

WATCH THE SPARKS FLY!



Sizzling beauties light up the screen as they enjoy their independence in on-stage fantasies and back-stage fun. *Playboy's Naked on the Fourth of July*. There's no better way to celebrate a hot summer's night than with these sexy rebels!



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RIAA May Certifications

Following are the May Recording Industry Assn. of America certifications of album shipments:

MULTI-PLATINUM ALBUMS

Soundtrack, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Lost Highway/Mercury, 6 million.

Pink, *Missundaztood*, Arista, 3 million.

Shakira, *Laundry Service*, Epic, 3 million.

Lee Ann Womack, *I Hope You Dance*, MCA Nashville, 3 million.

Ludacris, *Back for the First Time*, Def Jam South/IDJMG, 3 million.

Soundtrack, *Save the Last Dance*, Hollywood, 2 million.

Tim McGraw, *Set This Circus Down*, Curb, 2 million.

Blink-182, *Take Off Your Pants and Jacket*, MCA, 2 million.

Ashanti, *Ashanti*, Murder Inc./Def Jam/IDJMG, 2 million.

Jay-Z, *The Blueprint*, Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG, 2 million.

Various artists, *WoW 2001*, Sparrow, 2 million.

PLATINUM ALBUMS (1 million units)

Josh Groban, *Josh Groban*, 143/Reprise/Warner Bros., his first.

Ashanti, *Ashanti*, Murder Inc./Def Jam/IDJMG, her first.

R. Kelly & Jay-Z, *The Best of Both Worlds*, Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam/Jive/IDJMG, their first.

Barry Manilow, *Ultimate Manilow*, Arista, his 10th.

Sheryl Crow, *C'mon C'mon*, A&M/Interscope, her fourth.

Fat Joe, *J.O.S.E.* (*Jealous Ones Still Envy*), Terror Squad/Atlantic, his first.

Soundtrack, *The Fast and the Furious*, Murder Inc./Def Jam/IDJMG.

GOLD ALBUMS (500,000 units)

Barry Manilow, *The Complete Collection*, Arista, his 19th.

Carman, *Heart of a Champion*, Sparrow, his ninth.

Steven Curtis Chapman, *More to This Life*, Sparrow, his ninth.

Steven Curtis Chapman, *Declaration*, Sparrow, his 10th.

Ashanti, *Ashanti*, Murder Inc./Def Jam/IDJMG, her first.

R. Kelly & Jay-Z, *The Best of Both Worlds*, Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam/Jive/IDJMG, their first.

Norah Jones, *Come Away With Me*, Blue Note/Capitol, her first.

Sheryl Crow, *C'mon C'mon*, A&M/Interscope, her fourth.

Montgomery Gentry, *Carrying On*, Columbia Nashville, their second.

Patty Loveless, *Classics*, Epic Nashville, her eighth.

Banda el Recodo, *Contigo Por Siempre*, Fonovisa, its second.

John Williams, *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, Sony Classical, his seventh.

Vicente Fernandez, *La Historio de un Idolo, Vol. 1*, Sony Discos, his third.

Various artists, *Sesame Street: Platinum All-Time Favorites*, Sony Wonder.

Big Tymers, *Hood Rich*, Cash Money/Universal, their second.

Soundtrack, *Spider-Man*, Roadrunner/Columbia/IDJMG.

Soundtrack, *The Scorpion King*, Universal/UMRG.



Declarations Of Independents™



by Chris Morris

PROPER FOLDS: At this column's deadline, our colleague **Ed Christman** reported that New York-based Proper Distribution is closing its doors (*Billboard Bulletin*, June 14).

The 6-year-old indie distributor—formed by the principals of college-radio promotion and producer/management firm Advanced Alternative Media, which will reportedly remain in business—was thought to have annual revenue of \$9 million during its heyday but was said to be generating a third of that amount more recently. Much of Proper's product was dance-oriented; among its distributed labels were Antler Subway, Murder, and Messenger.

HILLBILLY HEAVEN: Memphis International Records, the new label founded by industry vets **Bob Merlis** and **David Less** (*Billboard*, April 13), drops its first releases July 9. The unique gem among them is *Missing Link*, a collection of unreleased material by the great Bluff City eccentric "Harmonica" **Frank Floyd**.

Floyd, who died in 1984, was a street musician and carnival and medicine-show performer whose crazy-quilt style lights the darkest recesses of American musical history. As he himself says on the album, he played "a little bit of all of it, except for that grand opera. I just hate it—I don't like it at all."

Co-produced by Less and Memphis' native genius **Jim Dickinson** and recorded in a local studio and a couple of Memphis schools in 1979, these extraordinary sessions reveal Floyd as a great musical fusioner. Conflating blues, hillbilly music, vaudeville, and primitive rock'n'roll (he recorded in the early '50s for Sun Records), Floyd rampages his way through a bizarre and diverse catalog of tunes. He hoots and hollers, crows like a rooster, imitates a freight train, and generally disports himself like the "Howlin' Tomcat" of one song title. *Missing Link* is a stellar introduction to a true Southern original.

FLAG WAVING: Los Angeles-based vocalist/songwriter **Grey De Lisle's** sophomore album, *Homewrecker*, released on the singer's own Hummin'bird Records label, is one of those drop-dead gorgeous records that stops you in your tracks.

De Lisle—who is dolled up in a startling **Bobbie Gentry** bouffant on the album's cover—strikes us as the most dazzling alt-country talent to hit the boards since the '80s arrival of **Lone Justice's Maria McKee**.

Appropriately, both of De Lisle's albums were produced by ex-Lone Justice member **Marvin Etzioni**. De Lisle met Etzioni when she was

searching for a string player for her debut album, 2001's *Small Time*. "I met my **Everly Brother**," she says of the musician/producer.

Homewrecker is a more elaborate piece of work than the equally fine *Small Time*, which was cut in three days at a studio where De Lisle does cartoon voiceover work. (She has voiced *The Flintstones*' Betty Rubble and *Scooby-Doo's* Daphne, among many others.) At that time,



De LISLE

the effervescent singer says, she didn't have big expectations for her music: "If people played my record, I'd send 'em cookies."

The new album is highlighted by some heart-tugging ballads featuring lush country-politan string arrangements (by **Jerry Yester**), which make brilliant settings for De Lisle's rich voice (think of **Tammy Wynette**, **Connie Smith**, **Loretta Lynn**, or **Dolly Parton**).

The singer receives superlative support on the collection by such instrumentalists as guitarist **Greg Leisz** (k.d. lang, **Dave Alvin**), keyboardist **Benmont Tench** (**Tom Petty**), guitarist **Shane Fontane** (**Bruce Springsteen**), and her husband, **Murry Hammond**, of the **Old 97s**.

De Lisle—who composes her songs on the autoharp—and Hammond are already working on a new, **Carter Family**-styled set of old-timey country songs; it's tentatively titled *The Graceful Ghost*, after the name of a steamboat.

"We just built a little studio in our garage," she says. "I want [the album] to be spooky. In all the songs, everybody dies."

Like *Small Time*, *Homewrecker* has received limited release via mail-order/Internet retailer Miles of Music and at local L.A. stores. But De Lisle is not averse to getting wider distribution. Interested parties should contact her manager, **Lorne Saifer**, at 310-283-2000.