffin in a league with Bonnie Raitt, Chrissie Hynde, and Patti Smith. It also hints at Sheryl Crow and fellow Boston singer/songwriter Mary Lou Lord.

On “Flaming Red,” Griffin delivers vocals at the same level with her signature intensity, but she adds accessibility by going electric and turning up the volume. Griffin’s songs are published by One Life Music/Chroma Dog Music/ASCAP.

A&M hopes “Flaming Red” will be Griffin’s ticket out of the acoustic pigeonhole, and the label is counting on radio to play a big part. “It’s important that people hear the music first and let it speak for itself,” says Beth Tallman, product manager at A&M (U.S.).

Adds Peter Napolitano, senior VP of promotion at A&M (U.S.), “There is great anticipation that we will be very successful at all formats, because [Griffin] has a giant audience reach that would cover the full spectrum. The fact that she’s a prolific songwriter and her lyric content is intelligent could really hit the heartstrings of the masses.”

The first single, “One Big Love,” will debut at No. 1 on AC, hot AC, alternative, and key top 40 programmers in late May. “I hope (“Flaming Red”) is going to be huge,” says Bruce Warren, music director at WXPX Philadelphia. “Griffin has been an on-air guest. I know that listeners in Philly will be going crazy for it. She’s got a good following, and this is the record that should help her career.”

Adds John T. Kunz, owner of Waterloos Records & Video in Austin, Texas, “I think the new record is good because it’s fantastic; it’s nice, full-produced album. We’ve done incredibly well with Patty in the past—we’re around 1,500 [units sold] out of one store in July.”

Brent Sully, executive VP and GM of Epic/RCA, says “I’m not a player” has the potential to break out amid the competition from R&B singles.

“[We’re not working on a plan with A&M to place it into one of our promotional programs],” Griffin, who is booked by Internation Creative Management, said for three August dates of Lilith Fair, a tour she also performed at last year. According to Tallman, she’s performing May showcases in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Dallas. She’s currently playing secondary markets with her new band. Tallman adds that a summer tour begins July in the works.

Baker, Griffin’s manager, says it’s critical that she be recognized outside of the singer/songwriter realm, and he hopes to establish her viability as an alternative rock artist. He is pushing for Griffin to tour with popular modern rock bands, as opposed to the glossy acoustic acts she has been paired with since “Ghosts.”

“I don’t want her to have to tailor her show to accommodate a pollen audience,” Baker says. “We’re looking to build believers, and we’re going to be very aggressive about it,” says Al Caffaro, chairman/CEO of A&M.

WILLIAM BRONNER
**HOT R&B SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Weeks on Chart</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I GET LONELY</td>
<td>JANET (FEATURING BLACKSTREET)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>TOO CLOSE</td>
<td>ALICIA KEYS (FEAT. FLAVIA THEO)</td>
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<td>LET'S RIDE</td>
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<td>TURN IT UP (REMIX)</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>J. DAVIS (FEAT. J. JONES)</td>
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<td>RAISE THE ROOF</td>
<td>LUKES (FEATURING THE OUTKAST)</td>
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<td>DEJA VU (THE LUV BABY)</td>
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<td>DO YOU WANT MY HEART?</td>
<td>J. JONES &amp; DJ SURE Shot</td>
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<td>CRAZY FOR YOU</td>
<td>B. MORGAN (FEAT. M. BROWN)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>AM I DREAMING</td>
<td>O. SKOLL (FEATURING K. DAVIS &amp; K. DANIEL)</td>
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<td>U. WATKINSON &amp; 1000 DEGREES</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>THE PARTY CONTINUES</td>
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<td>LIL RED BOAT</td>
<td>L. SPRINGER &amp; O. MCCARTNEY</td>
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<td>WITH MY LOVE</td>
<td>J. JONES &amp; DJ SURE Shot</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>FEAR</td>
<td>J. JONES &amp; DJ SURE Shot</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>STRAWBERRIES</td>
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**Compiled from a national sample of R&B radio airplay monitored by broadcast data systems, R&B radio playlists, and retail single sales collected, compiled, and provided by Billboard**

- **Top Title:** I GET LONELY
- **Artist:** JANET (FEATURING BLACKSTREET)
- **Peak Position:** 1
- **Weeks on Chart:** 2

This week's chart includes data from the week of May 23, 1998.
### Billboard Hot R&B Airplay™

**Compiled from a national sample of airplay supplied by Broadcast Data Systems' Radio Track service. 106 R&B stations are monitored throughout the nation, with data collected over a 24-hour period. Chart reflects two-weeks earlier release date.**

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<th>Hot R&amp;B Airplay song chart for May 23, 1998.</th>
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<th>R&amp;B SINGLES A-Z</th>
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**Records selected that have appeared on the Hot R&B Singles chart for more than 20 weeks and have dropped below the top 50.**

### Billboard Hot R&B Singles Sales™

**Compiled from a national sample of POS (point of sale) retail sales key R&B retail stores which report number of units sold to SoundScan, Inc. This data is used in the Hot R&B Singles chart.**

| Billboard Hot R&B Singles Sales chart for May 23, 1998. |  |  |
**Dance ARTISTS & MUSIC**

**Dance TRAX**

Dance Mixes On TV, Film, And Record

by Larry Flick

Disco Nostalgia Thrives On TV, Film, And Record

Deep Soul Label Showcases Sound Of Chicago House

The disco revval has officially lasted longer than the actual 70s era of musical decadence. Go figure.

Over the last eight years, that glorious yet humbly criticized four-year period (we’re not counting the pre disco Philly Sound era) has been the basis for more compilations, song covers, books, movies, and television shows than any other musical movement.

And just when my fellow music pundits attempt to declare a second death of disco, another wave of nostalgia washes over their feeble words. The world at large just never seems to get enough of it.

The latest is just about to hit. This summer will see the release of the major motion pictures “Studio 54” and “The Last Days Of Disco,” both of which sport spankin’ hot soundtracks that sparkle with timeless baubles—as well as a few festivest hew.

The Work Group will come out the chute first with the album supporting “The Last Days Of Disco.” A test pressing of Nuyorican Soul’s jazz-kissed interpretation of Alicia Bridges’ “I Love The Nightlife” has been riding high at club DJs. A commercial single release is planned early next month.

If you need a disco fix sooner, VH1 launches the second season of its fab “Behind The Music” series with a special 90-minute look at notorious New York nightlife spot Studio 54 on May 24.

The program deftly traces the venue’s history—from its opening on April 26, 1977, through its reign as the quintessential hall of decadence and right up to its unceremonious close several years later. Featured are yarny anecdotes from celebs like Grace Jones, Nile Rodgers, and Jerry Hall, as well as vivid observations from many of the club’s doormen and bartenders.

It’s all good, dishy fun, while also being remarkably insightful regarding the endurance of the disco revival. Simply put, it represents a rare time of pure societal freedom. Although the disco era has been romanticized beyond realistic grasp, it truly was a time when seemingly nothing could go wrong. If you stuck reasonably close to the fantasy land of colored lights and boogie oogie oogie. After the disco bubble burst, we were whacked by crises like AIDS. Suddenly, we went from being irreirresistibly to incredibly vulnerable. With that knowledge, who wouldn’t want to permanently live in the past?

VH1’s “Behind The Music” special effectively captures the contrast between disco’s heyday and initial crash in footage from the last known interview with Steve Rubell (co-owner of Studio 54 with Ian Schrager), who died of AIDS-related illness in 1989. His words will haunt you long after the program ends—and well into the next time you dive into the ongoing waves of disco nostalgia.

LIVIN’ FT. UP: On the crazy-catchy “Boom Bye Bye,” intriguing newcomer Reiss so thoroughly soaks the brain with warm, sunny vibes that you feel virtually transported to a plush Jamaican island, frosty beverage in hand.

With a voice reminiscent of Tone Loc, Reiss seductively chats and raps amid a slinky shuffle-beat co-adjured with a sticky keyboard lick lifted from “Die Young Stay Pretty” by Blondie. His performance is nicely contrasted by budding toasting sirens Michelle Mee, who brings a Patra-like aggression to this hitbound Mercury release.

Intensely radio-minded in its original form, this Craig Kafon production will draw the heavy props of clubheads on the strength of Greg Padula’s meaty house remix. He flexes a muscular baseline atop rattling percussion, while keeping the keyboard frills to a minimum. Kafon takes a crack at reacasting the tune himself by injecting a jittery triple-retro into the mix.

Whilst we have Mercury on the brain, we also want to point out the imminence of a new album by the underappreciated Baha Men.

Due June 16, the wonderfully uplifting “Doong Spank” shows the Bahamian male posse floating its rich harmonies over grooves that capture the flavor of the island state of the floors funk with thumpin’ disco. The inexhaustible Berman Brothers and Tommy D. are among the set’s producers. The compilation includes cuts from Mercury A&E guru Steve Greenberg, who is actually quite impressive at the helm of the noteworthy first single, “Double Lovin’.”

HEY NOW: After teasing and taunting diehards for nearly two years with promises of an album, Washington, D.C., studio renegades Deep Dish are finally about to unleash the full-length “Junk Science” on deConstruction U.K. in June. Kids, you are not ready for the brilliance of this project.

Of course, Deep Dish compatriots Dubfire and Shararam include the recent singles “Stay Gold” and “Stranded,” giving purists a splash of the dark-house atmosphere that has become their signature. However, they also break exciting new ground by infusing elements of alterna-pop and even the scant guitar or two. Although the set remains fairly dubby, Everything But The Girl chanteuse Tracey Thorn makes an appropriatelytorchy cameo, while the lads even try their hand at vocalizing with respectable results.

Due to the very nature of the project, the label has refrained from releasing singles. For now, the buzz is better across the boards. The current buzz single, “Double Lovin’,” has been #1 on the Hot Dance Club Play Chart for a month, and has peaked at #14 on Billboard’s Dance Breakout Chart.

A native of the Bahamas, Baha Men is a fantastic group that has been playing the club circuit for nearly a decade. The group’s sound is a blend of pop, rock, and dance, and they are known for their lively and energetic performances.

No Borders For Natcha Atlas

Beggars Banquet Set Mixes Dance, Arabic Styles

BY DYLAN SIEGLER

NEW YORK—Border-crossing comes easily to Natcha Atlas.

Her multilingual upbringing, coupled with her musical versatility, has been helping bridge the gap between breakbeats and belly dancing for a decade. With “Halim,” her new release on Beggars Banquet, U.S. Atlas sheds her classical Arabic musical training to deliver a deep, danceable experience. In the process, she establishes herself as a viable entity apart from her usual dance partners, Trans-Global Underground.

While growing up in a Moroccan suburb of Brussels, Atlas realized how calling. “I was always singing and being françaises from the age of 6,” she says. “I always wanted to grow up and be a performer.”

The Middle Eastern vocal techniques and the Arabic language had been studied by Atlas since she was a child. Her music began as a child factor prominently in her music today. “I use that [training] and the structure that goes along with that,” she says. “I then cross it over with some European sounds, push it a little bit further.”

As a teenager, Atlas moved to England, where a chain of coincidences brought her talent to the club world. Atlas’ vocals and racy shanki (belly dancing) talents have been enhanced projects by venerable names like Jah Wobble, Peter Gabriel, Apache Indian, and Local, who had a huge U.K. club hit with “Timbal” in the early ’90s.

To the uneducated ear, “Halim” weighs in as an engaging collection of lilting Arabic melodies with an infectious drum’n’bass-inflected groove. But the average American listener might miss the context of Atlas’ new work, which, she says, takes its cues from “the sounds I like from Arabic music of the ’70s and the ’90s. It’s got a lot of the Egyptian sense, as a nostalgic sort of thing, even though it’s fused with dub and Western European music.”

“Halim,” which means “beautiful,” takes its name in part from the late Abel Halim Hafez, one of Atlas’ favorite Egyptian singers; his roots, like her own, were half Jewish and half Muslim.

“He was an angel in my eyes,” she says. (Continued on next page)
**HOT DANCE MUSIC**

**CLUB PLAY**

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**MAXI-SINGLES SALES**

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**NO BORDERS FOR NATACHA ATALA**

(Continued from preceding page)

Atlas says, “He was just incredible, really. It’s been 26 years since his death, so it seemed the right time to commemorate him.”

During Hafez’s prime, according to Atlas, Egyptian pop musicians were inspired by his performance and televised Hollywood aesthetics. Atlas, of course, can relate to their crossover mentality. But her voice—which is in cutting and distinctive as that of Björk or Portishead’s trip-hop diva, Beth Gibbons—is the biggest asset of “Halim.”

Atlas is jointly signed in the U.K. to Nation Records and Beggars Banquet’s Mantra label. Her 1997 debut, “Diaospura,” was licensed to MCA for stateside release. It was closer in content to the work of TransGlobal Underground, whose input still factors heavily in Atlas’ songcraft.

“I wanted to move away from that [on “Halim”] because there’s no point in having two TransGlobal Undergrounds around,” she says. “It’s not about any rules or tradition at all with TransGlobal Underground; it’s about getting funky. And then there’s my project, which is about tradition. People didn’t know the difference for a long time.”

Atlas and TransGlobal Underground still have clubbers in mind, however. Because unauthorized remixes had a field day with “Diaospura,” but none of the results were to Atlas’ liking, she and TransGlobal Underground beat others to the punch by remixing many tracks on “Halim” themselves. This includes Atlas rapping in Arabic.

Leslie Bleekley, executive VP at Beggar’s Banquet (U.S.), says Atlas’ work “is world music, so we obviously want to go to that fan base. But we do want to broaden the appeal.” The album’s first single will be the club-friendly, Moroccan-styled “Amulet.”

Bleekley says the label is “targeting the world fans but breaking out to reach—I hate the term ‘mature audiences’—but that’s the market.” As the sole purveyor of Arabic tonalities to U.S. clubgoers and pop audiences, Atlas says she does “whatever it takes to reach the many different facets of Arab music as possible.” She is already working with a small Egyptian record company on new material, embracing what she gleefully pronounces “a tasty, modern Egyptian pop feel.”
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TO ENTER: Submit one song, biographical information,
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Michele Quigley, Billboard, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.
(Please make sure tapes are clearly labeled).
All entries will be judged by Billboard Dance Music Editor Larry Flick. Performance
slots are on Thursday, July 9 and Friday, July 10 at venues in Chicago
to be announced. Billboard is not responsible for artist travel & lodging.
Michele Quigley
Special Events Director
212.536.5002 ph
212.536.1400 fx
Larry Flick
Dance Music Editor
212.536.5050 ph
212.536.5358 fx
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REGISTRATION FEES
Early bird - payment received by May 29
Pre-registration - payment received between May 29th and June 19
Full registration - after June 19th and Walk Up
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REGULAR
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BILLBOARD DJs & RECORD POOL DIRECTORS
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Jeff Foxworthy Segues From Rednecks To Relationships; Brooks Makes Nashville Debut

You might be: Jeff Foxworthy returns with his fourth Warner Bros. album Tuesday (19) and he's tailing away from his redneck shtick a bit. The title single, "Totally Committed," deals more with relationships.

"I've really hit it out of the park on this album," he tells Nashville Scene. "As crazy as the record business is these days, we'll have to see how it does. The first album sold 3/4 of a million copies, and the second one is 3 million, so I've got a record that's on a comedy record. The only thing I have control over is the quality of the material, and I think it's the best stuff I've ever done. That's about all I can do." Foxworthy says about half of the album was inspired by the fact that he and his wife just celebrated their 13th anniversary.

"You get to the point where you're saying, 'Hey, we might make it!' I have this theory that after two or three years you've been away from being behind the scenes, you're away from messing with the whole thing up," he says. "So I guess more than half of the songs on this album are just stuff that's been all over the place, and I've taken ideas from what I've learned about women and relationships in the first 13 years. Obviously it's not a whole lot. It just follows my life. Looking back, whatever I've done has been inspired by whatever I've done at some point. It's about coming to terms with a lot of this stuff. I think that's where I'm at in my life, and that's what I'm writing about. It's about growing up and being a man and being aware of what's going on around you and being aware of what's going on around you and being aware of what's going on around you."

Foxworthy was also in the studio with a new producer, Trey Bruce, suggesting a duet with Jon Jovi. Bruce approached the rock star about the project. "I was really tickled with the way it turned out," he says.

Others are also a result of the album being inspired by the success of the Foxworthy TV show. "I heard the track with Jon Jovi, and I thought it was excellent," says Brantley, who met Jovi while working with the TV show. "I remember the first time I met him and I was so impressed. He really came through, and he really came through for me."

"I really tickled with this album," says LeDoux. "They made it easy, and I can't say enough about the musicians and the band."

"Capitol VP of sales Bill Kennedy (Continued on page 38)"

So the redneck thing will not die? "You know what? I'm amazed," Foxworthy says. "It's been a decade since I started doing that. Like the calendar, every year I keep thinking, 'I can't think of 366 more things.' But I can't get a 367th idea. It's not that I'm not thinking about it, but I just can't get a 367th idea."

It's interesting that the white Southerner is the last ethnic group that can be made fun of in public. "It's become so tough," he says. "It's hard times for a comedian. You can't talk about anything anymore without offending somebody somewhere. It's a weird thing. If you look back at stuff I've done, I'm not sure I ever did anything that hurt somebody's feelings. I probably would stop doing it if I ever did."

It's been real lucky on this, because I think it's always been taken in the spirit with which it was intended. I think I've given up about half of these jokes. And those that I didn't, somebody in my family can put a check mark beside. I think it's always been laughed at with me and I think that's something that Southerners do have the ability to do. We don't take ourselves too seriously. It's a nice trait. That's the way I grew up. You weren't allowed to be real sensitive in our family. But we've always laughed."

On the Row: Most Music Row citizens were among the 51,000 ticket holders who attended Garth Brooks' first-ever Nashville appearances May 8-10 at the Nashville Arena. Brooks played Steve Wariner out of the crowd on Saturday and Sunday nights to duet with him on "Longneck Bottle," Wariner also sang his current single, "Holes In The Floor Of Heaven.

Brooks also appears on the new CMT single and video of "One Heart At A Time," which is benefiting the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Other artists singing the Victoria Shaw-penned song are Faith Hill, Neal McCoy, Michael McDonald, Olivia Newton-John, Billy Dean, Shaw, and Bryan White.

At Atlantic Records Nashville, Greg Gasselin is named director of marketing. . . DreamWorks/SKG Music enters into a co-publishing deal with Buck Moore and Prinetta Music.
TOLLIS MARKS TIME ON ARISTA SET

by Wade Jesse

FEEL HAT: According to the accompanying booklet in Garth Brooks’ “The Limited Series” box set (Capital), that would be a Stetson hat, thank you very much, and it’s tucked to historic Hot Shot Debut slots at No. 1 on Top Country Albums and The Billboard 200 with more than 372,000 sales (see Between the Covers, page 2). The Oklahoma man’s marriage contract with this title’s fastest gain on the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart, as “To Make You Feel My Love” gains 811 plays to shoot 51-4.

Hot-shot debut is something that ever happened to country music,” says WMX Akron, Ohio, PD Kevin Mason. “But I have to admit that at first, I thought ‘To Make You Feel My Love’ was long, dreary, and boring. Then I heard it was a Bob Dylan cover, and I became even more confused. We ran with it anyway. And less than one week later, it’s my No. 1 request.” Mason says his initial impression of the song remains the same, but he adds, “I’m shocked, really, but I’m never going to say anything about my audience again.”

With airplay at 123 monitored country stations, that track is the vaunted-courier single from the six new sides included in “The Limited Series,” two of which appear on the lower rungs of the radio chart. “Something With A Ring To It” enters at No. 68, and “Uptown Downhome Good Boy” two steps in at No. 71.

BOXING MATCH: Although Garth Brooks’ new outseels LeAnn Rimes’ new album by more than 2 to 1, the teenager flexes her muscles to the tune of approximately 156,000 units with “Sittin’ On Top Of The World” (Curb), which opens at No. 2 on Top Country Albums and No. 4 on The Billboard 200. Rimes’ showing is respectable, but it still falls about 29,000 units short of her prior opening-week benchmark of 186,000 sales, set by “You Light Up My Life—Inspirational Songs” in the Sept. 27, 1997, issue. That earlier set, at No. 8 on the country charts, wipes Greatest Gainer honors after rising more than 4,000 units.

Interest in Rimes’ new set has come from several areas, not the least of which was her three-episode role as a runaway on the daytime drama “Days Of Our Lives” the week of May 4. “Have I ever seen a scene, Rimes’ “Commitment” bullets at No. 14 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks, up 71 plays, while “Looking Through Your Eyes,” another track from the new package, holds at No. 27 on the Hot 100.

Rimes’ summer hit “How Do I Live” (Liberation/Atlantic) bows at No. 15 with more than 13,000 pieces, and Mark Wells sets up shop at No. 25 with “Wish You Were Here” (Mercury) with 6,000 units. Wells’ set pops on Heatseekers at No. 11, strengthened by "I Do (Cherish You)," a lead single which gains 43 plays to jump 12-9 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks. Airplay leaders include KIKK Houston (59 plays), KYNG Dallas (46 plays), and KRMD Shreveport, La. (43 plays).

TOLLIS MARKS TIME ON ARISTA SET

(Continued from page 36)

“Some show and took the last two months off to revamp with Kenny Ortega, who’s worked on Michael Jackson’s shows,” Foster says. “She’s also participated in the Country Music Festival’s Future Music, a Music Country’s show in major media advertising markets over the last few months and will be back on the road with her new show in the middle of summer. So it’s a great time for her, and she’s excited about her career.”

Now managed by Stan Mores and booked by the William Morris Agency, Tillis is also trekking to Branson, Mo., every Tuesday night to recharge her “musical journey” in song during the show by her father, Mel Tillis.

“It’s a hard commute, but I’m seeing my family more than I have in 20 years,” says Foster. “It’s one of those pedal to the metal years. I’m working like a madwoman, out of the dictates of the business as I look for new material and artist goals. It’s like that darn new Brooks & Dunn and Reba [McEntire] song ‘If You See Him/If You See Her’ was. That’s hard to tell. But overall, I’m doing great!”

ROAD STORIES WITH CAPITOL’S LEDoux

(Continued from page 36)

It says one of LeDoux’s best albums; he says the label has high expectations due to LeDoux’s strong fan base and how they keep their records.quickly sell,” says Kennedy. “He’s a great seller.” Berry says. “His catalog sells so well for us, and with the new video, we’re very excited about him over the last few years and have had huge turnouts. Every time he puts out a new release, it’s a total sellout. He’s one of the last stars of country music on radio, he’s got that fan base that’s looking for his new music.”

Kennedy seconds that. “Over the years, he’s done an extensive amount of retail-in-stores,” he says. “And it never ceases to amaze me how big the crowds are when we take him on the road to draw 50-100 people, and it’s all young kids. They look up to this guy.”

Berry credits LeDoux’s popularity partly to his accessibility. “When he does in-store appearances, he stays for hours and hours,” he says. “He’s so good to his fans. He has a real reputation for that with his fan base. When Capitol sent out his hits a few years back, we brought it all in. I was surprised, at that point, how popular he was. He’s out there working all the time. The crowds, he says, were who had previously performed as a singer on an episode of “L.A. Law.”

In addition to the single and an accompanying Tom Oliphant-directed video, Foster notes that the bulk of the album’s promotion will center on touring. “Pam’s always had an awesome perspective,” Kennedy adds, “we’ll do radio advertising to let people know the record is out in his top 20 or 25 markets on country radio. We also have a custom-non-roster list—most of his sales occur west of the Mississippi—and we’ve made a custom ‘Chicago’ video and will back that up with a detail and work beyond the reporters.”

Kennedy says the marketing campaign also includes a club promotion as well. “We’re also using Chris’ fan club,” Kennedy says. “He’s got a very passionate and loyal fan club, and the (members) will go out with point-of-sale materials and flyers to western stores, boot dealers, feed stores, country clubs, parking lots, churches, etc.”

Kennedy says the grass-roots support helps LeDoux sell without a great deal of radio support. “We’ve always had good shows. ‘He’s got a fantastic show,” says Kennedy. “People continue to come out and see him. Where else can you see an artist with all the exploiting pyrotechnics in country music?”

LeDoux is managed by T.K. Kimmel and booked by Monterey Artists.
### Billboard Hot Country Singles Tracks

**May 23, 1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Imprint &amp; Number/Distributing Label</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>'This Kiss'</td>
<td>Faith Hill</td>
<td>MCA Nashville</td>
<td>MCA-72047</td>
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**Notes:**
- Records showing an increase in detections over the previous week, regardless of chart movement. Answer powers to those records which attained #1 status the week following their first entry. There were 30 new titles this week, with 27 of them in the chart for at least 20 weeks. *Weekly SoundScan sales data showing retail sales with the ability to see: (a) the top 100 country singles, (b) the top 10 country albums, (c) the top 10 country复合专辑, (d) the top 10 country digital songs, (e) the top 10 country的新歌, (f) the top 10 country EPs, (g) the top 10 country compilation albums, (h) the top 10 country country music albums, and (i) the top 10 country country music EPs.* Records were compiled by a national sample of retail store and music sales reports and compiled, and provided by SoundScan.
- The chart is based on detections from one million units, with multimillion titles included by a numerical following the symbol ©. The chart is © 1998, Billboard/BPI Communications and SoundScan, Inc.
Country Artists Shine at 33rd ACM Awards Show

Country music’s best and brightest stars invaded Hollywood April 22 for the 33rd annual Academy of Country Music (ACM) Awards, where the performances were as polished as the shiny trophies the winners took home. More than 60 performers and celebrities turned out for the show, which seemed to transform the Universal Amphitheatre into the Grand Ole Opry.

Singer-fiddler Charlie Daniels is flanked, from left, by Travis Tritt, Garth Brooks, and Marty Stuart after receiving ACM's Pioneer Award. The backstage gathering at the Universal Amphitheatre followed a retrospective on Daniels' career achievements.

Shown above, from left, are ACM DJ of year Tom Rivers of WQYK Tampa, Fla.; Gil Cunningham of the Don Romeo Agency in Omaha, Neb., who was named talent buyer of the year; and PD Alan Sledge of WUSN Chicago, which was named radio station of the year. In photo at right, Buck Owens and presenter Chely Wright hold Owens' award for country nightclub of the year. Owens owns the Crystal Palace in Bakersfield, Calif.

Five-time ACM entertainer of the year Garth Brook and wife Sandy savor the moment. Sandy is holding her husband's special achievement award, which honored Brooks' summer concert in New York's Central Park.

Lee Ann Womack, Kenny Chesney, and the Kinleys celebrate their new artist awards backstage at the ACM show. Womack, left, won as top new female artist, and Chesney was top new male artist. The Kinleys earned a nod in the top new vocal duet category.

Pictured starting clockwise, from top left: Top country couple Tim McGraw and Faith Hill balance their four ACM trophies for their duet "It's Your Love." The track won awards for song of the year, single of the year, top vocal event of the year, and video of the year at the ceremony, which aired April 22 on CBS from the Universal Amphitheatre in Universal City, Calif. Next photo, from left: Gary Overton, Kevin Sharp, Stephonie Smith, and Jeff Carson celebrate their song of the year win. Overton accepted the award on behalf of publisher EMI Blackwood Music Inc. Smith wrote the song. Sharp and Carson were presenters in the category. Next photo, from left: Joe Diffie, Mike Curb, Byron Gallimore, James Stroud, and Pam Tillis. Gallimore and Stroud received awards for producing "It's Your Love," and Curb accepted on behalf of his Curb Records, which released the single from the McGraw album "Everywhere." Diffie and Tillis were presenters. Next photo, from left: Sherman Halsey, producer and director of the "It's Your Love" video, shares a laugh with presenters Mindy McCready and Glen Campbell. Campbell performed "Like A Rhinestone Cowboy" on the telecast.
A Mecca For Musical Mavericks

The dogs were jumping into the creek and romping through the brush of Joe Ely's Hill Country spread, a few miles southwest of Austin. On the tables under the oak trees, there was more than enough posole, cornbread and homemade posole to feed the friends, fans and family who had gathered to help Ely celebrate his "Twistin' In The Wind" album—and to enjoy his impromptu reunion performance with Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock as the Hill Country Flatlanders. The relaxed tableau provided stark contrast to the industry battle that was overwhelming downtown Austin, where the streets on this Friday afternoon of the South By Southwest music conference were swarming with movers and shakers, expense accounters, cellular phoners, indie hustlers—the kind of frenzied folks whose aggressive attitudes stamped them as conventioneers rather than natives.

"Everybody puts Austin on a pedestal," says Tony Brown, president of MCA-Nashville, enjoying the laid-back afternoon at Ely's. "The industry will never play as important a role in Austin as the live-music scene. Austin is blessed for that reason, and Nashville is cursed."

Austin doesn't mind being the focus of industry attention for one long weekend in March, but it couldn't stand such frizzle year-round. Since the early '70s—when Willie Nelson returned to his native Texas from Nashville, Jerry Jeff Walker found a vagabond's home in the Hill Country, and Doug Sahm recast himself as a "cosmic cowboy" following his psychedelic forays in San Francisco—Austin has been known as a creative oasis, a place that puts music first and career far behind. Far removed from the power centers of Nashville, New York and Los Angeles—in attitude even more than miles—it has provided an escape from industry pressures and a mecca for musical mavericks.

"Artists who choose to operate out of here have decided that they've got to have a life first, and that says something about you as a musician," says Walker, who recently released "Cowboy Boots And Bathin' Suits" on his Tried And True Music label. "You may put up with anything to be famous in Los Angeles. In Austin, you'll take whatever success you can get, just knowing you're in an environment you want to be in."

A SMOKIN' LIVE SCENE

Despite the recent Grammy triumph by Shawn Colvin, the emergence of Alva Moore and Fastball as radio contenders, and the high hopes surrounding David Garza's major-label debut (on Lava/Atlantic), Austin remains far better-known for the vitality of its live performance than the commercial success of its recorded product. With more than 50 venues offering live music on a nightly basis, the city proclaims itself "the live music capital of the world," boosting more clubs per capita than anywhere else in the country. More than 50,000 students at the University of Texas attend.
A Survey Of Five Up-And-Coming Austin Bands

There are two types of musicians that will always be integral to the Austin music scene. One is the outlaw country boy, as personified by the members of Reckless Kelly. The other is the gifted guitar wizard, such as Monte Montgomery. Even though these two examples are a little outside the norm, they show that Austin is bucking its stereotypes and continually opening its club doors to all kinds of music and musicians, including hip-hop acts such as MC Overlord, smart and sultry female songwriters like Trish Murphy and youthful pop-punk bands similar to Silver Scooter. These are just five of the most prominent and promising unsigned acts currently in Austin.

Trish Murphy
A newcomer in the Austin singer-songwriter crowd, which spawned such obvious influences as Lucinda Williams and Nanci Griffith, 32-year-old Houston native Trish Murphy arrived to open ears and hearts last year with her album “Crooked Mile” and the modest, local hit “Concession Stand Song.” Former part of the vocal duo Trish and Darin, Murphy has a sweet, country-girl quality that’s neither naive nor contrived. Blending childhood memories with Mary Tyler Moore-like “you’re gonna make it” lyrics, she offers a bundle of energy and charm on stage and on record. Her background is Texas folk, but lately she has turned the volume up on her band and offered a more rollicking pop sound. Either way, she’s attracting more fans—and plenty of label attention—with each new song.

Monte Montgomery
“...an acoustic guitar just feels more natural, like something you can put your arms around and hold on to,” says singer-guitarist Monte Montgomery, who embodies everything that a six-string hero from Austin should, but who dares to be different by not using a Stratocaster or any other kind of electric guitar. In the city that reared Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric there’s at least one in every crowd—who can’t believe he’s electricifying his shows really are. With his second independent album, “1st And Repair,” the 30-year-old guitar slinger took matters one step further, showcasing his singing and songwriting talents. The combination of his sandy voice and loose, laid-back, finger-picking guitar style has earned comparisons to Mark Knopfler and Bruce Cockburn, but his connection to the fabled Texas town of Luckenbach—he spent his teens there—and his heartfelt, soulful approach to songwriting have made him a uniquely Lone Star figure.

Reckless Kelly
Five friends just this side of 20, the members of Reckless Kelly went from a band that ladies went memers appropriated as the title for their album. That down-home, small-town charm finds its way into the group’s music via fiddles, mandolins and singer Willy Braun’s warm voice. However, the group’s noisy six-stringed and rambling, lonesome lyrics offer the edge that separates Earle and Willie Nelson from the rest of country music.

Silver Scooter
The most enticing band to come out of Austin’s DIY indie-rock scene in recent years, Silver Scooter plays an awkward, pubescent, fuzzy brand of pop filled with melancholy and gorgeous, brooding melodies, like the musings of a 12-year-old wondering how big the universe is. In actuality, the band features three 20-somethings, T-shirt-and-baggy-shorts-wearing guys who got together about two years ago and have since released one CD (“The Other Palm Tree”) and seven-inch singles on small labels Peek-A-Boo and Crank. The group has been embraced equally by skateboard-riding teenagers who enjoy its cheap or free all-ages shows and elder fans who remember the joy and innocence of jangly-pop groups like the Feelies, the dB’s and early R.E.M. Singer-guitarist Scott Garred and bassist John Hunt weave their parts together for some amazing, climactic
THANKS FOR OUR FIRST YEAR’S SUCCESS.

Steve Schnur: VP, A&R
Scott Robinson: Senior Director, Artist Development
Dan Herrington: Manager, Sales and Marketing
John Butler: Senior Director, Promotion
Jon Peterson: National Manager, Promotion
Athena Fortenberry: Manager, Media & Publicity
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Billy Mills: Coordinator, Artist Development
Aimee Johns: Executive Assistant A&R
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BLOW ON THIS
ARISTA AUSTIN: ONE YEAR OLD AND ALREADY MAKING BIG NOISE. THANKS FOR HELPING US BE HEARD.

SISTER 7 “Know What You Mean” continues its cross from Rock & Modern AC to Top 40 as sales explode on their debut album This The Trip. On tour always.

ABRA MOORE #1 AAA and Top 10 Alternative hit with “Four Leaf Clover,” Best Female Rock Vocal Performance Grammy nomination, Lilith Tour again this year. And it just keeps getting bigger with the new single, “All I Want,” from her acclaimed Arista Austin debut album, Strangest Places.

ROBERT EARL KEEN PICNIC - his Arista Austin debut and the biggest selling album of his career. His new album arrives this fall.

JEFF BLACK Anybody who saw him at this year’s SXSW is still talking about it. His debut album, Birmingham Road, arrives July 14.

BR5-49 The kings of modern-hillbilly beat return with their new album, Big Backyard Beat Show in stores July 14.

RADNEY FOSTER His Arista Austin debut album, featuring special guests Emmylou Harris, Darius Rucker and more, arrives in September.
ARENAS

Frank Erwin Center. 1701 Red River St., cap. 15,000. A University of Texas-run sports arena. Recently hosted LeAnn Rimes, Aerosmith and Metallica.

Southpark Meadows. 9600 S. IH-35, cap. 25,000. Large, grassy amphitheater usually booked by Pace Concerts. Pearl Jam, R.E.M. and Lollapalooza have all stopped in.

The Backyard At Bee Cave. 13101 Texas Hwy. 71, cap. 2,500. Situated under looming live oaks in the hills west of town, this beloved amphitheater has welcomed its neighbor Willie Nelson, plus Sheryl Crow, the Indigo Girls and Elvis Costello. Also a Direct Events/Pace venue.

La Zona Rosa. 612 W. Fourth St., cap. 1,200. Upgraded from a Mexican eatery to a first-rate concert facility. Recent headliners include David Byrne, Ben Folds Five and Paula Cole. Also a Direct Events/Pace venue.

Ranch Studios. 1101 Reimiti St., cap. 3,000. A strip-mall space newly converted into a concert hall. Sugar Ray and Megadeth are among the first.

Stubb's. 801 Red River St., cap. 2,000. Historic downtown barbecue joint recently added a permanent outdoor stage in its backyard, where George Clinton, Cheap Trick and Soul Asylum have already played.

CLUBS

Antone's. 213 W. Fifth St., cap. 200. New home of the world-renowned blues club that bred Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds and welcomed Muddy Waters, Albert King and more.

Bob Popular. 402 E. Sixth St., cap. 400. Dance club for college crowd now offering retro '80s shows like Vanilla Ice and Run-D.M.C.

Brooked Spoke. 3201 S. Lamar Blvd., cap. 660. Historic, authentic country dance hall that hosted Bob Wills and revered George Strait and Asleep At The Wheel. No line-dancing allowed.

Cactus Cafe. 24th & Guadalupe St., cap. 150. Intimate, on-campus songwriters have immortalized by Townes Van Zandt in “To Live Is To Fly.” Recent guests include Patty Griffin, Guy Clark and Darden Smith.

Cedar Street Courtyard. 208 W. Fourth St., cap. 200. Upscale martini, cigar and jazz bar.


Dessau Music Hall. 13422 Dessau Rd., cap. 1,380. A piece of old Austin, this large roadhouse has been upgraded for country and rock shows, including Marshall Tucker, Delbert McClinton and David Ball.

Electric Lounge. 302 Bowie St., cap. 350. Downtown hot spot for truly alternative bands, including Cornershop, the Geraldine Fibbers and Apples in Stereo.

Elephant Room. 315 Congress Ave., cap. 190. Subterranean hangout reminiscent of New York jazz clubs in both sight and sound.

Emo's. 603 Red River St., cap. 500. Johnny Cash played here once, but usually the men in black are leather-clad punk rockers. Alumni include the Jesus Lizard, L7 and Fear.

Flamingo Cantina. 315 E. Sixth St., cap. 300. A tropical hole-in-the-wall that hosts punk, reggae and ska acts, including the Blus, the Slackers and the Duh-Synthicate.

Gruene Hall. 1601 Hunter Rd., New Braunfels, cap. 500. A half-hour drive south of Austin, its history as the oldest dance hall in Texas makes it an intrinsic part of the local music scene. Jerry Jeff Walker, Hal Ketchum and Joe Ely are all frequent visitors.

Hole In The Wall. 2538 Guadalupe St., cap. 192. Small campus hangout loved by local bands since 1974. Regulars have included Timbuk 3, Nanci
Griffith, Doug Sahn and Alejandro Escovedo.

Liberty Lunch, 405 W. Second St., cap. 700. Voted Austin's favorite music venue year after year, this indoor/outdoor hangout sits on the site of a jazz club. Live album and concerts by Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins, the Neville Brothers and lots more.

The Mercury, 303 E. 5th St., cap. 250. Frequently hosts hipster jazz and funk acts like Jimmy McGriff, Victor Wooten and Big Ass Truck.

Ringside At Sullivan's, 300 Colorado St., cap. 250. Ultra-swanky jazz venue hosts local and touring jazz greats, such as Ron Brown, Carmen Bradford and Joe McBride.

Saxon Pub, 1399 S. Lamar Blvd., cap. 150. South Austin club hosts blues (Omar & The Howlers), country (Michael Martin Murphy), folk (Bustin' Hanko) and more.

Speakeasy, 412 Congress Ave., cap. 300. Back-alley entrance leads to trendy jazz club.

Steamboat, 405 E. Sixth St., cap. 200. Guitar-lovers have hosted Eric Johnson and Stevie Ray Vaughan, plus collegiate-rock acts Sister 7 and Jackapiece.

Stubb's, 901 Red River St., cap. 324. Barbecue joint has indoor club space, too, in historic, limestone building that showcases up-and-coming rock, country and blues acts.

Top Of The Marc, 618 W. Sixth St., cap. 320. Fancy dance spot appeals to adult crowd with shows by the Marvelettes, Classics IV and local jazz acts.

Perhaps the weakest link in the chain that bonds the Austin music scene together is radio, which in only a few cases reflects local fans' eclectic tastes and offers area bands access to the airwaves. The most prominent exception is KGSR (FM 107.1), one of the first Triple-A stations in the country and a continuing supporter of Lone Star music and much more. On a smaller scale, University of Texas-owned non-profit station KUT (FM 90.5), which is an NPR affiliate, and the student-operated KVNR (FM 91.7) also offer a wide variety of fare. KVNR shares the 91.7 airwave with KUOM, a community-run public-access station. The continuing champion in ratings is country station KASE (FM 100.7 FM), which competes with KXET (FM 98.1) and KKY (FM 92.1) in bringing Nashville to Austin. Typically behind KASE in ratings is contemporary pop station KUHF (FM 96.7), which goes relatively unchallenged in that format. Austin's only real access to rap and urban music is KJJE (AM 1370). The lines between rock stations in Austin are blurred, but the clear favorite is KLBJ (FM 93.7), which plays harder alternative, plus metal and classic rock. KROX (FM 101.5) is all-alternative and popular with college students, while KAMX (FM 94.7) offers a more adult mix of pop and rock. KPEZ (FM 102.3) and KAHK (FM 107.7) play classic-rock from the '60s through the '80s. Other formats include smooth-jazz station KJAZ (FM 93.3), techy leader KKLQ (FM 92.5), older favorites KEYI (FM 103.5), all-talk and Howard Stern-hosted KJFK (FM 96.9). Christian mainstream KNLE (FM 88.1) and classical music champion KMFA (FM 89.5).

ABCD's, 4631 Airport Blvd. #110. Great jazz, world beat and classical selections.

Alien Records, 503 W. 15th St. For DJs and electronic music lovers only.

Antone's Record Shop, 2928 Guadalupe St. Great vinyl selection, especially blues.

CD Warehouse, several locations with good used sections.

Cheapo Records, 914 N. Lamar Blvd. Used, new and hard-to-find CDs.

Duval Discs, 2928 Guadalupe St. Mostly used and local fare.

Maldonado's, 2207 E. Seventh St. Oldest music store in town, specializes in Tejano and Latin.

Musicmania, 3509-D North IH-35 #1. Home to hip-hop and urban music fans.

Sound Exchange, 2100-A Guadalupe St. Hip campus shop with lots of punk, indie CDs and vinyl.

Technophilia, 2418 Guadalupe St. CD shop with many imports.

Tower Records, 2402 Guadalupe St. Among the best in the chain.

33 Degrees, 4017 Guadalupe St. Hip vinyl haven with punk, jazz and more.

Waterloo Records, 601-A N. Lamar Blvd. Two-time winner of best retailer in America is

Continued on page 16

A CITY BUILT TO ENDURE

SIX GOVERNMENTS, THREE WARS AND A LOT OF ROCK 'N' ROLL.

With our breathtaking scenery, cool water and lively entertainment, Austin has established a long history of fun. So rest assured, whether you want a rockin' night on Sixth Street, or a serene getaway along our hills and creeks, you've definitely found the right place.

For free visitor information call 1-800-926-2282 or visit www.austintexas.org

LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD
VITAL STATISTICS
Continued from page 65

even more popular with locals. Lots of folk, country and vinyl.

Antone's, 507 West Ave. #2. Offshoot of the club and equally dedicated to leg-}

endary and new blues acts. Said to be signing a distribution deal with a

major label.

Arista/Austin, P.O. Box 163167. The only local office of a

major, it enjoyed first-year success with Abra Moore and

Robert Earl Keen.

Continental Records, P.O. Box 3843. Affiliated with the

Continental Club. Scored with local jazziers &

Souvenirs.

Freedom Records, P.O. Box 650032. Charming, eclectic

label has released Jon Dee

Graham and Asylum Street

Spankers.

Munich Records, P.O. Box 22912. American outlet for

European label. Works with

some locals such as the

Gourds.

Peek-A-Boo Records, P.O. Box 49542. Young operation

with youthful discs by local

punk and pop bands.

Trance Syndicate, P.O.

Box 49771. Owned by

Buthole Surfers' King Coffey and

featuring avant-punk

and electronic music. Reared

Sixteen Deluxe and

Bedhead.

Watermelon Records, P.O.

Box 49056. Affiliated with

Sire Records. Offers pure,

honest country and folk acts

like the Deralers and Don

Walser.

Alternative

Distribution

Alliance, 1501-B

E. St. Johns, Austin,

78752

Austin Record

Distributors, P.O. Box 312, Austin,

78767

BMI Distribution, 4605 Ave.

H., Austin, 78751

Koch International, 1803

Westridge Dr., Austin, 78704

Arlyn/Pedernales

Studio, 200

Academy Dr. Two

unique shops used by

the owner’s

uncle, Willie Nelson,

plus Stevie Ray

Vaughan, Sublime

and, currently, Wilco.

Blismero Studio, 4623

Manchacca Road. Asleep At

The Wheel's 48-track studio

works for commercials and

albums.

Blue World Music, 204

Winchester Dr. SSL mixing

consoles, plus 48-track direct-to-

capabilities. Clients have

included Jimmy Vaughan,

Junior Brown and Spoon.

The Hit Shack, 1621 S. Lamar

Bldv. New and vintage gear

used by Buthole Surfers, Hal

Ketchum and many locals.

Sweat Box Studio, 304 E.

5th St. Affordable favorite for

indie bands.

Tequila Mockingbird, 306 W.

10th St. Commercials rule

here.

Terra Nova Digital Audio

3102 Bee Caves Road. Leading

place for mastering and editing

only.

VIDEO

The Administration, 4012

Idlewild Lane. Low-budget

indie videos by Ed Hall and

Sixteen Deluxe.

Earl Miller Productions

1702 W. Koenig Lane. Filmed

concerts for Stevie Ray

Vaughan, HBO and MTV.

Inks Production Co., 5000

Bee Caves Rd. Music videos

and commercials by Willie

Nelson and Little Joe Y La

Familia.

U.R. Productions, 704 W.

Gibson. Documentary and

music-video maker. Has

worked for the Kerrville

Folk Festival, and Townes

Van Zandt.

Austin American-

Statesman, P.O.

Box 670, Austin,

78767. Arts coverage
daily and in

Thursday's XLent

pullout.

Austin Chronicle, P.O.

Box 49666,

Austin, 78765. Local weekly

is especially popular and music-

friendly.

Daily Texan, P.O. Box D,

Austin, 78713. Student-run, University of Texas-owned.

Hispanic Magazine, 98 San

Jacinto Blvd. #1150, Austin,

78701. Monthly coverage of

Tejano arts.

Pop Culture Press, P.O. Box 150423, Austin, 78715.

Magazine for pop and punk

music.

Texas Monthly, P.O. Box

1569, Austin, 78767. Lone

Star answer to The New

Yorker.

3rd Coast Music, 620 Circle

Ave., Round Rock, 78664. Free

monthly on Texas country and folk.

Austin City Limits, P.O.

Box 7158, Austin,

78713. Beloved PBS

music series now in its 23rd

year.

Austin Music

Network, 309 W. Second St.

#15. One-of-a-kind, 24-hour

local cable channel. ■

Continued from page 44

MC Overlord

The running joke about MC

Overlord is that not only is he

Austin's best rapper, he's only

rapper. That's not exactly true,

but he is the only local hip-hop

act who consistently performs

and attracts crowds every week. Unlike 95%
Armadillo with Willie and Waylon, "so many kinds of music hit here from so many different directions," explains Ely, one of the dozenth of musical mainstays who found himself drawn to Austin from conservative Lubbock, Texas. "This is where East met West and North met South, unlike any place I'd ever seen. I'll never forget seeing Flaco Jimenez and Stevie Ray Vaughan playing on the same stage together. Austin was just so wide-open, with few rules and a relaxed atmosphere. Besides, it's such a beautiful place.

A COLLEGE TOWN AT THE CROSSROADS

Though so much of the musical spirit remains the same, the late 90s find Austin at a crossroads. The friendly college town is sprawling into a metropolitan area of more than a million, with the city still trying to decide what it wants to be when it grows up. The cheap rents that once made Austin so attractive to musicians have skyrocketed, while the relaxed pace has been undermined by traffic jams. Where artists once came to escape the commercial dictates of the industry, Austin now attracts musicians who are hoping to catch the industry's eye.

"Though it used to be a myth, people really do get signed to labels here," says Jody Denberg, program director for adult-alternative KGSR-FM. "You can be seen here and make a living at it—as long as you don't expect to make your money playing here exclusively."

"Just like there's a new crop of freshmen every year at the University of Texas, there's a new cycle of talent that is drawn to this city," says Steve Schnur, VP of A&R and artist development for Arista/Austin.

"It's an ongoing musical mecca, not just an up-and-coming one," Schnur continues. "It's a very attractive place to live and to make a living, for hands or songwriters. Arista/Austin is geared to the music of an environment that begets more and more musical activity of different genres. The music that Abra Moore is writing is universal. In actual fact, probably very few people could agree on the type of music that best characterizes Austin.

Yet those who prize Austin most for the guitar tones of a Jimmie Vaughan, the blues bass of a Marcus Boll or a Texas troubadour such as Jimmie Dale Gilmore fear that catering to the industry will do Austin music more harm than good. "Developing an industry infrastructure" has been the crux of an executed Austin debate, with some claiming that the city needs more of a professional industry presence, and others insisting that the music industry is the last thing that Austin needs.

NASHVILLE? NOT LIKELY

"We could use more producers, engineers, managers and booking agents, but I really can't see us developing in the way of New York, Los Angeles or Nashville," says Carlyne Major, executive director of the Texas chapter of NARAS. "What makes us unique is that Austin is one of the largest pools of raw talent in the country, and it's not encumbered by pressure from the industry."

"Austin isn't capable of becoming a Nashville even if it wanted to," says one exec. "And why would it want to?"

Increasingly, Austin has been able to carve its profile on its own terms, from the television exposure of MTV's "Austin Stories" and "King Of The Hill" by Mike Judge (who still moonlights as occasional bassist for Doyle Bramhall) to the films of Austin-based directors such as Robert Rodriguez and Richard Linklater. The latter's success has had a direct benefit for Austin music, through his commission of the Bad Lovers to provide much of the soundtrack for "The Newton Boys," and the trio's Danny Kortez to compose an original score.

"I think [Linklater] saw in us something he sees in himself," says the Livers' bassist, Mark Rubin, who served as the film's music supervisor and recruited a number of other Austin acts for the project. "When he presented us with an Austin Music Award a few years ago, he said what a big fan he was and reminded us that he'd"
AS

LOCAL NOISE

(Continued from page 17)

rappers, Overlord is in his element on stage, where he's always backed by his four- or five-piece funk band and where his mammoth, 6-foot-5 figure looms as large as his hard-hitting but incredibly positive music. Born Don Robinson and raised in a single-parent, six-child home, he says, "My childhood was the same as so many other black kids." On his recent, self-released CD "The Dark Side," he explores this and many other problems facing African Americans while offering messages of peace and unity for all races. He has avoided the stereotypes of rappers well enough to earn a following in Austin rock clubs and on local rock radio stations. Even if MC Overlord were the only evidence of hip-hop in Austin, he'd still be a shining example.

Thousands
of
dreams
One
voice

MUSICAL MECCA

(Continued from page 17)

hired us to play his "Slacker" wrap party.

Now in its 23rd season on PBS, "Austin City Limits" remains the city's musical vitality. Spawned by the "outlaw" inspiration of Willie Nelson and the rest of the progressive-country movement of the '70s, it has since introduced the nation to the likes of Lyle Lovett, Nanci Griffith, Stevie Ray Vaughan and other local luminaries who were fans of the show long before performing on it.

SYMBIOSIS WITH A DASH OF HOT SAUCE

"It's a very much a symbiotic relationship," says program producer Terry Liebman. "I think that 'Austin City Limits' has nurtured the Austin music scene and vice versa. There's a crossroads of so many musical styles—Texas, Southern, Mexican, blues, country—and there's the Texas frontier mentality of anything goes that has really fed the creative energy."

Can that creative energy generate multi-platinum sales?

"Proportionally, there are just as many L.A. bands that haven't made it as Austin bands," says Casey Monahan, director of the state's Texas Music Office. "Because there are so many bands trying to get deals in Austin, and because of the local media spotlight on those that do, the inflated expectations of the Austin music scene often crumble in the face of the harsh realities of making it in the music business."

"It'll happen," insists Tony Brown. "As a source for music, Austin has influenced lots of acts that have gone platinum. People will continue to come here to be discovered. Not to make commercial music, but non-commercial music that becomes commercial."

Don McLeese is columnist/critic-at-large for the Austin American-Statesman and a contributor to many music magazines.

SXSW

Local Bandfest Becomes Multimedia Showcase

The vitality of Austin music and the growth of South By Southwest have become so intertwined that it is hard to imagine one without the other. Twelve years ago, SXSW was launched by the alternative weekly Austin Chronicle as a regional counterpart to the New Music Seminar in New York, with an emphasis on Texas talent and independent initiative. On a grass-roots level, it has provided opportunities for showcasing and networking, away from the musical power centers on the coasts. The laid-back Austin atmosphere continues to figure heavily in the event's appeal, as the conference has become widely regarded as "spring break for the music industry."

With the demise of the NMS, SXSW has established itself as the most significant music conference in the country, increasingly reflective of major-label priorities and international in scope (with European and Japanese talent strongly represented). It has also spawned its own movie and multimedia conferences (held concurrently in March), as well as other regional conferences in Portland, Ore., and Toronto, Canada.

This year's Austin festival found more than 800 acts showcasing at some 40 venues March 18-22, with Sean Lennon, Sonic Youth and local heroes Fastball playing to some of the fest's more tightly packed houses. During the day, the conference offered panels and workshops for registrants at the Austin Convention Center, along with a trade show. Such officially sanctioned events have faced increasing competition from record-company receptions throughout the week, as well as relentless power-broking at the bar of the nearby Four Seasons hotel.

The festival climaxmed with a free show at Waterloo Park featuring Jimmie Vaughan, Junior Brown and Ian Moore—a guitar extravaganza that drew the weekend's biggest crowd and returned the Texas twang to the musical forefront of SXSW. Despite charges that SXSW has grown too broad in scope and too big for its own good, this year's fest drew high marks for the quality of its diverse musical offerings and the manageability of its club-hopping.

—D.M.
Artists & Music

Ritenour, Hancock Launch Labels

GIVING BACK TO THE MUSIC: We each have our own way of giving something back to the music we love, whether it’s working in the music industry, creating music, or spreading the word amongst friends. For those with seemingly limitless creativity (and the proper resources), there is another option—replenishing the music with new talent, to ensure that jazz will continue to thrive and develop.

Last June, guitarist Lee Ritenour launched his own label, i.e. music, with the release of "A Twist Of Jobim," a contemporary take on the music of the late Antonio Carlos Jobim. "In this day and age where thousands of records are released in a given year, I wanted more control over my music and destiny," says Ritenour. "To have a successful record, you need great music and a great record company. If you have one without the other, it never works. With jazz, you need a team that understands the music and the marketing and promotion that goes with it."

Verve distributes i.e. music. "I’ve been making music for 25 or 30 years," Ritenour says, "I wanted to give the talents and musicians that I’ve been fortunate to develop back to some young artists."

Although Ritenour has been asked to produce for numerous artists, he says that producing for his own label holds special meaning. "From hands-on experience, I may know that a particular musician or experience that I’ve been fortunate to develop back to some young artists." In stead of helping an artist with just one album, i.e. music puts me in a position to help them develop their whole career and artistic vision.

On June 16, Ritenour fulfills a long-term goal of recording an album on his own label. According to Ritenour, the forthcoming i.e. music release "This Is Love" is "representative of what we want to be with i.e.—contemporary jazz, straight-ahead, pop, and classical crossover."

The album, which runs from the gamut of the Bob Marley-sampled title track to two Sonny Rollins compositions and an impressionistic classical piece, is sequenced like a Ritenour concert. "It begins with some contemporary pieces, then I hit you with a straight-ahead piece, then an acoustic piece, a vocal, and back to contemporary," the guitarist explains.

Ritenour notes that flexibility is a key element in i.e.’s game plan. Al Jarreau is the latest i.e. music signing. Jarreau will do contemporary projects for i.e. but has the option of doing a straight-ahead project for Verve and, speculates Ritenour, a classical crossover album for Philips in the future should he so desire.

Recently, i.e. released "Chameleon" by world music guitarist/vocalist Badi Amsad, and plans are in the works for an upcoming album by singer Vesta (a former A&M artist) and a "Can- nonball Adderley" tribute by Eric Marienthal.

for Ritenour to tour throughout the summer.

HEADHUNTING: On July 21, Herbie Hancock launches his own label, Hancock Records, an artist-driven imprint that is also distributed by Verve (Billboard Bulletin, May 8). Like Ritenour, Hancock will spearhead his label’s artistic direction, which will focus primarily on jazz. And like i.e. music, Hancock Records is committed to the discovery and development of new talent. Says Verve president Chuck Mitchell, Hancock’s "unique reach through all musical styles will develop exciting special projects and fresh artist relationships" for the label.

The imprint’s first release, however, will be a name familiar to the pianist/composer’s followers. "The Return Of The Headhunters" is a reunion (of sorts) of the band that created Hancock’s landmark 1973 jazz/funk album, "Headhunters," recent-

(Continued on page 52)

Jazz & Blues Notes
by Steve Graybow

Top Reggae Albums

This is the live album Johnny Winter has always wanted to make—recorded at the Bottom Line late April with tracks chosen by Johnny and members of his extensive fan club.

On Tour This Summer

Top Reggae Albums
What becomes a legend? 1850

Legends quartets singing legendary hits in a legendary live performance

Living Legends Of Gospel a four-video set hosted by Lou Rawls coming soon from CBS Distribution

by Lisa Collins

Classical KEEPING SCORE™

by Bradley Bambarger

The FRENCH CORRECTION: In his sable article in the May 14 issue of the New York Review of Books, pianist Charles Mahler’s Symphony N. 1 with cellist, Julian Lloyd Webber and Sony classical president Peter Gelb that seek to blame mainstream composers for the crisis in the classical music business. Along the way, Rosen dubs Pierre Boulez—one of the unnamed villains in both the Webber and Gelb pieces—a “veritable ‘public institution’ for his decades-plus as a prime mover in contemporary music as Grammys-winning conductor, composer, author, and founder of visionary music institutions. Moreover, as I discovered a couple of weeks ago in Chicago—where Boulez was log-}

In the meantime, Peoples is prepping for her next live recording of all-new material in Atlanta. And make no mistake about it, she’s coming back strong with her trademark traditional style. Thus far, songs have been submitted by Zekeahia Walker, Kurt Carr, and Byron Cage.

With A VENGEANCE: EMI Gospel theat the full force of its marketing efforts behind the self-titled debut released from Lando Campbell & The Spirit Of Praise with a marketing initiative dubbed “Project Prayer,” enlisting the efforts of street teams in 50 markets, each of which will host street-date listening parties on Tuesday May 19th. The catchy catchphrase is also celebrating its second signing, Sharon Riley & the Faith Choral. The Toronto-based, 35-plus voice choir—featuring in the recently released Universal film “Blues Brothers 2000,” as well as its soundtrack—is slated to release its first album in October.


Malaco Records’ June releases include Greg Hoover & the Charlotte Community Singers’ “It’s Gonna Be Alright,” as well as the newly launched Solomon Mass Choir, whose debut project, titled “It’s Alright Now,” was produced by Dorothy Norwood.

Sharon Hevey has been appointed senior director of marketing for New York-based Harmony Records . . . They’re celebrating at Verity with first-week sales of 24,000 units for Fred Hammond’s latest release, “Pages Of Life.”

board later this year. But regarding a timely issue, Boulez is familiar with the recent round of discussion in the U.S. about classical music and its dissipating public. It is all old hat to him, in fact; after all, as a veteran of the French music scene of the mid 60′s—when he saw first-hand the French music scene of the mid-60′s—he wrote in the early ’80s a dialogic essay with the late philosopher Michel Foucault titled “Contemporary Music And The Public” that addressed similar concerns. Boulez has always been concerned with the dissemination of the solution, not lower standards. The Cité de la Musique in France that Boulez helped found—and that served as inspiration for Chicago’s new Symphony Center—should be a model for other art cities. he wrote. He also sees this as a formative art, as Boulez says he would like to see it do more with recordings and links to the other arts. And following up innovative associations with CBS Masterworks and EMI, Boulez has been surveying 20th-century music for Deutsche Grammophon over the past decade, crafting a sort of encyclopedic in sound from Stravinsky and Debussy to Schenew and Bartók (composers considered canonical today but whose work was often misunderstood or disparaged in its time, like so much great music). Boulez says the audience for challenging contemporary music may never be enormous, but it can be significant. “You must cultivate the taste and understanding for the music in the public. You can’t expect someone to read Emily Dickinson like they read the newspaper, after all. And, of course, if someone reads Emily Dickinson, they’re going to have an appreciation for the same the music. That is easy on the ear at first is often something that is easily forgotten.” And any assumption that only academics care for composers like Grigory Ligeti or Elliott Carter is obviously not true, he says. “We had a Ligeti festival in Paris last year: Every concert was completely packed. We just played the Carter Clarinet Concerto here in Chicago: The hall was full, and the people applauded—they seemed to truly appreciate the piece. So for these articles to say

(Continued on page 52)
WOW! GOLD in 60 days

WOW GOSPEL 1998

WOW GOSPEL 1998 joins the rank of its other successful WOW counterparts in sales performance, gold & platinum respectively. Special thanks and congratulations are due to BMG, Provident Music Distribution, Retail, Gospel Radio and to all who celebrate gospel music's bright performance and promising future!

From the WOW Brand Partnership, EMI Christian Music Group/Word Entertainment/Provident Music Group/Verity Records.
Top Contemporary Christian

**No. 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>ALBUM</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTION LABEL</th>
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<td><strong>MAY 23, 1998</strong></td>
<td><strong>BILLBOARD</strong></td>
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E-MI LAUNCHES NEW COMPANY: EMI Christian Music Group (EMI CMG) is creating a new company, Sonic Fuel Music Sales, to handle alternative music sales in the Christian Booksellers Assn. market. The first company to be distributed by the new venture is Tooth & Nail Records. EMI CMG’s Chordant Distribution will handle management of the new company and will take care of fulfillment services, such as shipping, billing, and returns processing, for the new sales team.

Bryan Ward, formerly a Chordant field territory manager, has been named director of sales. He’ll report to Greg Fritz, Chordant’s senior director of telesales, customer service, and sales administration. Ward is already familiar with Tooth & Nail, as he worked its product when he was at Diamante Music Group when that outfit was distributing the label. Plans call for Ward to be based in EMI CMG’s Brentwood, Tenn., office and to staff of eight, including five or six sales reps.

MS-P’s June 13 LP with Tooth & Nail’s album, “Slowly Going The Way Of The Buffalo,” (see story, page 18) will be the first release to go through the new system. Other June releases scheduled to be worked through the new company include Stick Shocks’ “Barn Out” and the debut release from Craig’s Brother, “Homecoming.” Starting July 1, the entire 100-plus-title Tooth & Nail catalog will be available.

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KEEPPING SCORE (Continued from page 50)

that the public isn’t open to this music or doesn’t care is mistaken.”

More than perhaps any figure in the recording world today, Billy Boulez assembles (and rewards) the intelligence and curiosity of the listener. Yet while he is optimistic about art and the audience, Boulez is also realistic. “This is not to say that new composers can make a living from it. Unless the sales of their music are no longer the purpose of the piece, but that not being played at all will not make any money in the long run, either the composer will have to go away,” he says. “In my concert programs, I don’t want to make things too difficult for people, but I do try to attract them by offering something rare: a sense of adventure.”

Carter, Ligeti, Luciano Berio—these composers who are furthering the tradition of “classical” music, Boulez says, and who will be remembered for the effort. Reactionary articles are “gone with the wind,” he adds. “How many people will talk about this Webber in five years? Not so many: I don’t think.”

SPEAKING OF ELLIOTT CARTER, there are few honors that haven’t come the composer’s way in his nearly century-spanning career—although his forward-minded idiom has also earned him his share of detractors, particularly in these conservative times. But, amazingly, Carter—he celebrates his 90th birthday this October—11—keeps working away, and at the highest level. One example is his ingenious Clarinet Concerto, which Pierre Boulez just premiered in the U.S. with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. More proof of Carter’s vigor can be found on an album of his chamber music from the Arildi String Quartet and pianist Ursula Oppens, due in June from the French Montaigne/Auwilds label (via Harmonia Mundi in the U.S. and U.K.). The set’s centerpiece is the de- but recording of Carter’s piano quartet, the fifth in a genre that has earned him two Pulitzer Prizes.

Peerless interpreters of the cutting edge, the Arditti toured Carter’s String Quartet No. 5 in North Ameri- ca to acclaim this spring; the group tours internationally with Oppens later this year to play the composer’s new Piano Quintet. In the orchestral realm, Oliver Knussen and the BBC Symphony recorded Carter’s fresh- ly compiled triptych “Symphonia: Sum Fluxae Pretial Spum” last month for Deutsche Grammophon following their premiere of the piece in Manches- ter, England. And just out is a re- issue in Sony Classic’s “Bernstein Century” series that pairs works by Ives (Carter’s early mentor) with the 1794-1907 edition of the Amadeus String Concerto for Orchestra. A more recent take on that piece comes courtesy of a disc by BOCM Classic’s Arts Nova line that includes “Three Occasions For Orchestra” and the brilli- ant Piano Concerto, with Oppens and the Southwest German Radio Symphony under Michael Gielen. The set is a prime introduction to an indefatigable American composer and his demanding yet exhilarating art.

JAZZ BLUE NOTES (Continued from page 59)

ly reviewed by Legacy/Columbia). “Return” features original Headhunters reed player Bennie Maupin, bassist Paul Jackson, percussionist Bill Summers, and guitarist Mark Miller, who joined the band when original drummer Harvey Mason left after recording the first Headhunters album. Most of the new band duties on “Return” are ably handled by Billy Childs; Patrice Rushen and Darrel Smith add their piano skills. Hancock himself plays on almost half the album’s tracks.

LORBER SIGN: Also breaking label ground is keyboardist Jeff Lorber, whose new Water Sign Records (distributed by AV Experience American and the Unity Label Group) releases “All The Colors” by songwriter Sonny Souphon June 9. “Colors” is a smooth jazz affair that features Lorber on keyboard and guitar. Lorber also arrange and produced the album.

It is quick to note that Water Sign is about the development of new artists, rather than for a vehicle for his other artistic needs. “I’m looking for artists who can both write and play and an instrument, artists who have their own statement to make.”

**Second Western a Success:** The second Great Western Quartet Convention (GWQC) was held May 9-10 at the Sellarin Arena in Provo, Calif. The event takes place each Mother’s Day weekend and is a spin- off of the Louisville, Ky.-based National Quartet Convention (NQC), which celebrated its 40th anniversary last September. “The NQC board was pleased with the second GWQC,” says NQC executive director Clarke Beasley. “Attendance was well over 10,000 for all three days. We were also very pleased in our increased expo- sition and afternoon matinee attendance. And we were overwhelmed with advance sales for 1999.” The event included seminars, showcases, and special speakers. A key event was a performance of “When Men Pray” at the Berean Bookstore on Fresno’s Black- stone Road. The song, penned by Jacky Jack White and Dale Cal, was performed by some of Southern gospel’s legendary voices, including Les Beasley, Glen Payne, Ben Speer, and Ernie Haase.

**More Southern Gospel News:** Southern Gospel fans in Nashville have cause to rejoice. With the Opryland theme park no longer in existence, many of us wondered what would happen to the annual Gospel Jubilee, traditionally held in the park on Memorial Day weekend. Well I’m happy to report The Grand Ole Opry will continue the tradition by hosting the event May 22-24 at the Opry House. The weekend’s festivities will include concerts, plus a Sunday-morning service and a “dinner on the ground.” The lineup includes J.D. Summer & the Statlers, the Crossmen Quartet, the Florida Boys, Tony Gore & Majesty, the Boys Heart of Dixie, the Dobro Boys, and The Fox Brothers. Grand Ole Opry stars the Whites and Billy Walker are among the Opry stars also sched- uled to participate.
Gatfield Takes On Dual Radio

BY IRV LICHTMAN

NEW YORK—Music publishing won't be taking a back seat for Nick Gatfield in his unusual dual role as president of PolyGram Music Publishing and sister label Polydor Records.

“From my point of view, my job will mainly be that of publishing,” says the Los Angeles-based Gatfield, who recently took over the publishing slot months after the departure of David Simon to a senior A&R post at Geffen Records.

“A&M has taken over promotion at Polydor, and we don't have that many releases,” he says. “There was no reluctance on my part at all [in making this move]. I did not come to it kicking and screaming. It's a really great opportunity to develop a roster of artists from publishing signings.

“’I'm not chasing after major new-artist deals, but want to develop [new talent] through publishing to the point where they can get a record deal at Polydor or through third-party companies,” he adds. “I don't expect to sign more than two or three acts a year. To function as a publisher [today] is to acquire acts at the opportune time at a competitive price.

In fact, Gatfield says, “I'm intrigued by the concept of management deals that are going on in publishing. Publishing can take a longer view without dealing with label pressures such as radio add days. That’s a real luxury.”

Gatfield notes that A&R staff at Polydor still play a dual role, too, in looking to bring acts to the publishing roster.

“The more you’re in the marketplace, the more opportunities you have,” says Gatfield. “The belief that the dual role of a creative function in publishing is not the same as A&R. It's a demanding full-time job to seek out new songs and in working with the company's catalog.

Among the executives who continue to hold key creative roles are VP’s Hotel (L.A. Reid and Carl Craig) John baldi on the West Coast; Daniel Hill in Nashville; and Linda Newmark, VP of acquisitions, in L.A. Another key player at the publisher is controller Steve Holmberg, also based in L.A.

“We are looking to fill several vacancies, including head of business affairs What George Hayes” Gatfield, who speaks with ease on publishing matters yet admits to having the “slightest” previous experience in the field, says that music publishing is “far more experienced than record companies in getting as much as possible out of its acts. Record companies think largely in terms of standard distribution.”

Gatfield refers to publishing’s wider role as a so-called “house” record company, such as synchronization deals for film/TV and commercial usage.

Gatfield expresses deep concern over the lack of a vibrant intellec- tual property rights, so much so that he says he would welcome positions on the boards or committees of in- tellectual property organizations. “To create an online delivery alone, we want to have a voice in determining proper payment for our own copyrights.

In assuming a dual role, Gatfield sees his job as two parts: “One is the authentication and commercialization process involving two people. As chief of Polydor, he continues to report to Al Caffaro, chairman/CEO of A&M Records; he now also reports to Roger Ames, president of PolyGram Music Group. His home base is in PolyGram Music Publishing’s head- quarters on the A&M lot in L.A.

At Polydor, Gatfield, who has been with the corporation for five years, is credited with developing the company’s direct come- back for the Bees, and organizing the successful release of the “Grease” soundtrack and a compilation album “Grease’s Kisser 1” in conjunction with PolyMedia.

Gatfield’s career has included stints in A&R and as a performer. He came to Polydor after heading things up for EMI Records U.K., where he is associated with the signings of Jesus Jones, EMF, Blur, and Radiohead, as well as working on the campaign for “The One,” his single “Do You Want Some Of My Love,” and Morrissey. He was also a member of Dexys Midnight Runners, whose biggest hit, 1985’s “Come On Eileen,” was released on Mercury.

Family Stand’s Lord, Smith Build Long Line Of Hit Songs

BY SHAWNEE SMITH

NEW YORK—Songwriting is really just the foundation of what I’m about,” says Peter Lord, half of the songwriting/production team behind EastWest’s the Family Stand and various other acts. “Even when I was taking piano lessons at 15, I would always stay after and try to write something. I was always creating.”

For the team’s other half, V. Jeffrey Smith, songwriting has been more a form of self-expression.

“My [musical] energy developed into my writing different things,” says Smith, who plays seven instruments and contributes most of the musical arrangements for the songs they compose. “Songwriting [never had] anything to do with getting paid; it was just a form of expressing myself.”

The two met in 1983 while Smith was working with long-time friend and collaborator Will Downing. “Will let me hear a demo for a guy he was looking for a flutist player, and when I heard the tape, I said ‘Let me meet this guy, because the song I heard, the music he was doing, was brilliant’,” says Smith.

Once they met, the two, along with singer Sandra St. Victor, formed the Family Stand and recorded three albums, 1988’s “Changes” By Evon Geffries And The Stand,” 1990’s “Chain,” and 1995’s “Moon In Scorpio.” They had limited commercial success, and the group disband in 1992, only to regroup with vocalists Jacie Mc Gee in 1996. Its fourth set, “Connected;” steered Feb. 24. It has yet to have a commercial break through.


For the most part, their work for other artists has gained them the most recognition. Lord won Billboard’s top pop songwriter of the year award in 1991 for writing or co-writing 10 songs on Paula Abdul’s “Spotlight” (Virgin). His hit from the set includes “Rush, Rush,” “Blowing Kisses In The Wind,” “The Promise Of A New Dog” and “Will You Marry Me.”

Smith and Lord’s “I’m A Philthy Kind Of Mood” for Daryl Hall piqued interest in the veteran artist’s set, “Soul Alone” (Epic); and their “Crazy For You” and “Trip On Love” rounds out Decree’s set, “I Ain’t Movin’” (Epic).

They also wrote and produced Chyna Phillips’ “When 2000 Comes” (EMI); Steel Pulse’s “Soul Of My Soul” (MCA); and Goodfellas’ “If You Walk Away” and “Sugar Honey Ice Tea” (Avatar/Polydor).

Their latest work includes tracks on “Hymns,” the upcoming album on LaFace for Corey Glover (former lead singer of Living Colour). Smith wrote the first single, “Do You First; Then Do Myself.”

With all their success, Lord says he still can’t understand why their own (Continued on page 70)
At New York’s Hit Factory, Success Has Been A Family Affair

By Paul Verona

NEW YORK—“Project studio” and “family business” are two of the last phrases you’d expect to come to mind when one thinks of the Hit Factory.

A stroll through the studio’s marble entrance hall—lined with platinum awards and Grammy certifications—presents a scene of awe not unlike what one feels walking into a museum or jet cockpit. A ride in its slow-moving, wood-paneled freight elevator evokes a fume of excitement through one’s veins. And a glance around any of its 15 state-of-the-art rooms suggests a wealth box of top investments and corporate partners.

However, owner/president Ed Germaine insists that the Hit Factory is both a family business and a project studio. By that, he means that the recording complex—which he acquired in 1976 and has operated with his wife, mother, and children since—he always regarded as a top of the game by devoting itself to recording projects rather than film post-production, commercials, or any of the other high-end studios that other high-end studios have turned to for survival.

“When times get slow, everybody races to the studio,” says Ed, “We steadily at least where we were, because we wanted to do album projects.”

His son, VP Troy Germaine, adds, “The thing that I’m most proud of is that on any given day, in our 10 rooms we’re doing pop, hip-hop, R&B, jazz, rock, alternative rock, Broadway cast albums, film scores, classical music, crossover classical music, etc. We don’t concentrate on one or two types of music.

We went from 64 Grammy nominations this year, and over the past three years there have been over 175 Grammy nominations that we were involved in—projects that were recorded, overdubbed, mixed, and mastered here.”

Sitting in Ed’s office on a sunny late afternoon, the Germaines reflected on the studio’s magnificent history. Rather than boast about the superstar who has recorded there over the years—dubbing lists that included virtually every name one could conjure up—the Germanos kept returning to two central themes: family, and love their jobs, and the second was how much it thrills them to work among family.

Troy and Troy, the studio is run by CFO Janice Germaine (Ed’s wife), and their daughter, VP Danielle Germaine, who is in charge of bookings. There are no outside partners. Just a nuclear family of four who work a million-dollar business the hard way and who have chosen to work together since they launched their new company.

The Hit Factory employs approximately 100 people in its 15 recording/mixing rooms, five mastering rooms, and ancillary businesses, such as its in-house label, Astoria Entertainment. Long situated at 237 W. 54th St., the studio later acquired a 100,000-square-foot building down the street at 421 W. 54th St. Opened in 1962, the new suites house five recording/mixing studios and four mastering rooms, including a cavernous sixth-floor tracking room that can accommodate up to 140 musicians.

The studio’s credit list is mar-

n-ingly star-studded: Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Bruce Springsteen, Mariah Carey, David Bowie, the Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, Sting, Aerosmith, ATM, and hundreds of others.

The pinnacle of the state of the art, the Hit Factory offers every imaginable recording, mixing, and mastering option, from the Sony Oxford digital console and Sony 344

HR recorder in its all-digital room to the Solid State Logic 9000 J series board with a 960 center section for surround-sound monitoring in Studio I. It also sports vintage Neve and Neve VRs and a dazzling collection of microphones and outboard processors. In short, it’s the world’s biggest, most impressive, and most lavish appointed music studio—a source of interminable pride for the Germaines, who say their relationships and their top-notch staff are the keys to their success.

“I’ve always said that you can bring a horse to water, but you can’t make the horse drink the water,” says Ed. “All my buddies that I grew up with are now heads of companies. The second generation behind me, Troy and Danielle, have their relationships, and their relationships are taking over my relationships. So we can bring the people to the studio, but if the employees don’t do their job, the clients will never come back.”

Another cornerstone of the Hit Factory is meticulous preventive maintenance. “We have a tremen-

dous maintenance staff here,” Ed adds. “We work round the clock with maintenance. At whatever sacred moment we can get into the studio, we’re in there doing it.

While other studio owners and music industry executives have mounted the softness of the business, the Hit Factory is busier than ever and making money every year, according to Ed.

“We had 29 sessions two weeks ago in two days on a weekend,” he says. “I don’t think that’s ever happened here at the Hit Factory. You read the articles in the papers about the music industry being in the doldrums, that it’s not a happening business right now. But I must tell you, we’re busy. We have second and third hands on all our time.”

An independent producer who cut his teeth working at the old A&R and Record Plant studios in New York, Ed was set to move to California to go into business with another producer. He changed his mind and decided to stay in New York when the opportunity presented itself to participate in a management buyout of the Record Plant from Warner Communications, which owned it at the time.

Following the purchase, one of the partners, John Stone, moved to Cal-

ifornia to open Record Plant studios in Los Angeles and Sausalito, leaving Ed to head the flagship New York facility.

He remembers the Record Plant days as vital and fun-filled—with a staff of eventual stars that included Grammy-owning Panunzi, Shelly Yakus, and Roy Cicala—but he tired of the layers of decision-making that went with a partnership. Consequently, 18 months after joining the Record Plant, he sold his shares back to the company and bought the Hit Factory from founding owner Jerry Ragovin for $30,000.

At the time, the Hit Factory—which was located on West 48th Street—needed to make a big splash to compete with the Record Plant and the other top studios in New York. Ed was counting on his friend John Lennon to deliver the goods, but Lennon decided to take a five-year hiatus in 1975. Fortunately for the Hit Factory, Wonder booked three days at the studio in 1976. That booking evolved into a six-month session that yielded his landmark album “Songs In The Key Of Life.” By the time Lennon found his way back to the music business—and to the Hit Factory—in 1980, the studio was one of the major players.

In 1981, Ed moved the facility to the address at 54th and Broadway that it still occupies. Since then, he has steadily built the business from a small shop to one of the world’s great recording venues.

Troy, 39, started getting recording studio work when he was 8 years old and his father worked as a producer in various rooms in New York. After the family bought the Hit Factory in 1976, Troy worked part-time at the studio while attending high school. Upon graduation, he faced the momentous decision all graduates face.

“Instead of going to college, I decided to come to this college,” he says. He emphasizes the facility’s “academic aspects but also the facility where every day is a learning experience.”

Troy built his career from the ground up, working in the delivery, tape duplicating, and tape library departments before ascending to the position of booking manager. Regarding the latter job, he says, “I thought I did a great job, but Dan really comes twice as a good job as I did.”

Danielle, 30, got further into a “normal” career than her brother did. She attended college for six days before announcing to her parents that she was dropping out to join the studio staff. Although many parents would bristle at a child’s decision to leave college, and Janice was equally supportive once she was convinced that her daughter had made the right decision.

Asking how she keeps the Hit Factory’s recording and mastering rooms humming, Danielle echoes the themes sounded by her brother and father: “I love what I do, and I like every single person that comes in here,” she says. “They’re friends of mine, and I try to do for them the best I can. My dad and my mom always told me, ‘We’re in a service business.’ If a client calls at the last minute, I do whatever I can to get them in.

While some top families play favorites, displacing a lesser-known client if a superstar suddenly calls, the Germanos treat their customers equally. “You try to treat everyone the same way, whether it’s Bob Jones or Bob Dylan,” says Troy. “The next Bob Dylan could be Bob Jones. You never know!”

Even outside the studio, the Ger-

manos are extraordinary close-knit. Ed, Janice, Troy, and Danielle—plus the parents and siblings of the elder Germanos—live on the same block on Manhattan’s East Side.

Although Ed says he never counted on his son and daughter to join the business, he’s delighted that they have. He beams with anticipatory pride at the imminent birth of his first grandson, from Troy’s family.

Constantly stereotyped as an Italian-American family, the Germanos have a more complex heritage, as Janice is Austrian, Irish, and Spanish—and Troy is Jehovah’s Witness. They have no ties to their ancestors. Instead, they view themselves as quintessentially American, embodying the dream of the self-made, mom-and-pop business—with a little marble to boot.

AA Offers Reduced 1st-Class Fare For Nashville/L.A Flights

By Dan Daley

NASHVILLE—Underpricing the importance of the entertainment business in Nashville and Los Angeles, American Airlines announced April 30 that it had estab-

lished a reduced-cost, advance-pur-

chase first-class fare between these markets, the first program of its type for any major U.S. carrier.

Each round-trip first-class fare of $850 is $128 less than a stan-

dard one-way first-class fare on American and considerably less than half the cost of the standard $2,108 round-trip first-class fare. The new fare basis requires a seven-day ad-

vance purchase and is non-refund-

able, although it can be applied to similarly routed future bookings.

The announcement comes nine months after the music industries in both cities noticed a dramatic drop in business. After the story broke in Billboard Aug. 30, 1997—to American’s plans to terminate its one remaining non-

stop flight between the cities—one L.A., which would have eliminated first-class service between the two cities.

Southwest Airlines also services that route, but the so-called “no-

frills” carrier has no first-class cabin service or reserved seating, points that American has been hammering home in its efforts to tout the advan-

tages in newspapers in both cities since it recommitted to the route.

(Continued on next page)
AA OFFERS REDUCED 1ST-CLASS FARE
(Continued from preceding page)

American opened a hub in Nashville in 1986, building service up to 144 nonstop flights a day, including three a day to L.A., five a day to New York, and a short-lived Nashville-London nonstop flight in 1994-95. But the airline began dismantling its hub in Nashville in 1985, which irritated many in the entertainment industry who had moved or regularly commuted to Nashville during country music’s recent boom years of 1985-95.

By the end of 1997, American had fewer than 20 flights per day out of Nashville. However, the announcement, on July 30 that it would cancel its one remaining nonstop flight between the two cities incensed entertainment industry leaders.

“First class isn’t a luxury; it’s a necessity in this business,” says Gary Haber, an L.A.-based business manager whose clients include award-winning producer and MCA Nashville president Tony Brown, and recording acts Randy Travis, Joe Cocker, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. “You never know who you’re going to run into and make deals with. It’s an extension of your office when you commute that much.”

A campaign of letter writing and phone calls to American’s management ensued. On Sept. 22, 1997, a conference call was placed between executives of American Airlines and major music industry leaders in Nashville, including RCA Label Group (RLG) chairman Joe Galante, Arista/Nashville president Tim DuBois, and ASCAP VP Connie Bradley, during which they conveyed the dismay of the recording community. Reacting to the furor, American not only reinstated the flight but added a second Nashville-L.A. nonstop.

The carrier has since added a fourth daily nonstop flight between Nashville and New York’s La Guardia Airport. American’s Southeast regional sales manager, Mike Dye, acknowledged that the airline had been “overwhelmed” by the entertainment industry’s response.

Dulio and American spokesman Tim Smith also confirmed that there were “verbal agreements” that several labels would promote the flights, which Galante said were still in place and which have contributed to an ongoing dialogue between American and Nashville’s music industry.

“American has made regular presentations to us and kept us informed about things like load factors between the two cities,” Galante told Billboard. “But if you ask me, ‘Has the entertainment industry in Nashville propelled a change in corporate action regarding this market?’, I say ‘Absolutely, yes.’ It’s pretty significant that record companies can affect airline policies.”

Despite a slowdown in growth in the music industry that saw significant staff reductions at major labels last year and the closing of Nashville imprints Rising Tide and Almo Sounds this year, Hollywood-based entertainment companies have taken positions here recently. The Spielberg-Katzenberg-Geffen film/video/music-venture DreamWorks and Deane’s new Lyric Street Records label are two examples.

The new discounted first-class fare is intended to capitalize on this connection, and American’s Dye acknowledges the influence of the entertainment business on his company’s recent decision in the Nashville market.

PRODUCTION CREDITS
BILLBOARD’S NO. 1 SINGLES (MAY 16, 1998)

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PUERTO RICO STEPS UP: If there were doubts about the importance of Puerto Rico as a radio market, they were dashed May 2 at the annual Puerto Rico Radio Broadcasters Convention when Arbitron announced it was going to measure the island's radio audience (Billboard, May 16).

With a population of more than 3 million aged 12 and older, "La Isla Del Encanto" becomes the 11th-largest market of the 268 markets surveyed by Arbitron. Miami is bumped from 11th to 12th place. All markets below Miami will be bumped down a position, too.

Arbitron's first book to report Puerto Rico's ratings is summer '98. Subsequently, the commonwealth's ratings will be measured for spring and fall only. All stations on the island will be surveyed whether or not they are Arbitron clients.

Thomas Mocarsky, Arbitron's VP of communications, says the company's foray into Puerto Rico will benefit both the island's radio stations and stateside advertising agencies.

"The Puerto Rican broadcasters approached us, saying they were looking for a service that had wide acceptance by mainstream advertising agencies," says Mocarsky. "Agencies understand the methodology here in the States, which is the same methodology we have successfully tested and will use in Puerto Rico."

Test surveys conducted in February showed that Puerto Rican consumers actively filled out the diaries that Arbitron uses to compile its radio ratings. Each Arbitron survey in Puerto Rico will have a sample goal of 2,400 persons aged 12 and older.

Mocarsky noted that ad agencies, as well as Arbitron, see the Latin America as a continually growing marketplace. Moreover, he says, the company's entrance into Puerto Rico "is a very logical (move) for Arbitron because we are interested in expanding internationally, and Puerto Rico has served as a stepping stone for many U.S. companies to expand internationally."

As in the U.S., Billboard will use Arbitron's Puerto Rico books as the basis for its revisions of stations reporting to Hot Latin Tracks.

FONOVISA INKS EL RECUENTRO: Fonovisa has signed a recording deal with El Recuentro, a six-man vocal group comprising the former members of Menudo. Terms of the pact call for Fonovisa to put out a live double album that was recorded during the act's shows staged earlier this year in Puerto Rico. The album, due to drop in late May or early June, contains many Menudo hits that have been revamped with new arrangements.

El Recuentro is slated to perform Thursday (21) at Festival Acapulco '98. The group will also be in New York June 14 to take part in that city's annual Puerto Rican Day Parade.

STATESIDE BRIEFS: Grammy-winning trumpeter Arturo Sandoval is supporting his splendid, just-released album, "Hot House," (N2K/Encoded Music) (Continued on page 58).
3,000,000 copies sold.

SPC is proud to reach Brazil's all time sales. BMG is proud to share this with the world.
The Billboard Latin 50, is the only other Latino title on The Billboard 200, where it slips 191-192. "Vuelve" rules the pop chart for the 12th suc-
cessive week. Sales of the top 15 titles on this issue's pop chart are 41,500 units, compared with 40,000 pieces sold during the comparable week last year. Sales of tropical/salsa albums this issue are 33,500 units vs. 18,500 pieces during the comparable week in 1997. And sales of regional Mexican titles this issue are 77,000 units; in the comparable week last year they were 30,000 units.

Finally, two nomenclature items: In order to avoid confusion among the actual labels and the distribution divi-
sions, Sony will now appear as Sony BMG and BMG will now appear as BMG Latin.

The Billboard Latin 50, is the only other Latino title on The Billboard 200, where it slips 191-192. "Vuelve" rules the pop chart for the 12th suc-

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Latin Tracks A-Z

Title (Publisher, Licensing Dir) Short Music Dist.
1 RICKY MARTIN "Vuelve" (Sony Discos) 52
2 JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ "Romanes" (Sony Discos) 48
3 ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ "Mas" (Sony Discos) 45
4 ENRIQUE IGLESIA "El Día Que Llegaste a Mi" (Sony Discos) 43
5 TITO NIEVES "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 36
6 MANNY MANUEL "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 28
7 ALLA MEGAN "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 23
8 ANTHONY GONZALEZ "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 19
9 ELVIS CRESPO "Vuelve" (SONY BMG) 18
10 ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ "Mas" (Sony Discos) 17
11 MANNY MANUEL "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 15
12 ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ "Mas" (Sony Discos) 13
13 TITO NIEVES "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 11
14 JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ "RomaneS" (Sony Discos) 10
15 RICKY MARTIN "Vuelve" (Sony Discos) 9
16 TITO NIEVES "El Tiempo que Faltaba" (SONY BMG) 8
17 JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ "RomaneS" (Sony Discos) 7
18 ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ "Mas" (Sony Discos) 5
19 RICKY MARTIN "Vuelve" (Sony Discos) 4
20 JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ "RomaneS" (Sony Discos) 3

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H.CAP SHUTS BOGUS CHINESE STORE
U.K.-BASED RETAILER MOVES TO HALT USE OF ITS NAME

BY GEOFF BURPEE
HONG KONG—When is an HMV not an HMV? The London-based international retail chain has acted to stop a store in Guangzhou, China, from using the HMV name, store design, and deep-catalog concept to market CDs, cassettes, and video CDs in the mainland Chinese market.

John Fu Yu-체중, director of finance and administration at HMV greater China and Southeast Asia, says that the company's lawyers, along with the Guangzhou branch of the Chinese government's Authority of Industry and Commerce (AIC), raided the bogus HMV store May 3 (Billboard Bulletin, May 6). The AIC is responsible for investigating trademark infringements and complaints associated with industry and commerce.

Fu says HMV has been aware of the outlet for several weeks and monitored a low-key opening March 29 and a grand opening April 25.

"They call themselves 'China HMV,' but the logo was simply HMV," Fu says, adding that the logo and store design were "totally similar" to the chain's trademark pink font and gray background signage.

Fu says those similarities continued inside the outlet, where an identical setup and branding greeted custo- mers as in the HMV store, including the same segregation of genres and music types, chart walls, listing posts, and other point-of-sale features.

Following investigation of the chain's complaints, the AIC and HMV representatives have been successful in getting China HMV to stop using the HMV name. However, China HMV is also using the HMV characters in a stylized form that resembles the Chinese logo used by HMV at its four Hong Kong outlets (translating as "Chinese Music Unlimited"), a trademark that Fu admits is not registered. For the time being, says Fu, HMV is taking advice on whether it can proceed against China HMV under the use of the HMV logo color scheme and in-store design.

Fu says the music product found in China HMV was legitimate. "The pricing is quite different, and the range is limited due to supply, but they are targeting the same customers."

Fu says he is unable to comment on who is responsible for the investment in and establishment of the store, saying that HMV lawyers are still investigating Guangzhou. "They have a few names, but they are not yet confirmed." Fu notes that the bogus HMV store appears to be, from his travels around Guangzhou, by far the biggest and "most professional" retail outlet in the region.

Record company sources in Hong Kong, while condemning the copyright infringement, welcomed the experiment with deep-catalog retail in the Chinese market.

Fu also comments that HMV is exploring opportunities for new openings and that "in China, China is definitely a part of that."
Sony France Management Revamped

BY RÉMI BOUTON

PARIS—Sony Music France president Paul-René Albertini has set up a new management organization that will give the company more flexibility to react to changes in the market. “Since 1994, Sony Music France’s market share has grown from 25% to 25% in a very competitive marketplace,” he said. “In the future, we need to be able to react quickly.”

The new structure is in addition to current label management. “Those three groups have been created in order to carry out the company’s business strategy,” says Albertini.

The Management Group is to be run by Jean-Claude Gastineau (current music director and Sony Music France deputy managing director), and the A&R group is managed by Philippe Désindes, currently managing director of the Small imprint. Both Montfort and Désindes, who retain their responsibilities at the head of their respective labels, are promoted to senior VP of the company.

Says Albertini, “This new organization is the result of a major structural change that has been made at the LTC/Tristar and Epic imprints. The Epic management team of Christophe Lamergière as GM and Caroline Montfort as GM has been split. Diamond joins LTC-Tristar as GM, and Lamergière is confirmed as Epic’s sole GM.

According to Sony’s sources, “This move is more personal than strategic-driven.” At the same time, LTC-Tristar chief executive Luigi Théo Calabrese will extend his input to Epic’s “American” Lamergière with the label’s marketing strategy. “But LTC-Tristar remains my most important activity, and I am happy to now have Calabrese in my team,” says Calabrese.

After a year of operation, the Sony/Calabrese joint venture has made a major change in its management. For the label, “we are constructing a great catalog in two directions: French acts and Latin acts. It is good timing to create a new structure,” says Calabrese.

South African Awards Show Draws Criticism

BY DIANE COETZER

JOHANNESBURG—South Africa’s annual music awards ceremony, the FNB South African Music Awards (SAMA), is facing tough criticism over this year’s event, held April 20 here.

BMG Music managing director Keith Lister says his company would “politely inform” FNB (sponsor First National Bank) of “the whole range of South African Music Industry (ASAMI) organizers that ‘unless judges are named before entries are closed, no South African record company would no longer participate in the awards ceremony.’

Lister’s criticism stems from the fact that, unlike in previous years, the official fourth annual FNB SAMA program did not contain a list of judges. Another reason is ASAMI’s apparent reluctance to name those individuals chosen to judge. Lister says, ‘Until the awards ceremony is fully transparent and accountable, we will be extremely reluctant to participate.’

Many analysts consider the quality of the awards has caused dispute. Don Lakata of the successful independent label Kaiwa/Jazzmeese Records has been critical of the judging process, suggesting setting up an alternative to the SAMAs, based on the Soul Train Music Awards in the U.S. None of his label’s acts received a nomination despite the fact that several, including Trompies, have had an enormous impact on radio and the live circuit this year.

Former SAMA, station manager at South Africa’s fastest growing regional station, YFM, says the current categories and nominations “don’t show what’s happening in SA music in the least.”

(Continued on next page)
**International**

**Smellie Running BMG Japan**

**BY STEVE McCULLEN**

TOKYO—Michael Smellie, Hong Kong-based senior VP of BMG Entertainment International Asia-Pacific, is playing an unusually active role as acting president of BMG Japan.

Smellie, who was appointed to the post following the elevation of president Osamu Sato to the company’s chairman (Billboard, April 16), is spending Tuesday-Friday each week at the label’s Tokyo headquarters. He says he is involved in both the day-to-day running of the company and the search for a permanent replacement for Sato.

“I think all I’m doing is keeping the wheels turning at the moment,” Smellie says. “We’ll just have to wait and see how [the search] works itself out. It may be either very quick or very slow.”

Smellie says Sato’s appointment to the chairmanship was part of the overall effort to strengthen BMG Japan’s management, which, he emphasizes, that the former president continues to play an active role at the label.

**SACEM/SDRM Figures**

(Continued from page 59)

due to the slowing down of the video and audio tape market.

Collectors from abroad in both the performance and mechanical sectors were also active—by 6.3% to 552 million francs ($92 million). At the same time, SACEM/SDRM’s expenses have increased by 1.1% to 872 million francs ($145.4 million).

“Obviously, this increase is more important than the increase in any negative sales figures, but the rise is the smallest one for many years,” says Tournier. “We have reinforced the financial controls, and, in terms of staff, all we have done is to keep the people who have retired.”

Staff costs represent about 70% of the society expenses, according to the figures released by Tournier. Those figures show that SACEM/SDRM has an average commission rate of 17.28% for performance and mechanical revenues, compared with 16.9% in 1996.

“I can lower this ratio by laying off 300 people,” says Tournier. “It’s easy to lower costs, but we would then be less efficient. Some collecting societies criticize the level of our costs, but what’s important is what the authors receive. And SACEM is among the best in this domain.”

For 1997, SACEM/SDRM will report revenue of $2.6 billion francs ($443 million) to authors and publishers.

**South African Awards Show**

(Continued from preceding page)

“The big thing this past year was definitely kwekwe … there was really only one category [dance] for these artists,” Abraham says. “Where are all the other artists, like Sbu Mafifin, E’Smile, O’Da Meesta, Trompies, and others?”

Speaking after the awards ceremony, National Awards Chairperson FNB Steering Committee, responded, “The South African music industry is a very complex one in terms of genres, styles, and languages, and it’s extremely difficult to please everybody. While this industry may have a long history in terms of recording and creating, it’s still in its infancy in most other respects. It’s also not a very unified industry.”

Defending the failure to name judges, Lowe says many judges were reluctant to be named. “Many of these individuals do not want to be named or taken to task about how they voted.”

Lowe says he is still struggling to have an impact on the South African record-buying public. Howard Lazarus, Director of Look & Listen, and a number of independent retailers, says the awards had no impact on sales, either before or after the event.

“In fact, the Grammys has far more impact on sales in our stores,” he says. “I feel strongly that the awards organizers are not doing nearly enough to bring retailers into the fold. Most of us would not know the event was taking place if we did not read about it in the press.”

**Canada**

**James And Little Big Band Are Back**

**Sequel Set Reflects Singer/Guitarist’s Love For The Blues**

**BY LARRY LEBLANC**

TOKYO—Two years after a U.S. breakthrough has long eluded blues-based Colin James, the Canadian singer/guitarist isn’t worried about the commercial prospects of “Colin James No. 1,” he says.

The album, which explores the jump style of horn-dominated R&B, is being released June 23 here by WEA Records. There are no plans as yet to issue it in other territories. Nor was James’ 1997 WEA album, the sparse, traditional blues-based “National Steel,” released outside of Canada. It did, however, earn James a Juno Award in March for top Cana- dian blues album of the year.

Whether performing jump blues, rural blues, or rock’n’roll, the Vancou- ver-based James says he intends to con- tinue concentrating on recording the diverse records he’s known for, rather than those that others might expect of him. Also, he says he insists on being able to move around freely between the blues and rock genres.

“I guess there’s a certain level of what I’m about,” says James. “To those on the periphery who thought ’I’ve Come Back’ [a 1996 Canadian hit] was a good rock’n’roll record, doing now will be a surprise. To me, there’s no difference between performing Muddy Waters’ version of ‘Rollin’ Stone’ and Tom Petty’s ‘Baby Workout’… you have to do what makes you happy to play. When I was 16, I loved rock’n’roll, but I also loved R&B and swing music.”

James, who as teenager backed Ten- nessean bluesman Yank Rachell, later toured with Stevie Ray Vaughan, James has appeared with Steel Wood- wood, ZZ Top, Albert Collins, and the Rolling Stones. He has been long hailed as another in a long line of great white gui- tarists, which irritates him. “I got so tired of people telling me, ‘The White Man’s Going to be a white guy like you do to the blues’?” he says.

Strikingly more low-down than its predecessors, “Colin James & The Little Big Band” was released worldwide in 1995 by Virgin Records. The new album features a pulsating (and radio-friendly) version of Wilson’s 1963 R&B/cpop crossover hit “Baby Workout.” It’s the album’s lead single, slated to be serviced May 30 to top 40, adult chart, and all formats.

A video will be released to Canadian video outlets in early June.

The album features spot-on versions of straight-out blues songs originated by Memphis Slim (“I’m Lost Without You”) and Willie Dixon (“Bring It On Home” and “You Know My Love”), a cover of the Ray Charles novelty “Mary Ann,” and a running parody of James originals, “Trip Trap” (“Rocket To The Moon”).

The album’s core is slightly off the beaten track, including “Something Going On In My Room” (originally recorded by Dadyd Cleanhead), “Sudronia B” (Calvin Bue & His All Stars), “C’mon With The Cmon” (Carr Bocaylou, and “I’ll See It Through” and “Think,” both originally recorded by Jimmy McCracklin.

The album was co-produced and engineered by Colin James and Shawn Earle, who produced James’ 1990 album “Suddlen Stop.” The bed tracks for the new album were re- corded in December at Vancouver Bromo- dins in Vancouver. James recorded his guitar and vocals at his own Rat’s Ass Studio in the first two weeks of 1998. “This is really is a superb album,” says Kim Cooke, senior VP and manag- ing director, U.S. division, at Warn- er Music Canada. “The other record (‘Colin James & The Little Big Band’) was good. This is even better.”

Says Candy Higgins, marketing manager of domestic repertoire at Warner Music Canada, “It’s the last album on which we’re going to be distributing until the second half of the year. We’re still cutting a five-song, six-minute session, the special, with Steve WHO is going to be marketing the album around several of Colin’s appearances at [Canadian] jazz festivals in late June and early July. We’re also going to be focusing on a theatrical tour in the fall.”

“Colin James definitely has a fun base that is very hip,” says Steward Duncen, director of music for the three-store Indigo Books, Music & Café chain in Ontario. “I’m actually booking releases today, and I’m planning a big building up for the album. James says it too much longer to pick songs for the follow-up album. “With the first Little Big Band album, I had 16 years to pick the songs,” he says. “A lot of songs [for that album] came out of me putting in my pocket for a long time. On my first short-list for this album, I had 75 songs. We [recorded] 18 songs and then chose the top 12.”

James says his primary aim was to gather together some great musicians (many of whom have played on the 1993 album) and have a good time recording. Hardy, who came aboard after James’ longtime producer Chris Kim- sey couldn’t make it, was an inspired choice. Working as an engineer at Stax Records in Memphis in the 70s, and later with such seminal R&B artists as Eddie Floyd, Sir Mack Rice, and Al Green, Hardy knew the music James was after.

“Joe brought a blues savvy to the project,” says James. “I like the way he records. Very dry. He puts a gloss on [the production] without it sounding manufactured.”

Hardy says that having arrangement- ensembles that emphasized James’ guitar work was the key ingredient in the album’s vibrancy. “For the most part, these songs were horn-based songs or the [original] guitar parts were so buried,” he says. “We were keen on getting the most out of the guitar.”

After James completed recording the album, he rehearsed the band for two months to write with Hardy and long-time collaborator Daryl Burgess for a rock-based album, expected in 1999. That set, says Canada’s Cooke, says “should reflect a mature blues-based performer.”

**No Blues For James With Canadian Sales**

**BY LARRY LEBLANC**

TORONTO—While he has been unable to crack the U.S. market-place, Canadian singer/ guitarist Colin James remains a significant star at home.

Although there’s no label commitment yet for the American releases of “Colin James & The Little Big Band II,” James says he has high hopes for the set, the fol- low-up to 1998’s “Colin James & The Little Big Band.”

“When we put that first record out, there was no swing scene like today,” he says. “We got over 100 million [U.S.-based] swing going on, we can turn something over in the U.S. this time.”

Despite strong press and criti- cal acclaim, U.S. sales of James’ albums have been minimal. His self-titled Virgin debut album, released in 1988, and its 1990 follow- up, “Sudden Stop,” have sold 65,000 units each, according to James. “The Virgin release of Colin James & The Little Big Band” has sold only 17,000 units in the U.S. to date, while 1995’s “Bad Habits,” released by Elektra Entertain- ment Group in the U.S., has sold 8,800 units there, according to SoundScan.

In Canada, however, James’ sales are impressive. Bill Banham, VP/GM of Virgin Music Canada, says James’ self-titled debut album has sold 275,000 units in Canada, “Sudden Stop” has sold 194,430, “Colin James & The Little Big Band” has sold 173,441, and the 1985 compilation “Then Again,” released only in Canada, has sold 68,271.

After leaving Virgin in 1995, James signed with Warner Music Canada and released “Bad Habits.” In Canada, the album has sold 100,000 units, says Candy Higgins, marketing manager of domestic repertoire at Warner Music Canada. James’ 1997 coun- try blues project, “Steel Nation,” available outside Canada, has sold 39,000 units there, says Hig- gins.
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Music Fans Get Early Taste Of Hi Def
CineMuse Previews Technology With Museum Presentations

BY STEVE TRAIMAN
NEW YORK—With high-definition TV programming due to start later this year on a limited basis, Hi Def programming of jazz, blues, reggae, folk, classical, and opera music—as well as other entertainment—is already being previewed at museums and performing arts centers across the country.

“We’re looking at niche marketing for roots American music,” says Mort Cooperman, founder of New York’s Lone Star Café and Lone Star Roadhouse. Cooperman is one of four partners in CineMuse, the only company now presenting Hi Def programming to U.S. audiences on a national basis.

The company, which was launched a year ago, has formed alliances with museums and other presenters of art to showcase Hi Def features on life-sized screens in their theaters. Any production done on film can be rebilled in the Hi Def videotape format.

“The future is limited only by your imagination as to where this technology can go,” Cooperman says. Via Hi Def satellite delivery, he says, “you could take Buddy Guy across the country into several hundred small but quality venues he’d never reach and earn enough in one night to rival the best pay-per-view [PPV] concert and even sports revenues to date.”

This vision convinced company president Ted Geier to put together the new venture. He had previously founded and served for 14 years as CEO of Cause Effective, a leading provider of nonprofit fund raising and special events consulting and training.

He estimates he worked with more than 200 groups over the years. This included work with the New York Folk Festival, of which Cooperman was a major sponsor.

Through Cooperman, Geier was introduced to Barry Rebo, whose Rebo Productions had filmed a number of Hi Def programs at the Lone Star Roadhouse and House of Brazil in New York. The Rebo catalog is a source of many of the initial CineMuse programs. Another source is the Rabbit Ears catalog of children’s programming licensed from Microleague Multimedia; those programs are narrated by top actors, with major artists providing the music.

(Continued on next page)

BY DON KAPLAN
NEW YORK—Boosted by a freshly inked deal that teams Domo Records with three former rivals, the Los Angeles-based label, specializing in new age, world, and AC music, has high hopes for a new album that will enjoy all the sales support and marketing muscle of EMI Music Distribution (EMD).

The deal, which creates a formidable family of labels offering similar music, links Domo, Narada, Higher Octave, and Virgin, with distribution being handled by EMD, the world wide distributor’s domestic arm.

Domo signed the long-term deal with Narada—a recently acquired division of Virgin Records—this past February and is banking that its $2.5 million domestic sales will double by next year as a result of the agreement.

“Card of the things that makes this deal very significant for us,” says Domo managing director Eddie Gilreath, “is that we now have the ability to be aligned with other companies doing the same type of business that we are.”

The companies might soon adopt a name that will represent all of the labels. Gilreath—who joined the firm last September—says the combined labels boast “so many types of artists that add to the spectrum of the group. It makes it a much stronger and [more] viable entity. It allows us to be aligned with other companies that have the ability to become very aggressive out there, and we can be a part of what they’re doing.”

Domo’s upcoming release, set to hit stores Tuesday (19), is Kitaro’s “Gaia.” It marks the first studio release in more than four years for Kitaro, a Grammy-nominated new age artist who is regarded as one of the genre’s most prestigious performers.

With the help of the label’s vast network of sales and marketing support, Domo plans to launch “Gaia,” which carries a $15.98 list price, at accounts like Borders, Blockbuster Music, and Tower Records/Videow. The label will use various point-of-purchase elements such as bin cards, chains, Kitaro notebooks, streamers, and album flaps. The effort is the largest merchandising campaign in the firm’s four-year history.

According to Mitch Rabin, Domo’s manager of operations, various retail accounts will offer a promotional six-song Kitaro sampler called “Six Musical Portraits” as a companion piece to the album.

“Some accounts are handing it with the Kitaro CD as a special piece,” Rabin notes, adding that other accounts will offer the sampler as a

(Continued on next page)

Amazon.com Plans Steady Growth In Music And Video

BY CATHERINE APPLEFELD OLSON
WASHINGTON, D.C.—The online retailer Amazon.com is out to prove it’s as serious about selling music and video as it is about selling books.

The Seattle-based company has purchased the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), an online repository of movie and TV information that it will use to enhance its existing video store. In addition, Amazon.com just launched a preliminary version of its music store.

However, in a departure from its no-holds-barred entry into the book market, Amazon is taking a much quieter tack with the latter product categories. It’s initially just advertising to its existing customers, with broader campaigns slated for later this year.

The IMDB (www.imdb.com) offers information about more than 140,000 movies and TV shows. During the past eight years, it has grown from an insider’s haven to a heavily trafficked consumer destination.

“It’s a great resource for us technically and to teach us how to do community well,” says David Risher, Amazon.com’s senior VP of product development. “We want to parallel our book community, and we saw the amount of passion that went into IMDB.”

For the near term, Risher says, the IMDB site will continue to exist much as it does today, with the addition of links to Amazon.com to buy videos and soundtracks.

“There is content there we intend to redeploy on the Amazon site,” Risher adds.

Although it’s just starting to piece together a robust video retail environment, Amazon.com actually has been selling video for almost its entire existence and now even carries DVD product.

“We’ve had videos for a long time but never made a big deal of it and have not put the energy behind it, as we have with [books],” says Risher, adding that video sales are “very small” for the company.

With the IMDB purchase, Risher says, the company now will move video into center stage.
MUSIC FANS GET AN EARLY TASTE OF HI DEF
(Continued from preceding page)

The initial 62-title CineMuse catalog includes such music highlights as "R&B In The Classic Style," which features Ruth Brown and Charles Brown and is also available as a Rounder Records/Rebel DVD release; "World Music II: Reggae," featuring Jamaican artist Sugar Minott; "World Music I: Soulful," featuring Papa Wemba and Dibala with Lokto; "Clearwater: Celebrating The Hudson River," with folk singer/songwriters Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie; "Romeo And Juliet," with the Paris Opera Ballet; and Wagner's "Die Meistersinger Von Nürnberg," from the Deutsche Oper Berlin. There's also an impressive array of fine art, drama, biography, documentary, and other arts programming.

CineMuse's initial selections also include 14 children's releases from the Rabbit Ears catalog, such as "Anansi," with Denzel Washington (Lift UB104); "Bry Rabbit & Boss Lion," with Danny Glover and Dr. John; "King Midas And The Golden Touch," with Michael Caine, Malsars and Yo-Yo Ma; "Koi And The Kola Nuts," with Whoopi Goldberg and Herbie Hancock; and "Rumpeltstilskin," with Kathleen Turner and Tangerine Dream.

A second wave of music releases is due later this year from the "Manhattan Music Magazine" concert series recorded live by Rebo in Hi Def on 24-track digital audio at the Lone Star and Sounds of Brazil. Among the new titles are "Hot Tuna: Alive In Concert," "Blues Men," John nie Johnson And Johnny "Texas Twister" Copeland; "The Rhythm & Blues Of New Orleans," with Snooks Eaglin and Johnny Adams; and "New Wave Folk," featuring Peter Galway, Aztec Two-Step, and Cliff Eberhardt.

This programming literally comes to life in the Hi Def electronic cinema that has been operating for years in Europe and Japan.

"In the CineMuse concept," Geier explains, "we offer equipment that creates a state-of-the-art movie theater in which audiences feel as if they're experiencing in person the live and prerecorded events on the screen. Hi Def quality surpasses most film and provides detail and color five times greater than conventional video. The image has a wide screen 16-by-9 ratio aspect and generally marries well to the cinema design.

To showcase the new concept and programming, CineMuse has put together equipment packages that are being loaned to the test performers or affordable. The quality of the Hi Def broadcast is very high. And the programming catalog is impressive now and holds great promise for future development."

After making presentations to more than 100 potential exhibitors, Geier put together an impressive list of test venues; they started offering Hi Def programs last fall. Participating venues include the Children's Museum of Manhattan; Bronx Children's Museum; Young University in Provo, Utah; Algonquin Arts Theatre in Manchester, N.J.; Kalamazoo (Mich.) Valley Museum; Mesa (Ariz.) Southwest Museum; Museum of the American Frontier in Utica, N.Y.; the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts; and the Cape Fear Museum of Fine Arts in Den- nis, Mass. Other bookings have included the Sheldon Theatre in Red Wing, Minn., and Cal Poly Arts in San Luis Obispo, Calif.

"In most cases it's a revenue-sharing agreement with minimum guarantees," Geier says. "Some venues had most of their own equipment set-ups. Others, like Kalamazoo and Pittsburgh, rented programs for special events.

The experience that the Cape Fear Museum of Fine Arts had from March until early May of this year was typical of the positive reaction to the CineMuse test.

"We were very pleased with the response from our audience to the artist biographies and some of the classical programs," says director Greg Harper. "For the 'Romeo And Juliet' performance, we heard comments such as, 'It was like being in the second-row center of the Paris Opera.' The audio and video quality was exceptional. One thing that Hi Def really works well with is the art programs, offering the true color you can't get when you're watching a basic VHS program on PBS or cable."

"We're going to rouse some high-light programs in our high season this June and July," he notes. "We're very seriously looking at purchasing the equipment and then we'll subscribe to the CineMuse program. It will definitely help our 92-seat venue, which has run a successful 16 mm fine-art package. With a great opportunity to 35 mm, it would cost about $165,000 to re-equip our theater. And with CineMuse, a much smaller investment will not only give us access to Hi Def, but the equipment also can be used for VHS, SVHS, and DVD programs."

Harper says he hopes the Cape Musem of Fine Arts will eventually be part of a consortium of fine-arts institutions that can use Hi Def satellite programming.

"This is Geier's goal for CineMuse. "We're now negotiating to get permanent sites in a consortium that would offer a minimum guarantee against revenue-sharing, that with revenue financing the equipment systems," he says. "We hope to have between 40 and 50 sites signed up by year-end 1999 and more than 100 by the new century, when we'll be large enough to begin originating and broadcasting live programs," he adds. "With live transmission via satellite, we expect to far outdo what PPV has accomplished to date for even sports programming."

Geier says fine arts content will work on PPV when it features programs generated typically on commercial or cable TV, when it's shown in an appealing facility, and when it's presented with the very best high-tech equipment. "IMAX has shown that if you deliver good shows in a great format, people will come to museums to see them," he notes.

For Cooperman, merchandising opportunities are equally attractive.

"CineMuse is something people will want to belong to," he says. "We'll launch some type of club for venue owners and multi-screen. We've already tested sales of videos and audiocassettes at the Children's Museum of Manhattan, and we know how well museum stores do on all types of memorabilia.

Geier lays out the bottom-line scenario: "If you get 200 people in 200 smaller communities, and you sell each ticket at $20, that's an $800,000 gross that spells success on any revenue-sharing basis," he says. "And when you add in the appeal of a very different type of programming, say, 50 percent documentary, we see Hi Def as the real wave of the future for performing arts."

AMAZON.COM
(Continued from preceding page)

"Right now there is a lot of emphasis on books," he says. "And music is where we see our short-term attention being focused, and then video.

In mid-April, Amazon debuted the initial incarnation of its long-awaited music store. The company sold a selection of 100,000 titles, which are searchable by title and artist and cover every genre except classical.

"The music store is similar to its book counterpart, Amazon.com plans to add editorial features and other content and has been amassing a dedicated music staff.

"One of the big challenges for the site's visitors is finding their way to the music store via the site's search facility, which also provides suggestions on ways it can provide information like current album reviews and "desert island" album picks; it's also asking for comments on the music area's design.
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Tower Set For Expansion With New Debt Offering, Revolver

TOWER POWER: Since January, Russ Solomon, Tower Records/Video president, has been saying the chain is ready to rock'n'roll. And now he can afford it, because Tower has completed a $110 million debt offering, selling senior subordinated notes that are due in 2003 and carry a 9.125% interest rate. Moreover, the Sacramento, Calif.-based company has secured a new revolving credit facility, with fund availability totaling $275 million; it matures in five years. The refinancing was underwritten by Chase Investors and Merrill Lynch, with Chase Investors also serving as the lead in the banking syndicate supplying the revolving credit facility.

Company treasurer Sandy Cortes says the refinancing was done with the "goal of positioning the company for future expansion opportunities, both domestically and worldwide." She notes that in addition to supplying funds to the domestic operation, the revolver also serves the needs of Tower Records Kabushiki Kaisha (KK), the company's Pacific Rim operation, which encompasses stores in Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan. "The syndicate supplying the revolving credit facility includes international banks," Cortes says. "We wanted to have access to the currencies and the funds in the countries in which we do business."

In addition to the countries named above, Tower Records KK has franchises in Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines, while Tower's parent company, MTS Inc., has stores in the U.K., Ireland, Canada, Israel, Colombia, Mexico, and Argentina, in addition to the U.S. In total, the company operates 192 stores and has total revenues of about $1 billion.

While saying that the refinancing should fuel Tower's expansion for the next five years, Cortes declines to specify how many stores will be opened in the current year. She notes that because the company doesn't use a "cookie cutter" approach, it's harder to predict when and how many store openings will occur. But, she adds, in the company's history, "we have only closed eight stores. Compare that total to the hundreds of stores that our competitors have closed in the last few years, and it speaks well to our expansion approach."

It does at that. And now we'll all get a peek behind the curtains to see exactly how healthy Tower's operation is. Thanks to the $110 million debt offering, the company will begin making 10-K and 10-Q filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

(Continued on page 70)
New Ownership, Distrib For Ichiban

ICHIBAN DEALS: There are a couple of new twists in the saga of Atlanta-based Ichiban Records. Label president John Abbey has re-acquired the 50% of the company purchased last year by Koch International and has inked a new exclusive distribution pact with Alpharetta, Ga.-based Intersound Distribution, a division of Downers Grove, Ill.-based Platinum Entertainment.

Last year, Port Washington, N.Y.-based Koch, which had been Ichiban’s exclusive distributor since December 1996, bought half of the label retained by Abbey’s ex-wife and ex-partner, former Ichiban president Nina Easton, after the couple split in early ’96 (Billboard, March 8, 1997). The Ichiban/Koch deal supplied new funding for the label, which had experienced some rocky times owing to the distracting Abbey/Easton divorce, and gave Koch—previously known as a distributor of roots, jazz, and pop product—a gateway into the R&B music sphere.

Today, both Abbey and Koch International president Michael Koch describe their parting of the ways as amicable. Neither is especially forthcoming about the reasons behind the dissolution of their partnership. Koch says only that he stepped out of “a difference in vision.” Abbey says his buyback of Koch’s interest for an undisclosed sum was completed in March. Even after the completion of the repurchase, Koch and Ichiban apparently talked about continuing their distribution relationship, which was up for renewal. However, Koch says, “we didn’t want to provide the additional funding…The renewal deal was too rich for me.”

“With Michael’s blessing, we spoke to a few other companies,” says Abbey, who adds that Ichiban ended up talking with seven or eight firms before narrowing things down to three prospective distributors.

Intersound, which was purchased in early ’97 by Platinum, won out, according to Abbey, because of its geographical proximity and its expertise in handling genres like bass music and old-school R&B, both Ichiban mainstays. “We weren’t dissatisfied with Koch, but I feel the marriage with Intersound is a better marriage,” Abbey says. “We have a lot in common with Intersound.”

The first albums under the new distribution arrangement, which took effect May 4, will arrive on Tuesday (19): “Lovers Again,” by smooth R&B vet Alexander O’Neal, and, on the Wrap imprint, “We Keep It Crunk For You,” by Atlanta hip-hop group the A-Town Players. Ichiban’s roster includes M.C. Breed, Ashford & Simpson, Millie Jackson, Top Authority, Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz, and Da Organization.

Abbey’s repurchase of Koch’s interest and the new distribution deal serve as an exclamation point for a period of some tumult in Ichiban’s recent past. In January, the label laid off 12 of its 36 staff members (Billboard, Jan. 24).

For Koch’s part, the distributor will be on the hunt for new R&B product. “We do want to fill that void now,” Koch says. “We’re definitely going to stay in that game. It’s a viable genre.”

ACTION AT DNA: Distribution North America (DNA) in Woodland, Calif., has undertaken a new relationship with the long-running punk rock label SST Records in Lawrence, Calif. DNA will now supervise the majority of SST’s product; fulfill SST for overseas accounts and regional specialty distributors; and sell SST product to chains, one-stops, and some indie accounts.

The bond between DNA and SST represents a major switch for the label, which is operated by former Black Flag guitarist Greg Ginn. In the past, SST utilized a broad web of U.S. distributors and one-stop houses to move its wares and warehoused its own product.

In other DNA news, the distributor has inked a long-term distribution deal with Moulin D’Or, the Minneapolis adult contemporary label that numbers Danny Wright among its acts. The new arrangement takes effect in July. Moulin D’Or was previously distributed by Navigator Corp.

FLAG WAVING: In the late ’70s, when punk rock was first rearing its ugly little head in L.A., the Heaters were a local act that energetically fused the punk outlook with some engaging pop moves. Now the band’s singer/songwriter, Missy Connell, is spearheading a new edition of the group, as the Heaters return with the album “Living In A Sticcom,” on Malibu, Calif.-based Garage Records.

Contemporaries of such nifty punk-skewed pop acts as the Pissfums and 2820, the Heaters issued albums on Arista America and Columbia in their early-’80s heyday. But, Connell recalls, “they wanted us to sound like Martha Davis and the Motels, and we said no thanks.”

The band came close to making an album with the legendary, and legendarily eccentric, producer Phil Spector. Connell says of those abortive sessions, “The bodyguard had his gun out on the piano, singing along...[Spector] was great, but it dragged on so long.”

Ultimately, the Heaters packed it in in 1986. While the original band members—including Connell’s sister Maggie—scattered to the four winds, Connell stuck it out in Los Angeles. “I had a feeling I didn’t complete something,” she says. “Music is so much timing. You do what you love, and the wheel of fortune turned around.”

The spark for the band’s reformation came round the liner-up of cable TV host Art Fein asked Connell to perform at a tribute to Bobby Fuller at the Hollywood nightspot Jack’s Sugar Shack. There she encountered producer Dollar Varden, and, she says, “things came together right then.”

Connell ended up recording the resultant album mostly by herself. “I just thought, ‘God—I had an 8-track [tape machine], I got a computer...’ I said, ‘I want to see what I can do, to clear the cobwebs out.’”

“Living In A Sticcom” manages to capture a good deal of the sassy original Heaters sound, in rockers like “That Roy (Wants To Be A Girl)” and the shock-rocking “He Treats Her Like A Trophy” and in lovely rock balladry like “Every Living Dog.”

Connell is applying her energies to whipping a band working into shape; guitarist Bernard Yin, bassist Lisa Henschel, and drummer David Deeter round out the lineup. “We’re rehearsing it up,” Connell says. “This music is hard. They’re going through torture.”

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![Order Now!](image)
Mike Dreese... The Oasis CD Listening Station Program, based in Los Angeles, has just changed its name to the Oasis Listening Station Program. The change was made due to a copyright conflict. In other news, Joel Oberstein, formerly director of retail operations for Tempo/Pacific Coast, has joined Oasis as label liaison.

Breaking Up: It's almost official: The long-anticipated split between David Lang and Jerry Solomon, owners of Compact Disc World, is about to become a reality, with the former buying out the latter. According to Solomon, Lang "is buying my half of the company. The deal should close in the next week or so, but we have an agreement in principal." He declines to disclose details of the transaction. Compact Disc World, based in South Plainfield, N.J., has nine stores, with another planned to be opened later this year. The two began the company in January 1986 and opened their first store in October of that year. In addition to the retail operations, the company also has a mail-order operation.

The breakup between the two partners has been brewing for a couple of years, and at one time the chain was put up on the block because of it. Sources say. But in the end, Solomon says, the partnership's dissolution has been amicable. In the meantime, he says, he's considering starting another music retail operation in another part of the country or pursuing other opportunities in the music industry. He can be reached for the next few weeks through the Compact Disc World headquarters.

Gia: It's true: Walter "Bad" Martin, executive VP at Tower Records/Video, is retiring from the chain. Martin, who also has the nickname of "Mr. No," has logged 37 years working with Russ Solomon, Tower's founder.

For the Record

Contrary to a statement in an article in the May 9 issue of Billboard, Jorma Kaukonen did not record an album for Warren Green, owner of the Spinners record store in New Hope, Pa. Kaukonen is under exclusive contract with Reelx Records.

Atlantic Employs Tie-Ins Galore For 'Camelot' Set

WHOLE LOTTA CAMELOT: Atlantic Records has put a wide array of laces in its promotional tiltyard in service for the soundtrack to "Quest For Camelot," the Warner Bros. animated movie that opened May 15. "Quest For Camelot: Music From The Motion Picture," released May 5 on Carb/Warner Sunset/Atlantic, features original songs from the film written and produced by David Foster and Carole Bayer Sager and performed by LeAnn Rimes, Celine Dion, Bryan White, Steven Perry, and Andrea Boyetti. Plus, actors Eric Idle and Don Rickles, who voice Camelot's two-headed dragon, Devon & Cornwall, perform on a track. The album includes excerpts from the film score, composed by Patrick Doyle.

Lisa Gray, senior director of product development for Atlantic, says the promotion and marketing campaign involves tie-ins with K-Mart, Eckerd Drugs, Wendy's, Blockbuster Video, Kraft/Kool-Aid, Wal-Mart, Tyson Chicken, and UNICEF.

The Wendy's program, which kicked off May 1 and runs through June 14, is centered around giveaways of two-song sampler cassette featuring movie songs "On My Father's Wings" (sung by Perry) and "I Stand Alone" (performed by White, who sings the movie's male lead role, Garrett; the Corrs' Andrea Corr sings female lead Kayley). Tray liniers in 5,400 Wendy's restaurants nationwide are tagged with information about the full soundtrack, urging customers to buy it at their local Blockbuster.

"Quest For Camelot" soundtracks are among the prizes being given away in Kraft/Kool-Aid's "Become A Knight" sweepstakes, which is being pushed via more than 45,000 free-standing displays in grocery stores through June or July, according to Gray.

From April 15 through July 15, the soundtrack is tagged on the back of 5 million Tyson Chicken boxes. Tyson is holding its own sweepstakes, with prizes including "Quest For Camelot" albums.

Though the end of this month, the soundtrack will be featured in listening posts at all Wal-Marts nationwide. The title is also receiving special attention at Warner Bros. stores. As for the UNICEF tie-in, each soundtrack will contain an insert with information about the organization. The charity is using music and characters from the film in a full fund-raising campaign called "With or Treat for UNICEF.

Gray says children's specialty marketing firm Playground Entertainment Marketing is playing a big part in the promotion of the "Quest For Camelot" soundtrack. "We're working with 4,000 retailers—everything that falls outside music accounts," says Playground founder/president Kathleen Bywater, who notes that her company is also handling Camelot book and tape product, released on Kid Rhino/Kids' WB Music. "Target is one of our major clients in this area. We've been working with them since September."

The book and tape title "Quest For Camelot Audio Action-Adventure" was released April 7 and is being pushed via advertising in DC Comics in May issue of Arachnids, Pinky & The Brain, and Superfriends; a trailer on Warner Home Video's "Quest For Camelot Sing Along." As June, the Krafty Kool-Aid sweepstakes, in which it will be given away to 100 first-prize winners; and other promotional efforts.

JUDY & DAVID ON TOP: Belated and richly deserved congratulations (Continued on next page).
CHILD'S PLAY
(Continued from preceding page)

to Toronto-based husband-and-wife duo Judy & David, who won this year’s Juno Award for best child
ner's recording for the thoroughly delightful album “Livin’ A Shoe,” on Tanglewood Audio. Kudos also to Tanglewood chief Bruce Davidson, who knew how to pick ‘em. Child’s Play kicked off this fresh, funny preschool-oriented pair in the Dec. 20, 1997, column; we consider the duo among the very best the genre has to offer. We’re anxious to see what the pair will come up with next.

KIDBITS: Sony Wonder has rereleased Waylon Jennings’ chairman of a children’s album, “Cowboys, Sisters, Rascals & Dirt,” which first appeared on Lou Adler’s Ole 2 Kids label in 1992. It views the world from a spirited little boy’s point of view and includes such original tunes as “All Of My Sisters Are Girls” and “Cowboy Movies.”

Redway, Calif.-based Music for Little People (MFLP) has secured an exclusive worldwide rights to audio product based on the Learning Channel’s preschool series “Bingo & Molly.” The first album is “You Can Do It!” with songs and a score by Ric Zivic. Also new from MFLP is “Sing for Kids” by Papillon, a New Orleans-based musician who is part of the Crescent City’s Arts in Education series. Tunes include “Let’s Go! Fais Do Do!”, “Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler”, and “Crawfish.”

The Club Baby label of Forest Hills, N.Y., has a new arrival in its endearing toddler audio series of the same name. “Club Baby: A Special Book.” The series is also available en espagnol.

DOMO RECORDS
(Continued from page 65)

The program is much larger than what Domo has been capable of in the past. Prior to signing the deal with Narada, the label’s distribution was handled by the independent Navarra. “When you’re dealing with a major distribution organization, you have a large field force,” says Gilreath. “With this deal, we have an entire sales force that is dedicated to selling.”

Both Gilreath and Rabin are firm when explaining that the deal doesn’t diminish Domo’s creative control over its product or its current direction. “We’re still an independent company,” Rabin says. “We’re not independently distributed, but we’re still fully owned by ourselves. We still have the freedom to do what we want to do and put campaigns together as we see fit. We don’t have anyone telling us what direction to go in.”

Altogether, the new label group is a potent combination of new age, world, and AC firms. The group’s Virginia area boasts the best-selling Yanni as part of its stable of new age artists; Gilreath says collaborative efforts across artists and labels isn’t out of the question.

As an example, Gilreath cites a recently completed Narada project, “Gypsy Soul,” a compilation album that tapped Domo’s Benedetti & Sbood project with its international flair. “We’re able to do things where we can easily license artists to other labels in the group,” he says, “be it for exposure or support of particular projects.”

According to Narada president Wesley Van Linda, there were several sides to the company’s interest in bringing Domo into the fold. Foremost was longstanding respect for Domo founder/CEO Etichi Naolo and Gilreath’s work.

“It’s just fun to be able to work with good, honest people in this business,” Van Linda says. “Secondly, Kitaro is one of the premier artists in the whole new age/world fusion area, and for us, the opportunity to be part of this is great.”

“We’ve indirectly worked with Kitaro in product in the past,” he adds, “and we have a tremendous amount of respect for him and his music. It’s a good match to bring them into what we’re doing with Virgin and EMI Distribution. For us it’s a real positive thing, and we hope we can do a good job with them.”
Brokers, Stores Squeeze Used-Tape Biz

Merchants Are Beginning To Trade On Previously Viewed DVDs

BY EARL PAIGE

LOS ANGELES—The used-tape business is suffering from an identity crisis.

Brokers of previously viewed programs who once relied solely on direct-response sales are outfitting stores. Meanwhile, retailers who bought only goods now are also spending open-to-buy dollars on used inventory. DVD is exacerbating the tensions between the two camps.

A market is developing in used DVDs, indicative of the year-old configuration's early maturity, according to trade sources. "Actually, many brokers are diversifying to the point where it is almost rare to find a company solely in the used-tape business," says Joe Mazon, president of Video Distributors of Florida.

Mazon, a veteran tape broker, is now scouting for disc inventory. So is Stage Two Video, the new name of a Dallas company that as Stage Two Previously Viewed had specialized in tapes. President Dan Crider, actively seeking DVD product, has just launched a World Wide Web site, trading DVDs with the general public.

Brokers, in fact, have gone heavy on Web sites, according to Craig LaRowe of Craig LaRowe & Associates, a consulting firm. LaRowe attributes this early activity in DVD to the increasing number of high-tech surfers who regularly shop the Web for bargains.

Damon Van Voorhis of Frontier Video Distributors agrees. A major broker, Frontier has also diversified into retail outlets. It went on the Internet last August to bolster store activity.

"We first picked up interest in used DVD on the Web site," says Van Voorhis, "but so far it's just a trickle." Used DVDs are not yet a factor at Frontier's three Video Cupboard and Family Video Depot stores, he observes.

The phones may be about to ring off the hook, however: Movies 2 Sell, a San Diego used-tape outlet, is starting to field DVD inquiries, says owner Eric LaRowe, brother of Craig LaRowe.

"That's how it started with video games. People got tired of them and want to sell," he says.

Movies 2 Sell "is about the only place in San Diego with a decent selection of laserdiscs, about 1,200 titles," Eric says. He anticipates the format will disappear as DVD catches on.

The line between used brokers and retailers is blurring for both VHS and DVD. Los Angeles chain 2020 Video advertises that it's "not a broker," but at the same time, it's hoping to buy used product directly for resale.

"In fact, there's so much confusion in the marketplace, that Gene Gross, president of broker Video Group in Clearwater, Fla., quips, "I just want to stop and catch my breath." Hollywood isn't helping matters any. Gross says the latest developments confounding the raft of so-called free goods going right through dealers' hands and into the unlikeliest places.

The trend dates back to late 1997, when the studios began rewarding dealers who made quotes with extra copies of hit movies that consumers might otherwise have difficulty finding on a hot-renting Friday night.

"What's happening is that many (Continued on page 75)

So Exactly How Successful Is DVD? As It Passes The One-Year Mark, Opinions Vary

HALF EMPTY! HALF FULL! If you listen to the enthusiasts, DVD is cruising. Software sales have far exceeded expectations, they say, and the number of players in consumer homes, while not as plentiful as hoped, are steadily growing. Buyers are picking up the latest player, so it's not just the early insiders.

In the view of the year-old format has taken advantage of the expansion of home video infrastructure and lags behind demand for the true example of consumer electronics success, the rooftop satellite dish. For DVD, there's still converting to happen.

The DVD Video Group (DVG) did some serious tub-bumping earlier this month in a meeting with the trade press. Machines in homes probably top 800,000, about 60% of those shipped to installers, according to the trade group's rough estimates. And the disc count is practically over 4 million units," said DVG chairman E.C. Ware via phone in early May. "It's not up to the satelllite numbers." The offshoot of Eagle-Vail Group, parent of Eagle Video, says DVG is "a very minor" glitch, in fact may benefit the Bay Area introduction. (A national DvDS roll out is delayed in the U.K.)

By June 12, the new start date for print ads, California will be past the political primaries thatJack up the cost of commercial time. DvDS spots are probably well and will roll out to all other outlets nationwide. GVC president Bob Gunst. "Anyway, we're used to this." The DVD suffered a delay of several months before supplier began shipping hardware and software in March 1997.

That postponement continues to haunt manufacturers. Trade observers as consultant Richard Kelly consider the early projections of 1 million DVD players in the first year as the standard that suppliers have failed to meet. Kelly counts an installed base of about 400,000 machines, higher than most of the estimates but less than one-quarter of GVC's estimate.

DVDs that are currently being shipped to stores in the first quarter. Overall, DvDS household penetration "does not add up to the satellite numbers," he says. In Kelly's view, is it simply astound of the VCR.

He notes that Betamax and VHS struggled in the early days "with very little software." It was only after the studios began releasing movies on tapes that VCR sales surged 8%-10% per year. A DVD, he suggests, has had the benefit of movies and retailers attuned to home video from the start. However, Kelly is quick to note that DVD will probably be found in 10,000 outlets this year, compared with 5,000 in 1997. Sales should reflect the increase.

His other concern is a disc inventory that has grown like topsy since early 1997. Although DvDS proponents trumpet the heavy sell-through—early adopters are snapping up an average of 20-30 a year, and some dual-layer titles are in short supply—Kelly says total sales were barely 25% of the retailers' 1997 output. The IRMA study estimates that as many as 12 million discs have been warehoused. In 1998, 35 million more are due to roll off assembly lines.

U.K.'s Technicolor Opens Danish Duplicating Plant For Scandinavia

LONDON—Technicolor, a subsidiary of the U.K. media group Carlton Communications, has set up a new plant in Denmark to exploit the Scandinavian cassette market. It's the duplicator's third European expansion in the past 18 months.

The facility, in Randup, Jutland, will initially have the capacity to produce more than 5 million units a year, says Technicolor, which also has manufacturing and distribution operations in the U.S., the U.K., Holland, Italy, and Spain. Its clients include Disney, Warner, and DreamWorks. First off the new production line will be "The Game," starring Michael Douglas.
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*ITA gold certification for a minimum of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of $9 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at suggested retail for nontheatrical titles. ITA platinum certification for a minimum sale of 250,000 units or a dollar volume of $18 million at retail for theatrically released programs, and at least 50,000 units and $2 million at suggested retail for nontheatrical titles. © 1998, Billboard/BPI Communications.
**Top Video Sales**

**Billboard**

**May 23, 1998**

**MAY 23, 1998**

**THE WEEK'S GROSS CHART**

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**Dennis Joins Warner's 75th Anniversary Lineup**

**Dennis the Menace Strikes Again:**

Dennis joins Warner Home Video's 75th-anniversary lineup with "Dennis the Menace Strikes Again," a direct-to-video sequel to the 1997 film "Dennis the Menace." Price at $19.94, the title will be part of the studio's 75th-anniversary marketing initiative. Dennis the Menace is a cross-promotional partner.

"Dennis has a lot of great characters that could become video franchises, but we're taking a wait-and-see approach on Dennis," says Warner Family Entertainment director of marketing Dan Canone. "I can't definitely say that this is our next franchise, but he's a strong direct-to-video character."

In fact, Canone says that "Dennis" is in the middle of seven direct-to-video releases Warner plans to announce over the next month. "Some will be spring, and others will be based on characters," says Canone, who wouldn't disclose details.

One reason Dennis is ripe for $19.94 is that the movie grossed more than $50 million at the box office and sold nearly 4 million units on video, according to Canope. The 1950s-old comic strip character created by Hank Ketcham also appears in 1,200 daily newspapers in 48 countries and is translated into 19 languages.

Plans for the title include a national TV and print advertising campaign, a national book worth $150 in related Warner products that will be included in each cassette, and the Dairy Queen promotion. The title is being released in Spanish as well.

On street date, Dairy Queen's 4,500 locations will hand out a coupon for $1 off the purchase price of the video and advertise availability via in-store displays. The cassette box will contain a 50 cent coupon good toward Dairy Queen purchases.

This time around, Don Rickles will play Mr. Wilson, replacing Walter Matthau, who starred in the movie. Justin Cooper, who co-starred in "Liar Liar," is the new menacing Dennis, replacing Mason Gamble.

**JOHN, YOKO & MIKE: Beatles fans are in for a rare treat this month, thanks to those creative folks at Rhino Home Video.**

The supplier has assembled the interviews and performances that John Lennon and Yoko Ono did as co-hosts on "The Mike Douglas Show" in 1972. Also included in the five-tape boxed set is a 48-page booklet with behind-the-scenes photos about the Lennon's week on-air.

It features backstage photos, a present-day question-and-answer session with Douglas, excerpts from a press conference featuring Lennon, Ono, and guest Jerry Rubin; and new liner notes. The $90.95 collection is available Tuesday (19).

For its show-biz guests, "The Mike Douglas Show" took on a different look with Lennon and Ono, who invited Black Panther Party chairman Bobby Seale, Asian activist/folk singer duo Yellow Pearl, a biofeedback expert, and a macabre cook, among others.

One cassette features a performance of Lennon and Chuck Berry. Lennon and Ono do several duets on each tape.

**Happy Birthday:** Fright fans, fright fans, and purists highlight some movies receiving anniversary treatments on this spring and summer.

The limited-edition soundtrack collection includes the all-exclusive CD of the Lalo Schifrin soundtrack, a commemorative book, archival information, eight movie card imprints, and a photo of a film frame. It's priced at $49.98.

Meanwhile, Paramount Home Video is remastering "Grease" for its 20th-anniversary rerelease following a successful theatrical run in March. The title will be out June 23, priced at $14.95.

A deluxe edition with an onpack CD is available for $19.95. Called the "Grease Megamix," the recording contains the songs "Greased Lightning," "Summer Nights," and "You're the One That I Want."

Also from Warner is the 25th-anniversary edition of "The Exorcist," available Aug. 25. A $19.98 version includes an introduction by director William Friedkin, a 30-minute behind-the-scenes documentary with 11 minutes of never-before-seen outtakes, the original theatrical trailer, and a lobby card.

The deluxe version contains all the above, plus the 52-page "The Exorcist: The Making Of A Classic Motion Picture," a limited-edition book of Schifrin's soundtrack, eight lobby cards, and a picture, and is priced at $49.98.
**Top Music Videos**

**MERCHANDISE & MARKETING**

Laserdisc Wholesaler Closes, A Victim Of DVD

LOS ANGELES—A laserdisc wholesaler has become a casualty of the DVD market. Image Entertainment says it will shutter U.S. Laser Video Distributors, acquired in 1996. U.S. Laser operated a distribution company, a magazine, and Digitainment, a retail venture in Whippany, N.J. About 10 people were laid off as a result of the closure. President David Goodman had left in December to form DVD International.

According to Image CFO Jeff Framer, much of U.S. Laser’s distribution business had already been folded into Image’s Chatsworth, Calif., headquarters. Laserviews ceased publication in October.

“With laser declining and DVD growing, we decided to close the store,” July 15, says Framer. The 8,000-square-foot outlet stocks about 2,000 titles and sold laser and DVD hardware. “It’s near New York, and we thought we’d get a lot of traffic,” he adds, “but when DVD came out, it became a problem.”

But the new format is not big enough to allow Image to convert the store to a DVD-only operation. “There’s only a small number of machines out there, not enough to cover expenses,” Framer says.

Closing U.S. Laser should save Image $1.2 million over three years.

EILEEN FITZPATRICK

**Brokers, Stores Squeeze Used-Tape Biz**

(Continued from page 72)

smaller dealers can’t meet the quotas on these free-goods offers, and they overdue and then sell it off,” says Gross. “We’re paying $4 for some movies which we sell for up to $50.”

Oftentimes, the cassette boxes have never been opened. Brokers, in fact, question the basis of these plans. “We recently canvass bought in offered in these Profit Plus plans, or whatever they are called, is not really free,” notes Crider. “Maybe you get a few free copies with an order on a title where you pay $70 for all the rest. How can you say these are free goods?”

Craig LaRoe says that much of the free-goods activity stems “from so many dealers who are these days acting as sub-distributors.” In essence, these retailers earn—and keep—the extra cassettes by filling other stores’ orders. Enthusiasm leads to excess.

“I am sure the traditional distributors take full advantage of what is going on. Quantities of these titles are left on these go right into the used pipeline,” says LaRoe.

Part two of this story in the May 30 Billboard will examine the impact of used tapes and DVDs in the big—and volatile—Los Angeles market.

---

**Top Special Interest Video Sales**

**RECREATIONAL SPORTS**

**NO. 1.**

**OWNER**

**NAME**

**CATEGORIES**

**QUALITY**

**PRICING**

**TOP 5**

**1.**

**DEANER BRONCOS: SUPER BOWL XXIII CHAMPIONS**

PolyGram Video 4400464434

**2.**

**GRETZKY: THE GREAT ONE & THE NEXT ONES**

**3.**

**THE OFFICIAL 1997 WORLD SERIES VIDEO**

**4.**

**LESLEY NIELSEN’S LITTLE GOLD GOLF**

**5.**

**MAYA: THE STORY OF A LITTLE GIRL**

**6.**

**UNSTOPPABLE**

**7.**

**MAYA: THE STORY OF A LITTLE GIRL**

**8.**

**101 GREATEST GOLF SONGS**

**9.**

**MANHATTAN, THE WHOLE STORY**

**10.**

**NBA 2000**

**11.**

**NBA at 50**

**12.**

**NBA at 75**

**13.**

**MAYA: THE STORY OF A LITTLE GIRL**

**14.**

**FOOTBALL SONGS**

**15.**

**TIGER WOODS: SON, HERO & CHAMPION**

**16.**

**1998 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES OVERALL HIGHLIGHTS**

**17.**

**1998 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES FIGURE SKATING COMPETITION**

**18.**

**THE ICE PRINCESS**

**19.**

**THE OFFICIAL 1996-97 NBA CHAMPIONSHIP VIDEO**

---

**HEALTH AND FITNESS**

**NO. 1.**

**OWNER**

**NAME**

**CATEGORIES**

**QUALITY**

**PRICING**

**TOP 5**

**1.**

**OPRAH: MAKE THE CONNECTION**

Buena Vista Home Entertainment 62428

**2.**

**DENISE AUSTIN: A COMPLETE WORKOUT WITH WEIGHTS**

PolyGram Video 4400464434

**3.**

**CRUNCH: FAT BLASTER PLUS**

Anchor Bay Entertainment SV11009

**4.**

**THE GRIND WORKOUT: HIP HOP AEROBICS**

**5.**

**YOGA JOURNALS OF PRACTICE FOR BEGINNERS**

**6.**

**THE GRIND WORKOUT: FITNESS WITH FLAVA**

**7.**

**FIRM BASICS: ABS, BUTTS & THIGHS**

**8.**

**CRUNCH: BEST ABS AND ARMS**

Anchor Bay Entertainment SV11009

**9.**

**CRUNCH: BURN & FIRM IN 30 MINUTES**

Anchor Bay Entertainment SV11009

**10.**

**CRUNCH: THE JOY OF YOGA**

Anchor Bay Entertainment SV11285

---

**RETAIL REPORT**

**TOP 5**

**1.**

**DARRELL BROOKS: NO HITTER: THE NARRATIVE OF A PERFECT GAME**

**2.**

**MIKE LAZARIDES: NIGHT OF THE CHECKERS**

**3.**

**MIKE LAZARIDES: NIGHT OF THE CHECKERS**

**4.**

**MIKE LAZARIDES: NIGHT OF THE CHECKERS**

**5.**

**MIKE LAZARIDES: NIGHT OF THE CHECKERS**

---

**BILLSITE**

**NO. 1.**

**OWNER**

**NAME**

**CATEGORIES**

**QUALITY**

**PRICING**

**TOP 5**

**1.**

**DALE & RITA: LIFE AMONG THE ANIMALS**

**2.**

**DALE & RITA: LIFE AMONG THE ANIMALS**

**3.**

**DALE & RITA: LIFE AMONG THE ANIMALS**

**4.**

**DALE & RITA: LIFE AMONG THE ANIMALS**

**5.**

**DALE & RITA: LIFE AMONG THE ANIMALS**

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COMMENTARY (Continued from page 6)
have always rejected this policy, producing and requiring instead a strong local industry together with the best possible supply of foreign recordings. Accordingly, we believe that copyrights should be left intact so that the public's interest can continue to be met by the activities of the industry in Australia.

In pursuit of its political agenda, the government has led a campaign of misinformation of incredible proportions. Following are just a few examples of the government's misinformation campaign; the list is very large, and this does not allow them all to be set out.

It claimed to have evidence showing that imports would produce a substantial price decrease. When it came time to produce that evidence, it could not and did not.

It claimed that allowing parallel importation would be in line with world developments. As we know, the world trend and standard is not to allow parallel importation.

The government has claimed that the world piracy problem will be solved in the short term. This is extraordinary in light of the fact that world piracy is getting worse and more entrenched every year.

The fact that the government has made such fanciful claims is a cogent example of its preparedness to pursue the political agenda with little or no regard to real facts.

Fortunately, the government does not control the Senate (Australia's parliamentary upper house), and the legislation to repeal our exclusive import rights cannot be passed unless all opposition parties and Independents agree. Prior to voting on the legislation, the Senate required a full review of the issues by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee.

This process involved close to 200 submissions, many hearings and a committee report of some 200 pages. The result was that the government's legislation was rejected by the nongovernment members, including the powerful Labor Party and the Democrats. The Independents now have the last say.

With the Senate report done, the legislation can be put to the vote in the Senate at any time the government chooses. The vote is likely to be at the end of this year in June. The dramatic irony is that Australia's recommended full price is now the same as the recommended full price in Canada. And with sales tax and royalties adjusted, Australia is cheaper!

It is absolutely clear that maintaining parallel import rights is vital to our ability to invest in new music for our customers and our artists.

Music is a high-risk, passionate, promotion-driven business. We need copyright, artists, and talent management/marketing to be successful. All are key factors in this equation.

The fairest and most basic concept that everyone can understand is that the people who create, own, and promote a product should also be the only ones who can sell their product. The government still can't (and will never be able to) explain how a business is better off if its products can be sold by others who don't contribute anything to the product's origin and promotion.

Consumers' best interests are served by us supplying the widest selection of back catalog and new product that is commercially sustainable. We must be able to continue to bring vibrant local talent to our customers through a recorded music scene that remains diverse, exciting, and constantly reinvented.

Equally, our retailers need us to supply credit facilities, primary promotion, and consistent distribution, and all the other backup services to get the best and widest product selection to our customers. We can only do all this to optimal levels if we sell our own products and gain the returns exclusively on the relatively infre-quent albums that are financially successful. And that's what the exclusive parallel import rights ensure around the globe.

If you're interested in joining those well-connected folks who do the big deals, make the big money, and have the big fun in the music and video business, we suggest that you order your own copy of Billboard's 1998 International Buyer's Guide before this year's press run is completely sold out.

IBG '98 brings you more than 16,000 listings including record labels, music publishers, wholesalers and distributors, manufacturers, service and supply companies, home video companies, public relations firms, schools, entertainment attorneys, tape duplicators, compact disc plants, and even a listing book section that has been doubled in size. Plus, you'll find more than 50 pages of informative ads, and an entire section of manufacturing specification charts on blank tape.

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**CALENDAR**

**MAY**
- May 16-19, European Audio Engineering Society Exhibition, RIH Exhibition Center, Amsterdam. 44-118-975-6218.
- May 17-18, MTV/Boardroom Asia Music Conference, Regent Hotel, Hong Kong. 212-536-5525.
- May 18, ASCAP Pop Awards, Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, Calif. 310-470-7285.
- May 21, Re-Arranging Arrangers, New York chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, New York. 212-244-5405.
- May 29-31, West Coast North America, Moscone Center, San Francisco. 800-504-5747.
- June 8, Tiger Jam I, sponsored by the Tiger Woods Foundation, Universal Amphitheatre, Universal City, Calif. 818-627-4440.
- June 10, Songwriters Hall Of Fame Dinner, Sheraton Hotel and Towers, New York. 212-957-9230.
- June 12-14, 19th Annual ASCAP Competition, National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, New York. 212-245-5440.
- June 14, Re-union Through June, through June 14. 866-855-2181.
- June 15-19, Summer Jazz Workshop, Texas Southern University and Willowide High School, Houston. 213-237-9070.
- June 15-20, 27th Annual Fan Fair, Tennessee State Fairgrounds, Nashville. 615-244-2840.
- June 16, Membership Awards Luncheon, sponsored by the Los Angeles chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills Hilton, Beverly Hills, Calif. 310-397-3777, extensions 214224.
- June 16-17, Recordable Optical Media '98, organized by Understanding & Solutions Ltd., Banbury Bunk Hotel, Amsterdam. 44-0-1582-607744.
- June 17-20, PROMAX Conference & Exposition, Convention Center, Boston. 213-955-9180.
- June 19-21, Consumers Electronics Manufacturers Assn. FUSE '98, Atlanta City, NJ. 701-907-7000.
- June 20-29, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America Leadership And Skills Conference, R. T. Miller State Community Coll., Chicago, Chicago. 312-957-3800.
Radio Faces More Artist ‘Misbehavin’’

BY CHUCK TAYLOR

NEW YORK—Lucent Technologies has launched a new company to develop its own version of an in-band, on-channel (IBOC) digital audio broadcasting (DAB) system, competing directly with its former partner USA Digital Radio (USADR).

The May 11 announcement places three proponents in the ring to develop a viable DAB system for the U.S., which is already years behind in Europe—many countries and many other nations in developing such a system (Billboard, May 4).

Along with Columbia, Md.-based USADR and the new Lucent Digital Radio in Murray Hill, N.J., Digital Radio Express, headquartered in San Jose, Calif., recently entered the race. All three are attempting to succeed with an IBOC system, which would let broadcasters overlap their current positions on the radio dial with new digital signals, making the transition to DAB much easier.

The developing Lucent system promises “near-CD quality” for FM radio and “greatly enhanced sound quality for AM.” Surprisingly, the company says it also will let broadcasters air digital signals with existing transmitters and antennas, a feature that hasn’t been part of the other systems’ plans.

Lucent Digital Radio president Suren Pai alludes to the company’s deep pockets, citing its parent firm’s assets of $24 billion. He adds that, as a result, it’s better-positioned than any other company to succeed. “But we have problems with the hip-hop acts bringing entourages,” notes Rajaseyah Shabbazz, assistant PD of WVEE (V103) Atlanta. “They have 15 people with them when we’re only one.”

(Continued on next page)
going to interview one person. Then sometimes they write on the furniture, they'll graffiti up the place or stick up a poster, and I think they should! Anyway, we're in a corporate building! A lot of MDs and PDS miss the time when artists came out and were humble and kind and they'd really love to support them, glad you want to do a show for you, instead of acting like we owe them something.

"It's true. It has been getting worse, and, unfortunately, it has been with a lot of hip-hop groups. And it's just a few people causing the bad rep," says Jay Allen, assistant PD/music director of WCGI-FM Chicago. "When they come into town for a show or even just a promo tour and do an interview, they have to bring their entire entourage. We call the label and ask them to give us a set list of who is coming, and we request that it be just the necessary people. Sometimes they bring more than that, but we don't allow them all into the studio."

SINCERE AND POLITELY Polite but not all artists are troublesome, insist those who spoke to. "When an artist understands the role of radio and how it helps them in their career, then these artists are much easier to deal with. They are professional, punctual, and, most importantly, enthusiastic about doing the radio tour," says Terrence Cole, radio tour manager for SJS Entertainment. "When we do a radio tour with an artist, we have many stations across the country lined up and waiting for their slot time with an artist. If they are late, it throws off the entire schedule. For the most part, the labels have been good about bringing them here on time, but I just think the artist needs to know the bigger picture for why they are doing what they are doing, and everyone will benefit."

Kelly Berry, music director of WJMJ Greenville, S.C., says her experiences have mostly been pleasant. "We have had some very humble, outgoing, and nice people come to this station. As a matter of fact, usually they want to stick around and hang out with the staff and get to know us better. Last week, we had Sam Salters, Elson, and 7 Mile in town, and they were great. All were down to earth, and there were no problems at all."

While good behavior might have been bred into these acts by labels or managers, Berry says it probably has more to do with personality. "They are just sincere and polite people. They want to go above and beyond the call of duty, because they genuinely love what they are doing, and they are excited about it. They were happy to talk to listeners and do interviews. They had no ego."

She adds that making sure radio staffers are familiar with the artist’s music and background helps put the artist into a friendly, communicative mood. "We usually will go over the questions with the artist beforehand as well. We don’t try to surprise the artist or put them out there on the spot."

"I think a lot of the problems is with the image of hip-hop - artists feel like they have to live up to a certain lifestyle, or maybe the clique they are hanging with has a rough street image. But it’s not necessary," says WCGI’s Allen. "Take, for example, Ice Cube. You would think that he might have this rough-and-tough attitude, but he is professional. He shows up when he is supposed to, and he is very articulate. He’s been in the game for a while, so he knows. It seems like the problems really arise with the newer up-and-comers. I guess experience is the best teacher, and maybe after a couple of programmers don’t play their records or don’t invite them up for interviews anymore, then they’ll learn."

MOTOWN CHARM SCHOOL So, what’s responsible for taking artists in hand and grooming them? Most radio personnel say that labels should reinstate the artist-development practices that made the Motown charm school so legendary. "Labels need artist development. The whole point is that sometimes the label needs to bring up these kids as parents would or should," says WUSL’s Cooper. "Even if you’re a gangsta rapper, there is still a way to come off that will be acceptable to your audience, as well as be professional about your career. You want to be able to articulate what your music is about if you are on the radio."

"They should go back to the old Motown days, when Berry Gordy trained his artists," says Allen. He notes that former White Sox player Frank Thomas has begun a new label where that kind of training is available. "It’s just like a mini-Motown there. They have an attitude room where they teach the artists things like, if you go to dinner with a PD, what fork to use, and ‘yes, ma’am, no, ma’am.’ I was so impressed. There are few labels that take the time to do that. Most just want to put the product out there and make the money. After the artist does his time, then they just move on to the next one."

Sometimes it takes experience to make an artist. Says Cooper, "If you look at some of the older artists, like Doug E. Fresh or Ice Cube, they have experience now and know what it takes to happen, and part of that is working radio. Mary J. Blige used to be real rough on her first and second and now she is seasoned now as well. Artists like this understand that radio is there to make them look good. Here’s your opportunity to sell records by being on our airwaves."

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**Radio Faces More Artist ‘Misbehavin’’**

(Continued from page 80)

If you enjoy the great outdoors but can’t stand the thought of leaving your motorized behind, then grab your surfboard and head west to www.92five.com, home of XHRM (92.5 FM) San Diego. Here you’ll find alternative rock with a Southern California focus, featured on a site that, all summer long, offers the latest surf conditions for nearby waters. In the winter, the site serves up snow reports for the area’s highest peaks. And it provides news about local bands throughout the year.

Featuring XHRM playlists and a 24-hour RealAudio cybercast of the station, the site keeps alternative music fans in tune with area favorites such as Anthony Kiedis, Blink-182, the Inspectors, and Mahalo Boogie. In addition, the Sko Toons section offers visitors more than 100 links to World Wide Web pages of San Diego-area bands.

The tailored focus helps the site’s appeal, says XHRM operation and promotion manager Jay Isbell. "We have listeners all over the world," Isbell says. "I think RealAudio is amazing. It’s sounding better and better every day."

Surfers—both literal and virtual—will also want to stop in at What’s ever, an area dedicated to new albums and top imports. "Our site will give you a total taste of the station," says Isbell. "The surfer can interact with us instead of just looking at some pretty pictures."
### Winter '98 Arbitron

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#### WINTER '98 ARBITRONS

82 BILLBOARD MAY 23, 1998
Webster's dictionary gives several meanings for the term "anthemaeum": the Athenian temple where scholars met, a Roman school of law and literature, a literary club, or any building used as a library.

But the Greensboro, N.C., band consisting of Grey Brexter, Nic Brown, Mark Kano, and Alex McKinney called more on personal significance when choosing a name; its moniker is lifted from a Kentucky literary society that lists poet laureate Robert Penn Warren, gonzo journalist Hunter S. Thompson, and Brown's dad among the alumni. (Music to My Ears, Billboard, March 28).

"It's catchy when people actually get it right," says tuna'smuth Kano. "But lots of times they don't, and you get called things like Anthem Mayhem. Thank God, the radio people have helped proliferate the correct pronunciation (ath-a-nee-um)."

Programmers have spread the act's signature pop-infused alternative sound by playing "What I Didn't Know," No. 25 on this issue's Modern Rock Tracks. The story of a first personal experience to describe one of Kano's old relationships: "I always feel like a jerk. This is a summation of the ups and downs and terrible things we did to each other."

Kano, who sees music as therapy and prefers sharing deep thoughts with strangers, isn't worried about the ex-hearing the song. "I'm sure she knows it's about her. I could go on all day about that time in life. It produced a lot of good fodder for sensitive musical outpourings."

Kano didn't get the girl that time; she married the band's former guitar player. But Kano does. She was in no ill and finds happiness with his live-in. "It's hard not to lose your life to the industry. Phone bills are high, you miss your loved ones, and most human contact is short-lived. That's the toughest part about this career choice."
Backstreet Boys View Their Teen Act Origins As Just The Start Of A Career

by Chuck Taylor

Their first worldwide single, "We've Got It Goin' On," a rabbidly tempoed, bass-heavy R&B/soul dance pop, signaled the group's arrival in the world of pop music. "We've Got It Goin' On," a hit on the Hot 100, was released as the first single from their debut album, "Backstreet's Back," on August 19, 1997.

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The Box Gets A Makeover: New Logo, New Slogan, Music News

The BOX CHANGES ITS IMAGE: The Box has always been a no-frills network: no game shows, no DJs, no talk shows. It just plays video, offered in a "jukebox" programming format.

Now the Box is revamping its image. For starters, the network has revamped its logo; it has also introduced the slogan "music television you control" and replaced it with "Music Network."

In addition to the Box, it is aiming to be a leading TV source for music news. As of June 1, the Box will begin airing 90-second music news updates every hour. The new content will be provided by Addicted to Noise, the online division of the Box. The Box and SonieNet/A-Net/Box (Billboard, Oct. 4, 1997).

The Box will show its new programming in a format somewhat like CNN Headline News, says Carl Zablotny, the Box’s public relations manager. "We’ll have the news scrolling overrun with video-on-demand and a computerized icon presenting the news."

Addicted to Noise editor in chief Michael Goldberg says, "Our strength is that we break a lot of news stories first, and we have a far-reaching network of sources."

And for the first time, the Box will venture into longform speciality programming by televising a concert: Wykle Jean’s second Hattian Benefit show, which will tape tomorrow (16) in Miami. The concert—featuring such artists as Jean and the Refugee Allstars, Salt ‘N Pepa, Canibus, Inner Circle, Lord Tariq & Peter Gunz, Pras, and Diana King—will premiere on the Box in July.

The Box will continue to feature "Box Calendar"—a regional tour-date summary—as a separate segment from the news. Expanded news segments will also be available on the Box’s Web site, which is located at www.thebox.com.

And in further development of its promotional boxing, the Box has also launched "Box Big Break," a feature that lets local artists get videos played on the Box in their respective markets. So far, "Box Big Break" has debuted in New Orleans; other markets will follow.

Zablotny says that despite these changes, the Box is "truly a music channel, and it’s going to stay that way."
years in a row. RCA's fiscal year ends in June, and although the label is part of the privately held Bertelsmann Group and doesn't disclose its financial details, industry sources estimate that it sees some $1 billion in worldwide revenue, at least a 30% increase over last year's numbers.

This remarkable turnaround has come with the stewardship of RCA president Bob Jamieson and executive VP/GM Jack Rovner. Under the guidance of BMI Entertainment North America—where the two have overhauled RCA's New York office since they came to the label in mid-1995. As Jamieson says, "The only thing that's the same about RCA is the name and the address."

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

But Jamieson and Rovner, replacing previous RCA chief Joe Galante—who returned to head the RCA Label Group in Nashville—the label's roster was pruned by about 20 acts. And the resulting talent roster, which has been changed almost wholesale, and a layer of middle management was eliminated. This implemented clear line of responsibility with taking ultimate control over A&R, and Rovner over marketing.

"Everybody had a different idea of what the label should be with RCA, we never know how bad things are until you're in the middle of them," Jamieson says. "We made a lot of changes, it was obvious and totally dis-or less so. And all respect to Joe Galante, he gave it his best shot here. He pushed country—which he's a genius at—and didn't forget the newbies he signed the Dave Matthews Band.

"But RCA was at one time the biggest, most successful record company in the world, and through a series of missteps, it was like a 'no-man's land,'" Jamieson adds. "I knew it was going to take a lot of time and money to make RCA competitive again, but Straight & Narrow's capital was not very supportive. Now we're back on track, after working our assets off to get there.

Jamieson and Rovner agree that focus and commitment have been the bywords of the new RCA, as the label has signed fewer acts and strives to stand by them over the long haul. The Verve Pipe's "Villains" album, for example, was down to selling just a few hundred copies per week after its second single, as was the entire new campaign behind the "Freshmen" to break the band with that song after more than a year's worth of efforts.

"It's a real problem to lose a lot of records, and that gives us the opportunity to really work each and every one," Rovner says. "Two to three singles or more is the average, so we just put out our records and then try to build awareness for them. We work hard to set them up. For instance, we've had several of the Dave Matthews Band's records since before January.

"Really, it's patience and perseverance with us," Rovner adds. "We're trying to build careers for our artists. So it's like Jai, we're taking our time to let him develop in the eyes of the media and the consumer. He's a truly gifted writer and singer, but it's going to be a building process for him. Not every artist gets on "Saturday Night Live" before their album is even released, like Natalie. If Jai sells 50,000-100,000 of his first album, that's OK. We're in it for the long term."

Patience is necessary, because there have been some gray clouds amid all the silver linings at RCA, with a few acts failing to make good on initial promise. The West Coast power-pop trio 10,000 Manos, Lisa's propelling a strong debut album and generated a regional buzz a couple of years ago, before their relatively edgy sound was rejected by the changing face of modern rock radio. With internal and external stress, the band eventually broke up.

Bloomington, Ind., folk/pop quartet the Mysteries Of Life has also never gone far beyond its local renown. RCA was a bit dismayed at the band's evolving lineup, but the label international experience as president/GM of BMG Canada in addition to years with CBS in Europe and Australia. Plus, as Jamieson took on ultimate A&R accountability, the president of A&R Dave Novik, shifted to senior VP of international A&R. Beyond Imbruglia, Robyn, and La Bouche, Novik imported Jai from U.K. impresario M&G and techmopop act Republica, which hit the modern rock top 10 in '96 with "Ready To Go," from English indie deConstruction. Another Novik electron session signing from the U.K. is Olive, which is working on its sophomore disc. And a second Swede chanteuse, Jennifer Brown, has her RCA debut in the works.

The broad A&R scope stems from not only Jamieson's and Novik's extensive international contacts and frequent flying but a willingness to consider all possibilities. "I try not to discriminate among styles—I don't want any barriers to potential," he means, their No. 1 goal is to sell a lot

of records, and while we want our music to reach more and more people, targeting the acts isn't necessarily our top priority. But any problems we've had have been worked out pretty quickly, and the label's faith in them is a real asset.

Jai says faith's vital because he's been something he has felt, too, even though his "Heaven" album hasn't broken yet. "It's been a great record, but the radio wasn't really there—and RCA still isn't discouraged. I think they're willing to take their time and invest some money in my potential. That's a sort of attitude toward artist development is what you hope for.

OUTSIDE VOICES

Hittingmark RCA artists like Matthes and Imbruglia have been embraced wholeheartedly by radio and MTV/VH1, but enthusiasm for the label's modus operandi is such that new acts like Jai and Eva 6 are getting support, too. "There's a feeling of empowerment at RCA," says Imbruglia. "From a record company, to the label. We're not just a label, we're like these big, scary monsters, but I really like my label."

"Being 18 and Swedish," Robyn says she also had some trepidation over how she might be positioned in the U.S. "I had my fights with Dave, Bob, and Jack—I always let people know just what I think—but we've been humble enough to keep things balanced so we're both happy with what we're doing.

Both parties should be happy with the results of Robyn's debut record, "Rabyn Is Here," which is platinum after three singles—"Do You Know (What It Takes)," "Show Me Love," and "Do You Really Want Me (Show Respect)."

In Sweden preparing to record her follow-up, Robyn says she will probably extend part of the work to the U.S. this summer, keeping close to the contemporary, R&B-leaning sounds that are her passion.

Domestically, the Verve Pipe veteran senior VP of A&R/Staff producer Brian Malouf as that rare bird, "a musical A&R man," says. And as Jamieson says, RCA has high praise for Matty Novik's artist development.
INDUSTRY IS ABUZZ WITH IMPLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE POLYGROM SALE

(Continued from page 1)

Many note that such an acquisition would require—to offset an estimated $9 billion in cost savings—significant cuts in personnel, especially in distribution, and in artist rosters. Music retailers, on the other hand, have not yet been told that sales of the potential folding of the Big Six into the Big Five (or Four).

Seagram has emerged as the likely buyer of PolyGram—with or without an AMC—because its music division has not been doing as well as expected, and its financial results have been disappointing. For the year ending June 30, 1997, the company reported a $2.5 billion loss and 1.1 million share of Time Warner stock could be sold on the market at current prices for $7 billion.

Although EMI announced last week that it was terminating buyout talks with an undisclosed suitor because it had not received an offer, Seagram is reported to have bid $7 billion. Seagram declines comment. An EMI executive says, “Talks are now off. We made it clear that an acquisition of EMI was a non-starter, but right now it’s business as usual.”

Observers view as unlikely the prospect of a leveraged buyout firm acquiring either company. Although the LBO firm puts up about 25% of its capital for a takeover and borrows the rest from banks or other lenders, it then diverts underperforming assets, makes large cuts in overhead and other expenses, and resells the company to the public or other investors at a large premium, an executive analyst says “Somebody already in the business like Seaga-

Seagram would be able to get more value from the acquisition, by reduc-
ging or eliminating costs thus leaving local sales at the local stores which are generally unwilling to get into competitive bidding, which is likely if Seagram makes an offer.

COST EFFICIENCIES

With a takeover by Seagram, many observers believe efficiencies will be real-
ized. For instance, PolyGram and Universal have overlapping branch distribution operations in a number of U.S. cities. After the acquisition, some local offices may be eliminated, and there may not be a need for so many regional sales offices. The result could be a reduction in the number of local offices.

The speculation about PolyGram becoming a major player in music is based on the fact that it is the largest player in the world with a market share of 11.2%.

Observers say that if PolyGram were to purchase the Los Angeles-based Universal, its market share would increase to 15.8%.

The speculation about a possible merger between PolyGram and Universal is based on the fact that they are the largest players in the world with a market share of 11.2%.

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**Track Listing For Angélique Kidjo’s ‘Oremi’**

- **"Voodoo Child (Slilt Return)”: This is the album’s first single.** It’s a reinterpretation of the classic reconstruction of the African voodoo child, Jini Hendrix. The track injects Angélique Kidjo’s vibrant energy into the music, giving it a fresh twist, especially those jubilant, yelping arias. But Kidjo wisely sidesteps the original’s sorrowing six-string passages, replacing them with a sturdy, rock’n’roll groove that’s entirely his own.

- **"Alafia": This track is a celebration of friendship, love, and family. It’s a heartfelt ballad that showcases Angélique Kidjo’s ability to connect with listeners on a deeply personal level. The melody is infectious, and the lyrics are filled with emotional depth.**

- **"Luny Se": This song is a traditional African rhythm that Kidjo has reimagined to fit her unique style. The percussion is driving and the melody is catchy, making it a standout track on the album.**

- **"Demba“**: It features a collaborations with some of the biggest names in African music, including remains of the legendary Malick Sama. The result is a joyful, infectious track that’s perfect for dancing to.**

- **"Wax Billie": This song is a tribute to the legendary singer and musician Billie Holiday. Kidjo’s version is a soulful, heartfelt rendition that pays homage to Holiday’s legacy.**

- **"Agni": This track is a reflection on the power of tradition and heritage. The melody is simple yet powerful, and the lyrics are a call to rekindle the spirit of our ancestors.**

- **"I Don’t Know": This is a social commentary on the issues facing African societies today. The message is clear and the melody is catchy, making it a track that resonates with listeners around the world.**

- **"Tema": This track is a love song that celebrates the beauty of the human heart. The melody is gentle and soothing, and the lyrics are filled with romantic sentiment.**

- **"Till There Was You": This is a slower, more tender track that showcases Angélique Kidjo’s emotional range. The melody is simple but evocative, and the lyrics are a heartfelt expression of love and longing.**

- **"Voices With A Mission": This is a collaboration with some of the biggest names in the world of music, including remains of the legendary Malick Sama. The result is a powerful, moving track that’s perfect for inspiring change.**

- **"To Be Free": This is a celebration of freedom and the power of music to bring people together. The melody is driving and the lyrics are filled with hope and inspiration.**

- **"Timbila": This is a traditional African rhythm that Kidjo has reimagined to fit her unique style. The percussion is driving and the melody is catchy, making it a standout track on the album.**

- **"Jade"**: This is a modern take on a traditional African rhythm. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with emotional depth. It’s a perfect track for dancing to, and it’s sure to get audiences on their feet.**

- **"Londolozi“**: It’s an African drum beat that’s been reimagined by Angélique Kidjo. The result is a powerful, driving track that’s perfect for inspiring change.**

- **"The Story Of My Life”: This is a powerful track that showcases Angélique Kidjo’s ability to connect with listeners on a deeply personal level. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with emotional depth. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

- **"Oremi“**: It’s the title track of the album and is a celebration of the power of music to bring people together. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with emotional depth. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

- **"Femi“**: This is a modern take on a traditional African rhythm. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with emotional depth. It’s a perfect track for dancing to, and it’s sure to get audiences on their feet.**

- **"Fela“**: It’s a celebration of the legendary Nigerian musician Fela Kuti. The melody is driving and the lyrics are filled with hope and inspiration. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

- **"Gone Are The Days“**: It’s a melancholy track that showcases Angélique Kidjo’s ability to connect with listeners on a deeply personal level. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with emotional depth. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

- **"I Am Your Friend“**: It’s a celebration of the power of music to bring people together. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with hope and inspiration. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

- **"The Road To Freedom“**: It’s a celebration of the power of music to bring people together. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with hope and inspiration. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

- **"African Children“**: It’s a celebration of the power of music to bring people together. The melody is catchy and the lyrics are filled with hope and inspiration. It’s a perfect track for inspiring change.**

**COMPLETE DISCOGRAPHY**

- **"Pretty“, 1980 (available in the U.S. as an import): This album was for the African market, says Angélique Kidjo. “I recorded it in France and went back to Africa, where it sold 200,000 copies. I never got a penny for it. I was still learning something to do with people with music.”**

- Kidjo joined Alafia, an Afro-funk group, then sang and recorded with the voodoo rock'n'roll group, Pili Pili. In 1987, she went solo, forming her own band with Beahm and recording "Parakou. Their trademark melange of world rhythms has fused tighter and tighter with each subsequent album (see discography, this page).**

- **In the U.S., is gearing up for a wider and more aggressive marketing strategy behind Kidjo’s new album than has been seen with her previous releases.**

- **In 1996, Island Records (chairman) and I are very excited about ‘Oremi’, says Island president John Barhick. “We feel Angélique has elevated the vibe and the songs so the band has to sing. That and my voice keep it moving.”**

- **Kidjo’s work in the U.S. has been recorded by David Z in Paisley Park Studio and by Will Mowatt in Soul II Soul studio. It combines his hi-tech approach with deep African culture. The video of the first single, ‘Agolo,’ was nominated for a Grammy Award.”**

- Kidjo says, “‘Agolo’ is a long story. It’s about how I had to have a baby. We were lucky that nature said yes. In the middle of ‘Logoz’, I got pregnant, and it gives you a voice like nothing else in the world can. I wish I could have that voice all the time. ‘Agolo’ came to me just like that. One day I was putting my garbage bag out and thought of how two days before the garbage can was empty and now I was talking about a baby. We were talking about nuclear waste and pollution, but we are consuming like hell. I realized, ‘Oo la la, I had to get inside and find a way of bringing my contribution for the sake of motherhood and my daughter coming into this world.”**

- **“Figma“, 1996 (Open/Island U.K. and France; available in the U.S. as an import): Says bass guitarist Alafia, Kidjo’s co-producer, and wife, and the jazz keyboard player Jasper Van’t Hof is in a very special track called ‘Blues’. Adds Kidjo, “This album was the last possible contract. Someone sent it to Chris Blackwell, and he sent a fax: ‘Chase her down. She calls me all the time, and she’s got one hole up there, don’t care. Chase her down! I still have the fax. I was playing in a Paris club called New Orleans, and all of a sudden the heads of Mango in France and England are both there, right in front. I had to attract their attention for a long time, but no one had answered. Chris had sent them.”**

- **This is the first album I produced for Angélique Kidjo, and it was the first production where I got into the technical part, which I don’t like at all. We didn’t have much money, and I didn’t have a good technical background. I belonged to the head of the jazz school which I was studying at that time. It was also a production with people from my jazz school, so you have a lot of jazz influence in there. ‘Parakou’ was named after a village in northern Benin, and it was the first step of bringing up a tradition from traditional to modern.”**

- **“Logoz“: (Tortoise), 1991, (Mango/Island): Says Beahm, “It was the first track I produced in it, and the only track for which I didn’t co-produce. It was led by John Gold [Miami Sound Machine], this LP represents the first step of Angélique’s international career. The album explores the music of several countries. American saxophonist Branford Marsalis appears on the track ‘Logoz’, which gives its name to the album. Listen to the song of the tortoise/She lives alone, folded up in her shell with no one in whom to confide.”**

- **Kidjo’s, the label first Island release; the contract was signed in France. What I really appreciated was that before I signed, Chris Blackwell came all the way to Paris to meet me.”**

- **“Aye“ (Life), 1994 (Mango/Island): Hebrail says, ‘This album was recorded by David Z in Paisley Park Studio and by Will Mowatt in Soul II Soul studio. It combines his hi-tech approach with deep African culture. The video of the first single, ‘Agolo,’ was nominated for a Grammy Award.”**

- Kidjo says, “‘Agolo’ is a long story. It’s about how I had to have a baby. We were lucky that nature said yes. In the middle of ‘Logoz’, I got pregnant, and it gives you a voice like nothing else in the world can. I wish I could have that voice all the time. ‘Agolo’ came to me just like that. One day I was putting my garbage bag out and thought of how two days before the garbage can was empty and now I was talking about a baby. We were talking about nuclear waste and pollution, but we are consuming like hell. I realized, ‘Oo la la, I had to get inside and find a way of bringing my contribution for the sake of motherhood and my daughter coming into this world.”**

ELENA OUMANO

BILLBOARD MAY 23, 1998
that!'

and listen to the song through the phone, it is possible to purchase the song directly. It's urban music for any city. Borders will feature 'Oremi' in a front-line listening post, like any major pop release.

Among other strategies expected to be deployed are plans to create posters and a postcard campaign that will be distributed at all the tour outlets, along with the CD and her catalog pieces," says Aubrey. "There will also be a consumer contest with ballot boxes to win a trip to see Angélique perform during her fall U.S. tour."

LILITH DATES
Kidjo will be part of this year's Lilith Fair tour. Five dates have been confirmed thus far: June 28 in Phoenix; June 29 in Albuquerque, NM; Aug. 9 in Edmonton; Aug. 29 in Vancouver; and Aug. 31 in Toronto. Kidjo will perform on a side stage. "However, it is expected that she will be the main attraction sometime during the tour," says Aubrey.

The album's title track will be included on a Lilith Fair CD titled "The Lilith Developing Artist Sampler," which is being created by the tour's organizers. Aubrey says that 2,500 CDs will be distributed free at each Lilith concert date.

"We're working on in-store opportunities for acoustic performances to coincide with the release of this album wherever possible," Aubrey continues.

Kidjo will return to the U.S. at the end of September for a solo tour that will last through the end of October, "going from the Northwest to the West Coast and back around the Midwest," says Aubrey. The artist has already been on the promotional road, talking to media in key European territories, including Germany, France, Belgium, and the U.K. She's also been appearing in the land/Austria region, and Scandinavia. Phone interviews for Australasia, South Africa, and Japan will follow. PolyGram in Brazil has committed to releasing "Oremi," notes Townsend, partly because of a duet recorded with that country's Cidade Negra.

A tour of Europe and Africa begins July 4, Aubrey says, and runs through the U.S. dates, and runs through this year.

-RADIO RAMP-UP
Plans for radio are also aimed at broadening Kidjo's fan base. "We want to introduce Angélique to a new world of radio listeners, one that hasn't been exposed to her music," says Aubrey. "Our efforts will initially focus on hot AC and AC formats using the service the CD promo of 'Vodoo Child' for work dates of June 16. We will follow with a June 22 work date on [jazz/AC], as well as full album servicing to the triple-A format.

As in the past, college and community radio will be a key outlet for Kidjo, Aubrey notes.

The label also plans to release a 12-inch single of "Vodoo Child" re-recorded on a dance-oriented alternative flavor for clubs and mix shows," says Aubrey. "And we anticipate scheduling radio visits by Angélique depending on her availability during and following her Lilith and her own tour." Among Kidjo's fervent world radio supporters is Richard Segan, director of "One World Radio," a college radio program that airs weekdays on WHUS-Storrs, Conn.

Segan, "She's quite savvy in her knowledge of the international sound, and her records have had huge successes. We're sure to get a strong listener response with this next record.

NEXT UP
Kidjo's "next steps" in her trilogy will be a release featuring the rich musical dialogue between Africa and the "mother continent," and Brazil, and one that will cover Africa, Haiti, Cuba, and New Orleans.

"I didn't put New Orleans in this album because the music of New Orleans is tinged with voodoo, and voodoo comes from Benin," Kidjo explains. "In fact, Kidjo's mission to make Angélique a folk hero of voodoo underlies the entire trilogy. "Why does voodoo have that bad reputation?" she asks rhetorically. "Collaborate with the voodoo religion and you find that the voodoo religion is a community religion, it brings people together. They didn't want that.

Asistance in preparing this story was provided by Dominique Pride in London.
The committee has ing provision abuse bankruptcy filings for improper purposes.

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**HOT 100 SINGLES**

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**Greatest Gainer/ Sales & Airplay**

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**Notes:**
- Records with the greatest gain and sales gains this week.
- Greatest Gainer/Sales & Airplay are awarded, respectively, for the largest sales and airplay increases among singles within the top 50.
- "Peak" is final charting peak.
- "Previous Peak" indicates the previous highest charting rank.
- Numbers in parentheses ( ) indicate tie positions.
- Billboards Hot 100 singles chart is published on Fridays and reflects single sales, airplay, and streaming data from the previous Thursday to Wednesday.
- Billboard charted singles airplay is based on radio airplay from Dec. 26, 2023, to Jan. 1, 2024.
- Top Airplay: Top 20 songs on the Hot Airplay chart for the week of Jan. 28, 2024.
- Billboard Hot 100 singles chart is published on Fridays and reflects single sales, airplay, and streaming data from the previous Thursday to Wednesday.
- Billboard charted singles airplay is based on radio airplay from Dec. 26, 2023, to Jan. 1, 2024.
- Top Airplay: Top 20 songs on the Hot Airplay chart for the week of Jan. 28, 2024.
Buddy Guy, Billy Joel, Joni Mitchell, Carlos Santana, and Chet Atkins. Established in 1992 by Billboard publisher Howard Lander and editor in chief Gail Nochlin, the Grammy Hall of Fame Award is given to artists who have had an influence on music. Guy himself has been called "a music genius" by the Los Angeles Times.

The Grammy Hall of Fame Award is given annually to artists who have had a significant impact on the recording industry. The award recognizes artists who have contributed to the history of recorded music and have had a significant influence on the industry. The award is given to artists who have made a significant contribution to the art of recording, and who have had a significant impact on the recording industry.

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### Billboard 200 Weekly Chart (May 23, 1998)

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<td>BOY / NO F THE THREE BEST SONGS FROM THE SHARPEST ELECTRIC</td>
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SMI awards.
In total, BMI honored 73 songs, 15 of which were represented by EMI Music Publishing, earning it publisher of the year accolades.

The awards are given to songwriters whose achievements are recognized in the music industry. The winners are selected based on the number of chart successes, radio airplay, and album sales for their songs.

The list of winners includes:

- "To Say I’m Sorry," by David Foster, Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.
- "I Believe In You And Me," by Sandy Linster, David Wolfert, EMI-Soso Music Inc., Jonathan Three Music Co., Linx Music
- "I'm Not That Easily Distracted," by Richard Alex, Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.
- "I%
WHEREHOUSE IN FINE SHAPE FOR B’BUST BID
(Continued from page 5)

Since 1992, Alvarez has helmed the company since it emerged from Chapter 11 on Jan. 31, 1997. He was brought aboard by New York-based Cerberus Partners, which wound up becoming the majority owner of Wherehouse Entertainment when the Chapter 11 plan called for converting the debtor’s claims against Wherehouse into equity in the chain.

While eager to talk about Wherehouse’s financial results, Alvarez wouldn’t comment on what he terms “rumors.” However, reliable sources say that Wherehouse is among the music chains interested in buying Blockbuster Music, which in March was put on the block by its parent, Viacom (Billboard, March 21). In addition to Wherehouse, Camelot Music and Entertainment are said to have looked at the chain (Billboard Bulletin, May 4), in the latest go-round.

A Blockbuster Music spokespeoson emphatically commented on rumors, as did executives at the music specialty chain.

Since March, Wasserstein Perella & Co., a New York-based investment banking firm, has been conducting an auction for the 888-unit Blockbuster; sources say the process is said to be in its final round, and Blockbuster has been unable to determine if all three chains are still participants in the chase for Blockbuster Music.

Sources suggest that of the three chains, Wherehouse is the only one that put in a bid on the entire Blockbuster Music chain, while the other two were interested in having made only partial bids. Sources suggest that other industry players, such as the Musicland Group, Tower Records, Video, and National Record Mart, will stay out of the bidding process but won’t be involved in the process by Wasserstein Perella. Also, the fourth category of parties interested in Blockbuster Music will not be involved in the process of bidding by Wasserstein Perella. Also, a source suggest to the New York Times that they won’t be involved in the process by Wasserstein Perella.

Some say that the Blockbuster Music chain has been a thorn in the side of Blockbuster Entertainment, showing consequent operating losses. In its most recent year, the chain reported a loss of $67.1 million on revenue of $762 million in its most recent year, lost $46.2 million on revenue of $616.2 million. Blockbuster has been aggressively shuttering outlets; its store count dropped from 3,000 to 350 in the last 90 days and has long leases. Billboard estimates the chain to have net present value at about $200 million. Over the last 18 months, Blockbuster at the behest of Viacom, has searched for a way out of the music specialty business. Last year, the company had separate informal discussions with music specialty chains such as Tower Records Video and Wherehouse Entertainment, among others, about the possibility of a merger, sources say.

In such a case, a new company would be formed with the other chain running the entire operation. Also, during the second half of 1997, Texas Pacific, a financial firm, is said to have approached Blockbuster about the possibility of buying sources, sources say (Billboard, Dec. 20, 1997). In that scenario, Blockbuster would have access to the company’s funds and its financial clout, while Blockbuster would have contributed its music stores. They would have then tried to buy another chain that would run the entire operation. That gambit, however, is said to have reached only the “talking stage” between Blockbuster and Texas Pacific, and never went further.

If bids in the current go-round don’t reach Viacom’s expectations, the company could choose not to sell the chain and return to pursuing any of the above possibilities. Or—since at the beginning of the year it named former Musicland executive Larry Gross as its chief executive— it could hold onto the chain and wait for the new management team to turn around the operation so it could command a higher price the next time it’s put up for sale.

COLUMBIA TRISTAR GOES GREEN WITH HENSON DISTRIBUTION DEAL
(Continued from page 8)

The film unit plans to release between three and five features under the Jim Henson banner each year. "Buddy," the first film under the studio deal, was released out of the Columbia in January and sold approximately 1 million units, according to trade sources.

Henson also has an extensive co-production TV deal with ABC but retains video distribution rights.

Henson president/COO Charles Rivkin says the company’s decision not to re-sign with Buena Vista was not based on poor sales.

"The product sold extremely well," Rivkin says. "It's a good deal, a great job," says Rivkin. "But it's not strategic to put our video and film product under one banner."


Two features co-financed by Henson’s current company, "Muppet Treasure Island" and "The Muppet Christmas Carol" — will remain at the studio.

It’s been more than a year since a new Henson title has come to the market, but Rivkin says the company is gearing up for its biggest year to date.

More than 300 hours of programming is available for release on video, including the new series "Bear in the Big Blue House," which will be the first Henson title released under the new Columbia deal. The series and the movie "The Muppets Present...A Day in the Life of Bear." Two video volumes will be available Sept. 15, priced at $14.95 each.

The previously released holiday titles "Weペット Family Christmas," "Emmet Otter’s Jug-Band Christmas," and "The Christmas Toy" will follow Sept. 29. Other catalog titles will eventually be repackaged and re-released.

More than 75 hours of programming are in production or in the works, including a new feature film, "The Muppets in Space." Other productions include the TV shows "Wubbulous World Of Dr. Seuss" and "The Brats Of The Last Night." In addition to gearing up production, Rivkin says, Henson will create an internal video marketing department, to be run by Margaret Loesch, who also heads the Jim Henson Television Group.

"We’re going to focus on each of our new offerings and bring back the specialness of the Henson line in the marketplace," Feingold says.

Despite the strong appeal of the Henson brand name, Columbia needs to learn how to break through the clutter of the crowded children’s market. But Feingold says the product’s existing media exposure will drive sales at retail.

"It’s a great validation of the rich source material there’s a Henson show in syndication on the Disney Channel, or on Nickelodeon," Feingold says. "And if you give the trade good marketing materials to create a bigger impression, you can be successful.

BORDERS ENTERS ONLINE RETAILING
(Continued from page 8)

Vanzura says Borders will employ a combination of online and offline promotions when the site’s grand opening takes place this summer. Although the site is now fully operational, it is considered to be in the “preview” stage and may evolve as consumers offer feedback.

Vanzura says advertising the site in Borders stores is a qualified risk that the chain is willing to take.

"It’s hard to tell exactly how much cannibalization there is going to be, but whatever it is, it’s going to be below what we would have expected," he says. "It seems to be part of the game. A good part of online sales appears to be incremental or inter-channel, so we’ll see how that evolves over time.

Not all traditional retailers, however, are so gung-ho about entering the online sales arena.

Jack Eustiger, chairman/CEO of Minnetonka, Minn.-based Musicland Corp., announced at the company’s annual shareholder meeting May 11 that the company had no plans to build a retailing online. Eustiger cited a lack of profits in online sales as the reason for the company’s hesitancy.
Industry Voting Begins In Expanded Radio Awards


Several changes have been made in this year’s balloting process. Record-label awards return for the first time since 1990, in the addition of a label promotion team of the year award in each of five format categories (country, R&B, rock, rhythmic top 40/mainstream top 40, and AC/adult top 40/mid adult). Also, several format categories have been expanded. The top 40 category is now split into rhythmic top 40 and mainstream top 40. There are also separate awards for AC and adult top 40/mid adult. R&B is now split into mainstream R&B and adult R&B. The rock category continues to be broken out into three format categories: mainstream, modern, and triple-A. Country continues as one category. Also, market-size categories have been changed from major, medium, and small to major (market nos. 1-25) and secondary (markets No. 26-plus). The eligibility period for nominees is May 1997 to the present.

For additional information on the Radio Seminar & Awards, please call Michele Quigley at 212-536-5052.

Billboard Plugs Into Web Confab

Billboard magazine has joined with Jupiter Communications and the New York Music Festival to produce Plug 'In '98, the New Music Meets New Technology Forum. The third-annual conference, which is devoted to examining issues relating to the music business and the Internet, will be held July 15-16 at the Crowne Plaza in New York.

Highlights will include keynote addresses by VH1 President John Sykes and Vibe Publishing President/CEO Keith Klein. Among the panels will be the Billboard Roundtable: Labels & the Internet, moderated by Ken Schwartz, editor and director of Billboard Online. Jupiter Communications is a New York-based media research firm that focuses on consumer interactivity.

The Plug 'In conference runs in tandem with the week-long Intyl New York Music Festival, which hosts performances by 400 artists from around the world and cybercasts concerts via the Internet.

For registration and sponsorship information, contact 212-780-6000 or 800-485-4345. Or visit Jupiter's Web site (www.jupiter.com).

Imaani Grows Bolder From Birmingham

I MAANI "WHERE ARE YOU?" S 2000 EUROVISION SONG CONTEST, held in Birmingham, England, is history, and the winner has been proclaimed (see story, page 10). Now the real test comes: Which entries will have global chart success? It’s too early to tell if the victorious “Divas” by Dana International will be a worldwide hit, although it has the muscle of Sony Music and CNN behind it. One thing is certain. After languishing for weeks, the U.K. entry is shaping up to be a top 10 smash.

WHERE ARE YOU? by IMAANI (EMI) placed second in the competition, perhaps a surprise to many people who liked the song but didn’t think it was an immediate hit that could register with telephone voters after one listen. In the wake of its runner-up status, the single jumps 60-22 on the U.K. Chat-Track list, just missing the top 20 portion published in this issue (see Hits of the World, page 62). Early sales figures indicate the single should be in the top 10 next issue.

That would fulfill the goal of Jonathan King, who has been the BBC’s point person to select the British entry for Eurovision since 1995. In the four years he has helmed the Great British Song Contest, King has come up with four hit singles. In 1996, “Love City Grove” by the group of the same name placed 10th in the contest and peaked at No. 7 in the U.K. In 1996, Gina G’s “Oh My Love, Just A Little Bit” was a disappointing eighth in the contest, but No. 1 at home. Last year, Katrina & the Waves’ “Love Shine A Light” brought the trophy home to the U.K. for the first time in 16 years and peaked at No. 2. Now the Nottinghamborn Immaani seems certain to join these three previous U.K. entries in the top 10. One of the composers of “Where Are You?” has already had a No. 1 on Bill-
Joe
All That I Am
SINGER • SONGWRITER • PRODUCER • ARTIST
PLATINUM
From a movie filled with hope, comes a classic soundtrack filled with heart.

**HOPE FLOATS**

**garth BROOKS***
The world’s most popular performer sings his most intimate love song ever, “To Make You Feel My Love” ships to Country Radio on May 5 & AC/AAA Radio on May 18. Video to VH1, CMT & TNN on May 18.

**bob SEGER & martina McBride**
"Chances Are" is the first new Seger song in three years! His first-ever duet features Grammy –winning country favorite Martina McBride. Ships to AC/AAA Radio on May 5. Video to VH1, CMT & TNN on May 18.

**sheryl CROW**
Multi-platinum, multi-Grammy –winner captures the heart of the film with a stunning new song, "In Need."

**the ROLLING STONES**
The most popular band in the world recently recorded this extraordinary cover of "Honest I Do," a classic Jimmy Reed blues standard.

**deana CARTER**

**bryan ADAMS**
After 50 million albums sold and two dozen hit singles, Bryan Adams unveils a wonderfully reflective acoustic version of "When You Love Someone."

**trisha YEARWOOD**
Following up her fifth straight multi-platinum album, American Country Music’s 1998 Top Female Vocalist Of The Year performs her first soundtrack recording since the 1997 Grammy –winning "How Do I Live?"

Also new songs from: lyle LOVETT, the MAVERICKS, lila McCANN, jonell MOSSER, gillian WELCH and WHISKEYTOWN

**Coming Up:**
- A special Hope Floats Rosie O’Donnell May 20
- HHI Hope Floats Special with Sandra Bullock begins May 24
- General Cinema Theaters previewing Garth Brooks and Bob Seger & Martina McBride videos in theaters nationwide
- VH1’s Hollywood & Vinyl on the Making of Hope Floats and VH1’s Top Ten Countdown hosted by Sandra Bullock and Harry Connick, Jr. both begin airing May 24

* "To Make You Feel My Love" the new single from Garth Brooks is also available on his box set The Limited Series.

Executive Soundtrack Producers: Don Was and Forest Whitaker
Music Supervised by 20th Century Fox by Robert Kraft and Laura Ziffren
Music Supervised by Capitol by Cary Gersh and T.J. Hitte

Visit box on the internet at www.lifetime.com

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