

Artists & Music

POP • ROCK • R&B • RAP • DANCE • COUNTRY • LATIN • CLASSICAL • JAZZ • MUSIC VIDEO

Cobain Death Spurs Rush At Retail Biz Talk Turns To Band's Unreleased Work

■ BY CRAIG ROSEN
and CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—In the week following the news of Nirvana front man Kurt Cobain's death, all four of the band's albums have made significant sales gains. His suicide also has fueled speculation about what unreleased material may be forthcoming.

Cobain was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at his Seattle home April 8.

In the days following, retailers reported a rush for Nirvana titles, as radio stations and MTV paid tribute to Cobain and his music by airing Nirvana material.

On The Billboard 200 this week, three Nirvana titles on DGC make significant leaps: "In Utero" jumps from No. 72 to No. 27 with a 122% sales gain. The title sold approximately 40,000 copies this week, compared with 18,000 the previous week.



NIRVANA

The band's previous album, "Nevermind," rises from No. 167 to No. 56 with a 197% sales increase for the week (approximately 20,000 units, compared with 7,000); and "Incesticide" re-enters at No. 135 with a 300% sales gain (approximately 8,000 units, up from 2,000).

"Bleach," the band's 1988 debut

for the independent Sub Pop label, enters the Top Pop Catalog chart for the first time at No. 6 with a 350% sales jump (approximately 9,000 units, compared with 2,000).

David Lee of Alternative Distribution Alliance, which distributes the Sub Pop title, says the distribution company sold 20,000 copies of the first album April 8. Another 72,000 units were shipped April 13.

With the sales spurt, "Nevermind" has sold more than 4.9 million and "In Utero" 1.8 million copies to date, according to SoundScan.

In a grim accident of timing, sales of "In Utero" may have benefited from the album's greater availability. In late March, Geffen shipped close to 100,000 units of an altered version of the album—which softened the controversial back-cover art and changed the title of the song "Rape Me" to "Waif Me"—to racked ac-

(Continued on page 102)

Arista Follows Tillis' Lead In 'Sweethearts Dance'

■ BY PETER CRONIN

NASHVILLE—Pam Tillis is accustomed to thinking of country music as a family affair. Her father is the legendary writer and performer Mel Tillis, and her husband, Bob DiPiero, is one of today's top Music City songsmiths.

Still, bringing her dad and four siblings into the studio to add background vocals to "Til All The Lonely's Gone," a rousing gospel-flavored track from her new "Sweethearts Dance" album (due April 26), was not easy. Musically, things came together quickly, but when "Entertainment Tonight" showed up with its cameras, the elder Tillis couldn't help playing the cutup.

"It was so hysterical," Pam Tillis says. "My sister had a plane to

catch, and my dad becomes a comedian when you turn the cameras on. But I'm the oldest, and I can get into bossing everybody around."



TILLIS

True to form, Tillis took control, and with a snap of her fingers and a firm, "Come on, Dad," she saw the session through with the same stubborn determination

that has marked her entire recording career.

Tillis has emerged from the shadow of her famous father, but her career was a little slow getting off the ground. In 1984, she signed with

(Continued on page 103)

Tommy Boy Artist K7 Has Started To 'Swing'

■ BY CARRIE BORZILLO

LOS ANGELES—Tommy Boy Records' motto these days could be "Good Things Come To Those Who Wait."



K7



CALLOWAY

On April 16, five months after the release of K7's debut, "Swing Batta Swing," the album cracked the top half of The Billboard 200 at No. 100, making K7 a Heatseekers Impact Artist.

The album, released Nov. 9, moves to No. 96 this week on The Billboard 200. SoundScan reports total sales of 173,000 units.

Tommy Boy president Monica Lynch says the hip-hop, dance, and reggae-inflected album, parts of which are a tribute to Cab Calloway, was a slow builder because it didn't fit easily into R&B or top 40 radio formats. But, she says, "it was worth the wait."

"Swing Batta Swing" bowed on the Heatseekers chart Nov. 27 at No. 11 and peaked on that chart at No. 1 March 26. The album didn't reach The Billboard 200 or the Top R&B Albums chart until Jan. 29, when it bowed at No. 171 and No. 99, respectively.

"Swing Batta Swing" is No. 60 this week on the Top R&B Albums chart.

"It was a tougher project to work because, musically, it fits between a rock and a hard place and it wasn't embraced by the hardcore rap crowd or black radio initially," says Lynch. "The sound is so distinctive that a lot of PDs had doubts about it. It had to prove itself, and once the public heard it, they loved it."

Lynch cites WQHT (Hot 97) New York as the station that helped break K7. "The first single, 'Come Baby Come,' immediately took hold at Hot 97. The song traveled slowly from market to market with resistance at first. But when it was played, it hung around for a while."

Hot 97 PD Steve Smith says that while K7 has a strong following among Latino women, "he is a universal artist. His music performs phenomenally here. It doesn't matter

(Continued on page 11)



Medicine For The Cramps. New York's Medicine Label announces the signing of recording group the Cramps. The deal includes North and South America, with Creation handling the group for the rest of the world. The band is recording a new album. Shown, from left, are band member Poison Ivy; Medicine Label president Kevin Patrick; and band members Lux Interior, Slim Chance, and Harry Drumdini.

MTV Bringing 'Revolution' To Radio

■ BY DEBORAH RUSSELL

LOS ANGELES—MTV assaults the radio waves next month with the premiere of "MTV's Weekend Revolution," a syndicated show hosted by network VJ Lewis Largent. Global Satellite Network will distribute the three-hour radio program to 100-150 top 40, modern rock, and current-based album rock outlets.

The weekly show, comprising music, news, interviews, and guest appearances, is aimed at to 15-to-28-year-old listeners and will debut over the Memorial Day weekend.

Matt Farber, MTV's VP of pro-

gramming/new business, will oversee the show's production, using the music video network's existing programming, news, and talent/artist relations teams to put it together.

Van Toffler, MTV's senior VP of programming enterprises and business development, says the radio show provides an ideal avenue for MTV to team with record labels and expose new music to the network's viewing demographic.

"It's another way to tap into our audience," Toffler says. "They can't sit in front a TV set for 24 hours."

"MTV's Weekend Revolution" will be produced at the network's N.Y.

headquarters. The show will feature exclusive, proprietary music, such as performances culled from "Unplugged" concerts and other MTV series that showcase live talent. The network's access to that talent will benefit the radio show in the form of interviews and guest-host slots.

Howard Gillman, president of Global Satellite Network, says the program provides an opportunity for top 40 stations and others to venture into alternative territory.

"It allows top 40 stations to get on the alternative bandwagon in a very safe way," says Gillman. "Having

(Continued on page 95)

Reprise Beats The Bushes To Promote Da Bush Babees

■ BY HAVELOCK NELSON

NEW YORK—Vying for a better place in the rap race, executives at Reprise/Warner Bros. are implementing a street-oriented campaign for the label's latest rap acquisition, Da Bush Babees.

"This group is one of our big hopefuls here, so we want to make sure we're providing all the right elements for it to grow," says Benny Medina, senior VP of A&R, black music/GM at Warner Bros. The label's initial focus is on providing high visibility for Da Bush Babees.

Between April 15 and 19, Reprise was to release the single "Swing It" to college radio, radio mix shows, clubs, and record pools. A commercial single of "Swing It" was shipped to retail April 7. It is supported by a promotional video lensed by director Michael Lucero that shipped March 16. "Ambushed," the band's album, is scheduled to drop June 14.

The label says it is optimistic about the prospects for Da Bush Babees because of the group's dynamism and musical blends. "Ambushed" incorporates New York hip-hop, L.A. lowrider aesthetics, Jamaican ragamuffin vibes, and a touch of jazz. Group members Y-Tee, Mister Man, and Babe-Face Kaos go on a bouncy lyrical journey, celebrating wordplay and building verbal puzzles. Along the way they emphasize hardcore skills while avoiding sexist and gangsta attitudes.

"A lot of people think that to be hard you have to curse and talk

(Continued on page 97)