

MUSIC WEEK

ESTABLISHED 1959

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Digital system steals the show

From JIM EVANS
HAMBURG: The hottest and most controversial topic of discussion, debate and conjecture at the Audio Engineering Society convention in Hamburg last week was the Digital Audio Stationary Head (DASH) digital editing format.

At a forum on the eve of the convention, Studer, Sony and Matsushita — the three parties involved in developing the system — underlined their continued support for the system and revealed that both 15 in/s and 7½ in/s machines are to be offered to the industry.

Sony Broadcast's Chris Hollebene said: "I suspect that the record industry doesn't fully understand all the ins and outs of the different processes. With this in mind, we have tentative plans for a digital editing seminar — to be held some time this summer, after the APRS Show — to explain all the various advantages and limitations."

Sony's plans for a seminar will be welcomed by the industry, but are likely to be pre-empted by the APRS. Executive committee member Bill Foster said at AES that he would be raising the matter at this week's APRS executive committee meeting with a view to organising a seminar/meeting for all member studios on the same subject — as soon as next month.

● Full details on all the latest DASH developments will be published in the next Studio Extra (March 30). This issue will also include all the other news, views and picture coverage from AES Hamburg.

EMI backs indies with double distribution link

THE UK independent record scene has been given a powerful boost with the forging of a parallel distribution link between EMI Manufacturing and Distribution Services and two indie companies: specialist reggae label Jetstar and distributors Music Industry Services. EMI will provide "a strong distribution back-up whenever the button needs pushing".

The major's resources are called upon when the indies feel that a record is selling well enough to warrant a larger push than they could otherwise manage.

EMI MADS managing director Ted Harris says: "We feel an affinity with the UK indie scene. Companies like MIS and Jetstar have fairly specialist product, but there comes a time when they have a record that is moving and they need to plug into a distribution company like ourselves. We can respond quickly to demand — if a record looks like it could be a hit then we take it on board and run with it."

"The advantage is that small companies don't lose the independence that is important to them, but they do have the distribution back-up that a major can bring to a potential hit record. We are in the market for more manufacturing and distribution deals and we are taking a close interest

in other independent companies."

MIS was set up as a distributor for indie labels in the New Year and MD John Bassett comments:

"This new distribution deal with EMI will greatly improve the chances of a successful record for smaller labels. Many excellent records are lost when jumping the gap between initial small sales, which are vital, and large, heavyweight output. Our new link with EMI will be put into use whenever we feel that we need EMI's assistance on a record and will bridge the gap and give indies a stronger chance in this competitive field."

Jetstar director Carl Palmer adds: "The association is a

tremendous boost. The reggae market can be quite small in terms of outlets, but we will be hitting a much bigger market than before."

He says Jetstar would link-up with EMI on any product that had crossover potential. "We anticipate doing a lot more business by the end of the year."

First product via EMI/MIS is the Max Bygraves album, Family Favourites, on Lantern Records which is heavily featured on the singer's Family Fortunes TV series and a debut single by London band Explained Emma. The liaison with Jetstar will initially promote the Reggae Hits Volume One album which is just outside the top 100.



PHOTOGRAPHED AT the top of the World Trade Centre in New York, Walbank Warwick Communications' Chris Warwick presents Latin star percussionist Tito Puente with a copy of World Record, the first of a series of CD-only releases.

CD-only label is launched

A NEW UK record label with a digital CD-only policy has been launched with a compilation of indigenous recordings from Africa and the Americas under the title, World Record.

The label has been spawned by Wallbank Warwick Communications, described by director Chris Warwick as "a small company made up of independent researchers". They plan to have a catalogue of 10 CD titles by the end of the year; national distribution in the UK has yet to be negotiated, but the company is supplying selected outlets direct.

They have a pressing deal with CBS/Sony in Japan and secured distribution in 12 overseas territories following talks at Midem. "One of our aims is to archive digitally the world's indigenous music, so as to provide a comprehensive data-base on the rhythms and harmonies that are the roots of most modern music," says Warwick.

Their first release includes music by Latin percussionist Tito Puente plus other South American artists Conjunto Tlacotalpan, Son Jarocho and Roberto Burrell, as well as music from the Ivory Coast of Africa and the Makurdi State of Nigeria. It was recorded in Calrec Soundfield stereo and holophonic stereo. Each of the artists on the disc will be featured on solo CDs later in the year.

Swan promoted to PRO MD

POLYGRAM RECORD Operations commercial director Clive Swan has been promoted to be managing director of the company, with added responsibility for PolyGram Ireland and PolyGram Classics UK, as well as the PolyGram commercial division which provides manufacturing, sales and distribution services for the PolyGram labels.

Coincidentally, PolyGram Lei-

sure chairman and chief executive Ramon Lopez has revealed that Swan will deputise for him "as necessary in matters relating to PolyGram Leisure UK activities".

Lopez is currently overseeing Phonogram Records pending the appointment of a managing director to replace Brian Shepherd who left at the end of 1984.

More scope for independents' chart

MORE LABELS will qualify for inclusion in the Music Week independent labels chart following a change in the criteria defining the nature of an "independent label", and a switch from chart compilers MRIB to Music Week's own research department.

The new criteria will effectively broaden the range of indie labels in the chart by allowing labels which are distributed by major labels; previously only labels serviced by the independent distributors were allowed to appear in the chart.

"We have made this change because of the changing nature of the indie label industry," says MW research manager Tony Adler. "We believe an indie label can remain independent in the true spirit of the word while using any form of distribution — be it independent or provided by a major record company."

"And we have felt for some time that the indie

chart was too restrictive in disallowing labels distributed by, say, PRT. Now more labels are using distribution through other record companies and the time is now right to allow them access to the indie chart."

Under the new criteria, an indie label is defined as one which:

- does not have its own manufacturing plant;
- does not benefit from a licensing arrangement;
- does not operate its own, or share, a salesforce.

As in the past, the indie chart will exclude records which are separately catered for by the heavy metal or disco/dance charts.

- See page 8 for the new indie chart.
- The Music Week heavy metal chart also switches from chart compilers MRIB to MW's own research department as of this week. See Page 12.

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