Retailers Plan Digital-Music Service; BMG Claims Record Earnings For 2002: Page 3 • Ted Turner, Norio Ohga Exit: Page 8

CONGRATULATIONS
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ON YOUR 2003 GRAMMY NOMINATIONS FROM ALL OF US AT ALLAIRE STUDIOS.
On February 23rd, we celebrate their nominations.

(Every other day we celebrate their music.)
BY BRIAN GARRITY

Word that a consortium of six of the largest music merchants in the U.S. plans to launch a digital-music subscription service to rival such major-label ventures as Rhapsody, Rhapsody LA, and.yahoo! Music has one more aggressive move to date to emphasize digital distribution.

The retailers in question—Best Buy, Hastings, Entertainment Tower, Trans World Entertainment, Virgin Entertainment Group, and Wherehouse Music—have inked promotional and commercial downloads via the likes of Liquid Audio and Riop for years. But concerns regarding everything from revenue-sharing and protecting control to customer-data ownership have kept them on the sidelines in the on-demand subscription business, until now.

With CD sales in a tailspin and competition in cyberspace rising, the consortium’s members are hoping to use the venture, called Echo, to control their own destinies in the subscription arena. Retailers are billing Echo as a vehicle for collecting content license fees rather than new revenue-sharing technologies that will power autonomous brand-endemic subscription services.

The move also represents a bet by merchants that they can drive consumer adoption of the service—so says the deal—better than rival media and Internet companies by using in-store promotion and sales of physical CDs to drive subscriptions. Ideas include bundling Echo start-up discount sales with physical products, offering access to free downloads with the purchase of a CD, and offering locked content in bulk that could be transferred to iPod-like portable hard-drive devices and later opened.

But specific details surrounding the venture are limited. The retailers have each invested an equal, undisclosed sum in Los Angeles-based Echo, formerly Echo Networks, a streaming music service.

Echo founder Dan Hart will head the new company, in which the privately held consortium holds a controlling interest. Representatives from the six retailers—as well as Anne Bernstein, former president of the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers, and Straus Zelnick, former CEO of BMG and an Echo investor through ZelnickMedia—will serve on the Echo board of directors.

Each of the retailers will launch their own branded service, using Echo as the engine, and will control pricing.

Beyond that, there is still much to be decided. Echo has not actually inked a distribution deal with any of the six retailers yet. And an investment in Echo does not necessarily preclude the retailers from cutting deals with other services. (In fact, another leading on-demand music offering says it is in advanced talks regarding a distribution agreement with an Echo investor.) Plus, Echo still has to acquire content licenses from the labels—a process company executives say they hope to complete in the next six months.

But those in the digital industry view the venture as a potential serious rival that even in its nebulous state commands instant legitimacy, courtesy of its backers.

The Echo consortium was established to create a viable business strategy that combines physical and digital-music distribution,” Hart says. “Music retailers can utilize their long history and expertise in building customer relationships and brand loyalty to bring new artists to provide a digital-music experience that truly serves businesses.

Hastings Entertainment CEO John Marraduva adds, “We have always excelled at selling music to consumers, and we plan to extend our consumer relationships from the physical world into the digital.”

Wherehouse Music CEO Jerry Comstock notes that the initiative reflects that retail has always been more about selling CDs than distributing CDs. He says, “We are in the customer-relationship business.”

Malasky—of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur in Washington, D.C., and antitrust expert—agrees that the Echo deal might bring what he calls “real competition” to the digital-music marketplace. “Under the terms of the venture, each retailer participant will independently market and price the digital entertainment products it offers, in the manner that will best serve its consumers.”

Schmidt-Holtz Hints At Record BMG Earnings

Together with the current head of BMG Europe, Thomas Stein, who will return to the position of chairman of Germany/Switzerland/ Australia/GSA president following the restructuring activities, Schmidt-Holtz provides an upbeat report on the company’s European activities.

BMG has achieved growth in nearly all European markets, reports Stein, who notes the following market-share figures: France increased its 3.5% share of the market in 2002 (2001, 5.2%); Germany 15.8% (2001, 15.5%); Netherlands 8.8% (2001, 8.3%); Spain 10% (2001, 9.6%); Sweden 10.4% (2001, 8.3%); and U.K. 9.6% (2001, 6.9%).

The European office increased earnings by 700% over 2001, reducing overheads by 15% and widened market share from 8.9% to 9.8%. At the same time, BMG racked up 12 million platinum records in the past 12 months, up from 12 million in the previous year.

Schmidt-Holtz particularly praised Stein’s contribution to the company’s success in Europe. Stein tells Billboard that given the global crisis in the record market, he was prepared to give up his own position in the interests of the company as a whole. By returning to GSA, Stein wants to make Germany a more profitable center. Stein reveals that earnings have turned the corner in spite of the difficult market conditions, with overheads in Germany cut by 30%. However, at the same time, the number of active artists has been reduced by half.

Stein said that the company’s ability to be implemented over the next few weeks is fully oriented to maximizing growth. Stein says one of the most promising projects recently was the great success of the broadcaster RTL’s Deutschland Sucht den Superstar TV series, which attracted 12 million viewers in the single by the 12-month-old show and plans to reduce staff.

Against the backdrop of a shrinking global market, BMG wants to play an active role in consolidation. Commenting on rumors of a merger between EMI and BMG, Schmidt-Holtz retorts, “We are facing another two hard years in which everyone is talking to everyone else; the end at which the market will emerge consolidated.”

BY WOLFGANG SPAHR

MÜNCH—Two years ago we were a born victim, today we are an equal partner,” these are the words BMG chairman/CEO Rolf Schmidt-Holtz uses to describe his company’s progress.

Without stating any figures, Schmidt-Holtz claims record earnings for 2002 and says BMG has exceeded expectations. The company’s market share has widened from 8.2% to 9.5%, he says, but does not expect to see a repetition of the record-breaking earnings this year as the global music market will, he contends, contract by at least 7%. “However,” Schmidt-Holtz says, “we have allowed for this in our figures.”

Unconfirmed reports have profits exceeding $10 million, notes the CEO, but those numbers are not due until Bertelsmann’s annual report scheduled for March 25. But in the first half of 2002, BMG sustained an operating loss of 45 million euros ($48.7 million) on revenue of 1.2 billion euros ($1.3 billion).

Schmidt-Holtz says in spite of this apparent turnaround in fortunes, BMG has to take every step to keep revenues steady and to operate at a high profit. This involves keeping an eye on the potential earnings of the record-buying market and the related closure of the regional offices are important steps in this direction, he explains, as they will permit savings in the eight figures.

Schmidt-Holtz believes the closure of the regionals was vital for BMG organizing the companies’ creative strengths more clearly. He claims the new structure is enjoying high-level acceptance within the company, demonstrated by the fact, for example, that executives were willing to continue working in the new framework with salary reductions of between 10 and 25%.

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- The New York Times

“An Extraordinary Film.”
- Entertainment Weekly

BY BRIAN GARRITY

The music industry has long been reluctant go after individual consumers in litigation efforts to stem the spread of digital piracy. However, a pair of recent court rulings—one in the U.S. and another in Norway—indicate that the business is shifting its thinking on that front.

The Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) recently won a court decision that found that telecom giant Verizon must turn over the identity of a subscriber whom the trade group claims has illegally made available more than 600 copyrighted-music files via the Internet (Billboard, Feb. 1).

Meanwhile, a Norwegian court, in response to a legal action brought by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), recently fined a 24-year-old student a reported $14,000 for operating a copy-cat Napster service known as Napster no. Other cases are pending in other parts of Europe.

Jupiter Research analyst Lee Black says, "It serves the industry well if they have an individual they can shine the light on and point to as an example."

Black says that the industry is likely to use such legal precedents to go after "blatant, large copyright infringers" as opposed to targeting peer-to-peer (P2P) users en masse.

The hope is that such precedents will serve as what Black terms a "psychological DRM," or digital-rights management that discourages P2P file trading.

In a statement following the Verizon ruling, RIAA president Cary Sherman said, "We look forward to contacting the account-holder whose identity we were seeking so we can let them know that what they are doing is illegal."

Indeed, legal experts have argued that the only truly effective litigation strategy may be suing end-users. Peter Zast, a professor of copyright law at American University, is on record as saying that targeted litigation strategy against individual consumers could have a "major impact" on P2P activity due to the fact that most consumers are "litigation-averse."

With P2P viewed by many as impossible to stop completely, the ultimate goal, analysts say, is reducing the number of overall file sharers.

So far the industry has focused on pursuing individuals it views to be egregious uploaders of content and enablers of file trading—not casual downloaders.

Executives are trying to avoid what one major-label new-media chief has termed "the grandstanding effect of having a policeman arrest a young kid in his home because he's been downloading from a file-sharing service."

But the ability to go after such consumers won't come without a fight. Verizon is appealing the Jan. 20 court ruling, and Black says he expects the telecommunications industry to be resistant to similar moves from the RIAA. What's more, Black says it remains to be seen just how significant the impact of an industry litigation strategy against individual consumers will be. He notes that it may viewed by many consumers as the equivalent to "jaywalking or a speeding ticket."
Eddie Levine
OCT. 9, 1918 - JAN. 15, 2003

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THE WORLD IS LESS COLORFUL WITHOUT YOU.
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Value Music Files For Bankruptcy

BY ED CHRISTMAN

The “perfect marriage” created by the merger between Value Music and Central South four months ago wound up in bankruptcy court last week, as the retailer was forced to seek Chapter 11 protection due to $3.6 million in accounting inconsistencies disclosed after the merger.

At the time of the merger, Rob Perkins and Randy Davidson, the presidents, respectively, of both chains, said the new company would result in a perfect marriage that would comprise one chain with about 125 stores and $140 million in annual revenue.

But when the two companies were integrating their accounting systems one month after the merger was completed, “it was discovered that Central South had $3.6 million in accounts payables that had not been recorded and had not been discovered by KPMG in the process of completing its audit report,” according to court documents.

The unrecorded liabilities meant that many of the Central South stores that looked profitable before the merger, were, in fact, losing money. Making matters worse, it also caused the new company—which is doing business as Value Central Entertainment, but is corporately named Value Music Concepts—to be in violation of some of the financial covenants of the $25 million revolving lending facility provided by Fleet National, which immediately tightened up on credit.

Randy Davidson was unavailable to comment, but a source familiar with the situation says that there wasn’t any attempt by Davidson to defraud Value Music. “Central South was a privately held company that had never undergone an audit before,” he explains. “I do not believe [Davidson] would have defrauded anybody. Whether he should have known as CEO about the discrepancies, that is another matter, and you can question his management abilities. But once the errors were identified he tried to deal with them in a very upstanding manner.”

Davidson is said to have forked over $1.75 million in funds and assets—as well as covenants due to the Central South Christian distribution company—in order to compensate for the $3.6 million shortfall, in a settlement with Value Music. Davidson and the other executives, who purchased the company, also forfeited their 50% ownership in the merged company.

The Value Central filing on Jan. 27 in Atlanta, in the Northern District of Georgia, in U.S. Bankruptcy Court, marks the second retail filing already this year, coming one week after a Chapter 11 filing by Wherehouse Entertainment. Billboard has been unable to obtain the Value Central filing, although various motions filed with the court have been made available.

According to sources, the senior secured lender is Fleet Financial, which is owed about $5 million, while the majors, secured, but subordinate to the bank, are owed about $20 million. A junior lender, Transamerica Business Services, is owed about $2 million, and is also secured, but subordinate to both Fleet and the majors, according to court documents. In addition, Value Music owes other product suppliers about $12 million, all of whom are unsecured, according to sources.

Improving the chances for a successful reorganization, Fleet has agreed to supply $15 million in debtor-in-possession financing. Also, the filing allows Value Music to shutter 34 stores and give them time to scrutinize another 20 marginal stores, to see whether landlords will provide rent relief that would make them profitable if they should be shuttered. Financial executives at the majors are optimistic that Value Music will have a successful reorganization that will yield a high return to creditors.

Turner Out; AOL Q4 Loss $45B

BY MATTHEW BENZ

NEW YORK—AOL Time Warner (AOL TW) reported a net loss of $44.9 billion, or $10.04 per share, for fourth-quarter 2002, while vice chairman Ted Turner said he would step down at the company’s annual shareholders meeting in May.

The massive loss is due to a $45.5 billion non-cash goodwill writedown— which consists mostly of a $33.5 billion charge to reflect a decline in the value of America Online, but also includes $1.5 billion related to music. It follows a similar non-cash writedown of $54.2 billion taken in first-quarter 2002 (Billboard, May 4, 2002).

In The News

• Sources say Clear Channel Entertainment (CCE) is developing a service in which live concerts will be recorded, then sold on CD to attendees as they exit the show. The name and launch date of the service have yet to be determined. CCE had no comment.

• On Jan. 27, the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed without comment an appeal that Mattel had filed in its battle against MCA recording group Aqua. Mattel previously lost a lawsuit in which it had accused Aqua of tarnishing the image of Mattel’s Barbie doll with the band’s “Barbie Girl” song. The dismissal brings the case to a close.

Sony: Record Quarter; Ohga Exits

BY MATTHEW BENZ and STEVE MCLURE

Music sales and operating income slipped, but strong film results pushed Sony Corp. to its highest-ever quarterly profit for the period ending Dec. 31, 2002.

Meanwhile, Norio Ohga has retired as chairman of the board and director of Sony. In 1968, he became senior managing director of the then-established CBS/Sony Records—now known as Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) (SME)—and in the early ’80s played a key role in Sony and Philips’ joint introduction of the CD. CEO Nobuyuki Idei is interim chairman.

For its fiscal third quarter, Sony reports net income of 125.4 billion yen ($1.05 billion), up 96% from the same period the year before. Sales rose 1% to 2.3 trillion yen ($19.2 billion).

Sony’s music division had total operating income of 20.9 billion yen ($174 million), down 9.5%; sales fell 3% to 198.8 billion yen ($1.66 billion). At Sony Music Entertainment (SME), which generated 74% of the division’s revenue, operating income fell 10% due to a 1% sales decline, higher artist expenses, and ongoing restructuring costs.

Corgan’s Zwan Songs Could Be No. 1

BY GEOFF MAYFIELD

LOS ANGELES—Fans remember Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan. The debut outing by his new band, Zwan, threatens to become the first album among those released in 2003 to reach No. 1 on The Billboard 200.

Based on first-day sales reports from retailers, one chart protagonist estimates the lowest possible tally for Zwan’s Mary Star of the Sea will be 90,000 units, while another offers a high-end forecast of 120,000. If the Martha’s Music/Reprise/Warner Bros. title comes in the lower end of that range, it will be a cinch for The Billboard 200’s top five. Should it manage to start at more than 100,000 units, it could well snag No. 1, halting the three-week run staged by Norah Jones’ Come Away With Me (Blue Note). Jones’ set made a run for the chart’s summit when it snagged eight Grammy Award nominations (Over the Counter, Billboard, Jan. 18) and has surpassed the 100,000-unit mark for eight straight weeks.

Next issue’s No. 1 could be a three-home run, with Zwan and Jones facing off against the soundtrack from Chicago-go (Epic), which moves to the number-up slot with a second-week gain of 10.5% (see Over the Counter, page 53). It trails Jones by a 22.9% margin.

If Zwan prevails, it will be Corg- ian’s second No. 1 album, as Smas- hing Pumpkins’ Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness (Virgin) opened on top with 246,500 units in 1995. Four of the band’s other albums reached the top 10.

Market Watch

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

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ROUNDED FIGURES FOR WEEK ENDING 1/18/03

Compiled from a national sample of retail sales and radio airplay reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.
"We don't need a weekly map in the music business as we have Billboard as our guide, our bible, our informational highway"
Alex Hodges, Executive VP, House of Blues Concerts

"Ray may be a pest, but he's our pest... who cares enough about the touring business to dig deep and get it right"
Irving Azoff, Owner, Azoffmusic Management

"I really enjoy the revitalized Touring section. I go right to it to see the latest news and enjoy Ray Waddell's column"
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"Billboard's touring coverage is a great overview of what is happening in the touring industry - it allows us the opportunity to see who is where and what they are doing which helps us as bookers of our facilities"
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Bryan Turner Back In The Fray With Melee Entertainment

BY MELINDA NEWMAN
LOS ANGELES—After selling urban-oriented Priority Records to EMI in 1998 and ultimately leaving the company in 2001, Bryan Turner decided to turn his attention to the entertainment industry’s fastest-growing segment—the DVD market.

He’s now formed Melee Entertainment, a new joint venture with DreamWorks Records, which bows March 5 with the DVD release of Entertainment’s Basketball Classic at Rucker Park: The Second Season. The title looks at the world’s top street basketball tournament and its participants, including Kobe Bryant and Allen Iverson.

In addition to licensing a number of tunes from top hip-hoppers for the DVD, the package will be bundled with a bonus CD featuring previously unreleased material from Fat Joe and Mob Deep. A soundtrack will come out this summer on Mele.

Turner says he also expects to start releasing albums from artists he will sign to the label in year two, “but we’ll start establishing them now through the DVDs, so when we put out their albums, they aren’t brand new.”

After leaving Priority, “it felt like I had gone through 15 rounds,” Turner says. “I didn’t want to get back immediately into the music industry. Instead he researched the DVD market and found “economics very similar to when I started Priority in 1985,” he says. “Then you could sell 100,000 units and make [at] $300,000-$400,000 profit because we didn’t use indies, we weren’t focused on airplay—our expenses were making the record.”

He linked with DreamWorks Records because he felt principals Mo Ostin, Lenny Waronker, and Michael Ostin best understood the company’s goals. “To be honest with you, I made a worse financial deal than I could have had elsewhere, but they clearly got it and saw that this could be the future of home entertainment as it relates to music and visuals.”

Although he wouldn’t give specifics about the deal, Turner says DreamWorks will front the money for the new company and will receive “a fair amount more than 50%” of the profits. Mele will be housed in DreamWorks’ Beverly Hills, Calif., headquarters.

“DreamWorks’ Michael Ostin calls the deal “a perfect extension of our business. Bryan will help tremendously in drawing people to the label. This will prove to be a great asset,” Ostin expects Mele to release four to six titles this year.

Turner’s deal does not limit his music projects to DreamWorks’ artists: His second venture will be a DVD on TLC, which is signed to Arista. Other upcoming titles include DVDs on Wayne Gretzky and an instructional DVD from choreographer Tina Landon.

Additionally, DVD titles from DreamWorks artists will now be put out in tandem by DreamWorks and Mele, with Mele handling sales through its own staff. Distribution for all titles will go through Universal Music & Video Distribution.

Mele has hired a number of Priority alumni, including Scott Aronson, who will be head of business affairs, and Shellee Fontana, head of acquisitions and marketing. Additionally, Turner has brought on Marcus Morton, head of film production, and Mike McCool, head of sales.

House Of Blues Concerts Prez Exits

Company Reorganization Leads To Integration Of Its Concerts, Club Divisions

BY RAY WADDELL
House of Blues (HOB) Concerts president Jay Marciano, an 18-year veteran of the North American concert promotion company, has stepped down from that role, effective immediately, and HOB’s concerts division will be integrated with the company’s club division.

With this reorganization, the concert team will be led by executive VPs of concerts Alex Hodges and Adam Friedman and senior VP of concerts John Van Zeeland.

Marciano oversaw Universal Concerts (UC) until HOB Entertainment acquired it from Universal Music Group for $190 million in 1999. He was originally hired by Vallon to run UC’s Universal Amphitheatre when the company was still known as MCA Con- certs.

Marciano opened HOB’s Fillmore Green Amphitheatre in Denver in 1988 and Hi-Fi Bays Amphitheatre in Atlanta in 1989.

“Our over the past 18 years, the landscape of this industry has changed considerably,” Marciano tells Billboard. “I’m proud of our accomplishments over that time. We opened many world-renowned venues, and we built a market in Canada, and we had a great team of people, with a lot of continuity in the management ranks.”

Walden worked with Larry Vallon 18 years and never had a bad day.

There isn’t a non-compete clause attached to Marciano’s separation agreement with HOB. “I’m looking at all opportunities and hope to return to the industry shortly,” he says. While Marciano wouldn’t elaborate on where he might resurface, sources say that Los Angeles-based rival promoter Anschutz Entertainment Group is a likely candidate for Marciano’s services.

Marciano is the second high-profile exec to exit the company recently: HOB Concerts senior VP/talent buyer Melissa Miller announced her resignation last week to pursue other interests (Billboard Bulletin, Jan. 27). Her departure is tentatively set for March. Miller was involved in programming HOB’s sheds and booked and promoted Lilith Fair, Down From the Mountain, and Blink-182, among other tours. She joined HOB in 1995 in Delenser/Slater Enterprises.

UMG Brokers Liquid, Anderson Deal

BY MATTHEW BENZ

Liquid Audio is selling its digital-music fulfillment business to Geneva Media, an affiliate of Anderson Merchandisers, for $3.2 million. Liquid co-founder and former president/CEO Gerry Kearley will oversee the business as head of Anderson’s new digital-media division.

Universal Music Group (UMG), which last fall launched a large digital-down- load program via Liquid, played a key role in the transaction. UMG had an option to purchase digital-music distribution assets from Liquid if Liquid ceased operations, and, Kearley ultimately “made the introduction to Anderson,” a spokesman for UMG confirms that it facilitated the deal.

UMG chairman/CEO Doug Morris says the involvement of Anderson-rackjobber to Wal-Mart and others—makes the deal a milestone in the evolution of music distribution: “This is really, in my view, the most significant news in the industry since the advent of the CD, because for 100 years the record business has been a packaged-goods business—selling little round things in stores. And now they’re going to sell things electronically.”

Moving to Anderson are approximately 20 Liquid employees and most of its digital-music assets, including hardware, software, licenses, and agreements it has to operate digital-music stores for retailers and others. The new Anderson unit likely will adopt the Liquid Audio name and remain based near its current Redwood City, Calif., offices.

In a statement, Charlie Anderson, CEO of Amariello, Texas-based Anderson, said, “This acquisition provides the perfect promotion vehicle for our physical distribution business.”

Kearley stepped down as president but remained a consultant to Liquid Audio. UMG terminated its proposed merger with distributor Alliance Entertainment in November 2002. He says he thinks Liquid its well with a physical distributor but cautioned that the future is uncertain. “None of us can predict when the download business is going to happen. It’s still a white off.”

With the sale to Anderson, there is a Liquid Audio. Beyond other technology assets last October to Microsoft for $7 million and is proceeding now with a cash distribution of $2.50 per share, which will use $57 million of the $81.4 million in cash it held as of Sept. 31, 2006. Be Music sued last December to prevent the distribution but has since settled with Liquid.
U.K.’s EasyInternet Cafe Chain Found Guilty Of Illegal CD Burns

BY LARS BRANDEL
LONDON—The ongoing drama surrounding the record industry’s fight against piracy grabbed the limelight in the U.K. mainstream last week when a High Court judge in London found the EasyInternet Cafe chain guilty of music copyright infringements.

In a summary judgment issued Jan. 28, Mr. Justice Smith ruled that the EasyInternet chain—a division of entrepreneur Stelios Haji-loannou’s sprawling Easy Group—was liable for damages for offering an unlicensed music service to its customers.

Speaking after the ruling, British Phonographic Industry (BPI) chairman Peter Jameson declared: “We are delighted that we have won this ruling, which sets an important precedent in support of authorized licensing services.”

The court will now determine penalties. Within hours of the ruling, Haji-loannou announced that he plans to appeal the decision.

The BPI launched civil proceedings against the cafe chain last July after it became aware of the operation and subsequently served a formal demand on the chain and its parent company Easy Group. The BPI’s claim was issued in March 2002.

In defense, EasyInternet declared it had ceased the infringing commercial service in mid-2001. It denied liability since the outset of the BPI’s complaint.

The decision confirms the fact that it is illegal to copy and sell other people’s recordings without their permission,” the London-based trade body comments. “The BPI is delighted with the court’s decision.”

Kazaa Charges RIAA, Others With Antitrust

BY ERIK GRUENWEDEL
LOS ANGELES—Sharman Networks Ltd., owner of the Kazaa peer-to-peer file-sharing network, has filed a countersuit against the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA), the National Music Publishers’ Assn., and the Motion Picture Assn. of America.

The suit—filed Jan. 27 in Los Angeles District Court—is in response to the trade group’s 2001 action against Kazaa, Morpheus, and Grokster, alleging that they cater to the unlawful exchange of music, movies, software, and images.

The court decision alleges that the entertainment industries—by litigating against, instead of working with, Sharman—conspired “to allow the alleged infringement of their copyrights to continue.” The claim that the entertainment companies violated federal antitrust laws in an effort to further their own monopolistic digital-delivery products.”

Sharrman says it is committed to using its network for “legitimate purposes.”

The suit seeks a jury trial and unspecified damages. The RIAA—which calls Sharman “the world’s largest piracy network”—describes it as “laughable” because the company has never marketed its software, and claims “it is not responsible because it has never marketed its software.”

Foes Swap Barbs At Radio Ownership Hearings

Continued from page 1

the Davids. The Goliaths, in this case, are the powerful lobbying forces of the National Assn. of Broadcasters (NAB) and its most potent radio member, Clear Channel Communications (CCC), which owns more than 1,200 stations and is the most prominent owner of concert venues in the country. At the Senate hearing, the lobbyists quoted studies that show that the deregulation of radio in 1996 has been good for listeners and said that they want the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to cast aside remaining rules so radio can better compete in the digital age.

The Davids are a fragile coalition of recording artists, artists’ groups and unions, and smaller broadcasters and concert promoters who cite studies that say radio is a shell of its former self and tell the tale of operating in fear of being bulldozed into oblivion by the allegedly anti-competitive behavior of such companies as CCC.

The Davids had a champion at the hearing: Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., who has reintroduced his Competition in Radio and Concert Industries Act, a bill he says will help consumers, smaller radio-station operators, and local concert promoters by prohibiting anti-competitive practices in the radio and concert industries (Billboard Bulletin, Jan. 29). Further, Feingold says the bill will "crack down on anti-competitive practices, such as the new "pay-to-play" system," a practice he says allows radio giants to "shake down the music industry." Insiders say Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., could sign on as a co-sponsor of the bill soon.

The hearing took place as the FCC determines whether to jettison remaining media cross-ownership rules.

Feingold was the leadoff witness at the hearing. Also testifying was Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., who said he was "deeply concerned" that consolidation is a problem that "merits scrutiny and investigation by the Department of Justice, the FCC, and Congress."

Other witnesses were BPI chair/CEO Lowery Mays; NAB president/CEO Eddie Fritts; Short Broadcasting Co. president Robert Short; Don Henley, recording artist and co-founder of the Recording Artists’ Coalition; and Jenny Toomey, an indie recording artist and executive director of the Future of Music Coalition.

Toomey presented a chart showing that 10 radio companies control 67% of industry revenue. "The rest of the industry—a total of 4,600 owners—controls just 33%," said she. "One gets much the same picture from the numbers on shotlisting. The top 10 firms control 65% of radio listeners."

In his written testimony, Henley told the committee: "The [monetary] consideration sought for radio airplay increased (following consolidation) because there was less competition among radio stations and networks." He added: "These days, radio stations are now demanding exclusive promotional concerts from certain artists who are on their way up the ladder of success."

"These up-and-coming artists refuse," he said, "there can be negative repercussions, as evidenced in some of the materials that I have provided—or will be providing—to committee staff."

The BPI has repeatedly denied all such allegations and asked for evidence of bullying treatment. No other artists have publicly come forward.

Henley admitted that he is one of the few recording artists who can "step up and publicly to discuss the issue. Many other artists are intimidated," he told Billboard. "They fear the consequences." Henley said he had appointments to meet with several FCC commissioners while in Washington, D.C.

The Recording Industry Assn. of America did not testify at the hearing but emphasized it will continue to work with lawmakers to "modernize" the industry to "deal with the reduction of local programming time."

Many members of Congress are finding it more difficult to appear on local shows to speak to constituents. For now, comments at the hearing make it clear that Republican-majority members agree with the radio industry and oppose any new regulatory legislation.

But as Feingold’s growing support for his bill. He told Billboard, “Since originally introducing this legislation in June of 2002, I have seen a groundswell of interest from both in Congress and among artists, consumers, independent radio stations, and local promoters in restoring fairness to radio.”

Additionally, sources say leaders from both parties on the Senate Judiciary Committee are preparing their own legislation to study the anti-competitive concerns voiced by opponents of radio deregulation.

Shalett Leaves Nielsen REI; Sisco Promoted to CEO

Nielsen Retail Entertainment Information (REI) CEO and Nielsen SoundScan and Broadcast Data Systems (BDS) president Mike Shalett has retired from those roles. Nielsen REI executive VP and GM Rob Sisco is promoted to Nielsen REI CEO and Nielsen Music president.

Shalett co-founded SoundScan in 1991 and launched the VideoScan and BookScan services in 1997. Shalett led Nielsen REI from the time it was acquired from him and partner Mike Fine in 1998 by VNU, parent company of Billboard Music Group.

Shalett will assume the post of chairman emeritus-SoundScan and continue as a strategic consultant to VNU, working closely with Nielsen REI.

Sisco’s new post will have him overseeing the day-to-day activities of Nielsen SoundScan and Nielsen BDS while directing the operational aspects of Nielsen REI’s suite of businesses, including Nielsen VideoScan, Nielsen BookScan, and Nielsen Entertainment Marketing Solutions.

Shalett says of retiring, “How lucky can one get to have the gig of a lifetime—as I have had— in all of places, the music, video, and businesses? To me, work has always been about relationships, and I have had the good fortune to get to know and work with so many outstanding people.”
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WE WILL ROCK YOU: Even though Puddle of Mudd’s double-platinum Flawless/Interscope debut, Come Clean, is still high on the charts, the band is recording the follow-up that could be out as early as late spring.

The project is being produced by John Kurzweg, who also helmed Come Clean. “He’s a truly great guy,” frontman Wes Scantlin says of Kurzweg. “We also kind of produced it ourselves with him, together as a team.” Scantlin says he started writing songs for the new record as soon as Come Clean was completed. “I wrote a bunch of songs a year-and-a-half ago, right when I got out of the studio with the first record. People will forget about you, so we try to stay ahead of the game. Man, you can’t stop writing music because this is what everyone dreamed about doing when they were little kids and we got a chance to do it now, so why stop? This is our dream.”

Fred Durst, who signed Puddle of Mudd to Flawless, is wrapping up work on the band’s next Flip/Interscope set, Less Is More, which is due in April.

Durst tells Billboard, “We wrote 30 songs, and it’s Limp Bizkit’s best album yet.” A number of the tunes address issues in Durst’s life, both internal and external. On a further Fred note, Durst is no longer affiliated with the Columbia Pictures skateboard story Lords of Dogtown, which he was set to direct. David Fincher will now helm the picture.

Creed guitarist Mark Tremonti has stepped into the studio to co-produce—with Kirk Kelsey—the debut by Submerged, a band Tremonti helped bring to Wind-up Records.

“I have a good buddy named Eric Friedman who was a young guitar player I met at a NAMM [National Assn. of Music Merchants] festival in L.A.,” Tremonti says. “I met him when he was 15 years old, and I’ve kind of just been his big broth-

Reed Reworks Poe On ‘The Raven’

Bowie, Buscemi Among Guests On Album, Available On One Or Two Discs

BY CHRIS MORRIS

Lou Reed’s new album, The Raven, may be based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe, but the New York rocker has taken certain liberties with the original work.

Reed says drily of a 2002 Bumbershoot Festival performance of the title work, adapted from Poe’s famed poem, “I remember a fan saying, ‘I don’t remember Poe saying, ‘Dickless liar.’”

Reed’s two-CD, 36-track, two-hour homage to the 19th-century American writer was originally created—and performed entirely in German—for director Robert Wilson’s 2000 theatrical piece, POE-try.

Reed explains, “It was completely reworked to be an audio experience, and not a visual one. Completely re-done from top to bottom, in such a way that you were not dependent in any way on seeing anything.”

He says of his continuing fascination with Poe’s oeuvre, “His use of language, his rhythm, his incredible vocabulary, his amazingly vivid imagination, and his remarkably astute psychological renderings and obsessions make him the grand-daddy of all of it—[writer] Hubert Selby, myself, [author] William Burroughs. Everyone should be genuflecting toward Edgar Allan Poe.”

Reed adds of his empathy with Poe’s work, “It’s summed up in an essay called ‘The Imp of the Perverse,’ to wit: Why are we drawn to that which is bad for us? Now, most people I know can relate to that statement very easily, but they can’t answer it. But they certainly know what he means, and that’s what he’s always writing about. Somebody like me, who’s very familiar with that particular attitude, is fascinated by it.”

Still, Reed chose to rework Poe’s poetry and short stories in his own words. He explains, “It’s a straight rendering only in the sense of goal. But everything’s been rewritten. I sat and read him with a dictionary, because the language can get very difficult.”

In a way, Reed serves as a supporting player on his own album, appearing as lead vocalist on only a dozen tracks. Much of the Sire/Reprise set (which went to retail Jan. 28) consists of spoken-word performances featuring a cast of well-known actors; other tracks find Reed taking a back seat to musicians from a cross-section of musical genres.

Reed, who co-produced The Raven with Hal Willner, says, “We had a wishlist of people. We’re in New York, so we have quite a few stage actors available to us. We pulled on a lot of downtown people for musicians.”

The actors include Willem Dafoe, Elizabeth Ashley, Amanda Plummer, and Steve Buscemi. Guest vocalists include David Bowie (who produced Reed’s 1972 breakthrough Transformer). Reed’s significant other Laurie Anderson, Kate and Anna McGarrigle, and the Blind Boys of Alabama.

Jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman makes a dramatic appearance on the track “Guilty.” Reed says, “I’ve been a fan of Ornette since the ‘80s, when I would trail him around to every club he played in. . . . Willner said, ‘If you could have anybody in the world, who would you want? Well, Ornette!’ So we gave Ornette a call, and he was like two blocks away. He said, ‘I’ll come over.’”

In addition to the full-length two-CD edition of The Raven—what Reed calls “the grand dual version”—Sire/Reprise is issuing a single-disc version that focuses on the collection’s song-based tracks.

Warner Bros. senior VP of marketing Craig Kostich says, “I think [Reed] felt that the one CD would be a way to give people the music portion of it; and for people who wanted the whole conceptual project, we would make it available on the two-CD set.”

Last October, the label serviced the track “The Raven” to public radio alternative, and college stations for Halloween. A five-song promo CD shipped to public radio, heritage rock, and rock radio outlets in January.

Reed, who is managed by Nancy Jeffries at M-Management and booked by Marshal Vlasic at MVO Limited in New York, will tour Europe and the U.S. through the spring and summer.
Shelved For A Year, ‘Nivea’ Nevertheless Nets Top 10 Hit, Grammy Nod

BY CARLA HAY

Sometimes good things come to those who wait. After having her eponymous debut album on Jive Records delayed for more than a year, R&B singer Nivea is starting to see the rewards of having a hit. Sales for the CD have been propelled by her top-10 single “Don’t Mess With My Man.”

Nivea was originally slated for release in 2001, but the album was ultimately released Dec. 10, 2002. The set debuted at No. 1 on the Heatseekers chart in the Dec. 28, 2002, issue. Nivea reached Heatseekers Impact status in the Jan. 18 issue when it rose from No. 107 to No. 94 on The Billboard 200. Thus far, U.S. sales for Nivea total 134,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“It’s all about timing,” Nivea says. “I’m glad we waited to release my album, because we all agreed that [2001] wouldn’t be the right time.”

Jive senior VP of urban promotion and marketing Larry Khan says of the album’s delay, “It was an A&R issue. We wanted to buy more time and explore more opportunities for Nivea.”

Nivea first came to mainstream attention as a featured singer on Mystikal’s “Danger,” which reached No. 1 on the R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart in January 2001. Later that year, Nivea’s first solo single, “Don’t Mess With the Radio,” was released and peaked at No. 85 on that chart.

Nivea adds, “We expected the song to do well, but urban radio thought it was too pop and didn’t really get behind it as much as we wanted.”

“Frankly, it wasn’t a 10 out of 10,” Khan says of the chart performance of “Don’t Mess With the Radio.” So Jive decided to “take a deep breath and regroup on Nivea’s career.”

“We believed in Nivea’s star quality and vocal ability so much that we decided it would be better if we moved forward after we took some time to do more work on the album,” he continues.

After changing some songs on her album, Nivea was reintroduced to the marketplace last year with “Don’t Mess With My Man,” featuring Jagged Edge singers Brian and Brandon Casey. The strategy paid off: The single vaulted into The Billboard Hot 100, eventually peaking at No. 8. On the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart, the song hit No. 1.

“The pairing with the Jagged Edge members gave Nivea a little more marketing credibility,” Khan notes.

Karen Wild, music director of rhythmic top 40 station KUBE Seattle, adds: “You just can’t help but sing ‘Don’t Mess With My Man.’ The first time we played it, it sounded like a hit. The song is told from a female point of view, but even guys like it.”

In addition to radio airplay, Nivea has benefited from TV exposure. Sales jumped shortly after the singer made appearances on the ABC specials Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve and the American Music Awards.

The video for “Don’t Mess With My Man” also received significant support from MTV and BET.

Capping off the song’s success, “Don’t Mess With My Man” has been honored with a Grammy nomination for best R&B performance by an duo or group with vocal.

“I was shocked,” Nivea says of hearing about her Grammy nod. “My manager [Collin Lampkin of Atlanta-based Lampkin International] told me all along that the song would be nominated for a Grammy, but I didn’t believe him until it happened.”

Unlike many female R&B singers, Nivea writes or co-writes almost all of her songs, which are published by Zomba (ASCAP). In the year-long interim between the release of her first and second singles, the artist says she used the time wisely to keep honing her craft.

“I feel more comfortable writing when I have down time. I’ve been writing songs since I was 15. Whatever I write, it has to be something people have to find realistic.”

Nivea believes that the attention that “Don’t Mess With My Man” has received could have been helped by fan interest on the Internet: “I know my original album was on the Internet and even before my album came out, there were people who had online fan sites for me.”

“A lot of people first heard the music on Nivea’s album through bootlegs on the Internet,” observes Robert Heredia, music buyer for Tower Records’ North Clark Street location in Chicago. “The word-of-mouth has been a big help, because it started before the radio airplay.”

Nivea’s next single, “Laundromat,” has been released and is getting airplay, even while “Don’t Mess With My Man” is still in heavy rotation at many radio stations. A music video for “Laundromat” is due in February.
Fronted By Sting's Son, Fiction Plane Continuing Down Road To Success

BY TOM DEMALON

Unlike many acts from the U.K. that arrive on these shores amid a flurry of hype based on a handful of shows or singles in their homeland, the London-based quartet Fiction Plane spent several years honing its skills in clubs prior to signing with MCA Records.

The next phase of the band's career begins March 11 with the release of Everything Will Never Be OK, and it will find the act where it is most comfortable—onstage. "That's what we want to do," says lead singer/guitarist Joe Sumner, the son of Gordon Sumner (aka Sting), "and that's what we are going to do for this year."

It was a show in London—under less than ideal conditions—that led to securing veteran producer David Kahne to helm the sessions for Everything Will Never Be OK. "We had just sacked our drummer, and it was just the three of us," Sumner says. "He came to the gig and, astoundingly, it was one of the best gigs we've played."

With Kahne's help, Fiction Plane has retained the energy of the band's live performances—capturing most songs in one or two takes—and brought in Abe Laboriel Jr. to handle drumming duties. In November 2002, Pete Wilhoit was added to a fold that also includes bassist Dan Brown and guitarist Seton Daunt.

The label will not be approaching radio with an emphasis track until late April, but it will focus on stoking early interest at modern and college rock through the use of samplers.

MCA marketing director Jock Elliot says, "Our idea is to take the slow approach and have the band out there working."

Surely helping out is the band's connection to Sting. Although he and the band have no desire to trade on it, the band's manager, Wayne Isaak of New York-based Isaak Entertainment, realizes that "there's no escaping the mention of it." However, music fans preoccupied with that fact would be doing themselves a disservice.
Taking Journalistic Approach, Weinger Celebrates Universal Artists’ Rich History

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—Veteran catalog developer Harry Weinger jokes that once when his mother was talking to a friend, she didn’t know how to answer the inevitable question of what her Grammy Award-winning son did for a living.

While “putting together reissue packages” would be suggested by Weinger’s job title—VP of A&R for Universal Music Group’s catalog development division’s Universal Music Enterprises (UME)—even that doesn’t fully define Weinger’s role.

Not only does he, indeed, assemble reissues and all that those projects entail (finding and optimizing masters, determining contents and sequence, and securing artwork, photos, and liner notes), but he also does so in a unique manner that is drawn from his former profession.

ALBUMS AS JOURNALISM

“I come from a journalist background, so I approach every project journalistically,” says Weinger, who won the 1991 best album notes Grammy for his James Brown career retrospective boxed set Star Time.

“When I look for a piece of tape I always look for evidence, and uncover characteristics of the tape the way I would interview somebody.”

With Star Time as an example, Weinger says he talked to every musician involved in Brown’s music that he could find.

“I talked to James Brown when he was in prison, and even [Brown’s backup vocal group the Famous Flames’] Bobby Byrd’s sister, who was in a gospel group with him,” Weinger says. “I made sure that we made a record that we all wanted to listen to, that told a story instead of just a collection of digitally restored tracks. But even when I do straight [album] reissues, I always try to tell a story and supply the answer to, ‘What’s the story of that album?’”

Weinger’s journalistic sense goes back to 1982, when he brought his experience as an engineer at New York radio stations WABC and WPJL to a radio editor stint at record business tradespaper Cash Box, where he also profiled such then-new acts as Eurhythmics and Robert Cray.

He later freelanced for Billboard, and became a staff writer for PolyGram Records in 1985, where after a “daily diet of Bon Jovi press conferences”—and working with the likes of Camel and Vanessa Williams—he eventually tired of the gig.

“My escape was doing liner notes for the emerging catalog department under [current Universal senior VP of A&R] Bill Leveron,” Weinger says. “When I left the label in ’89, he asked me to do some projects, and I said I’d clean up the James Brown catalog.”

This led to the much-lauded Star Time, cited by numerous publications as the reissue of the year, and a slew of additional Brown reissues.

Weinger continued writing and also began consulting for other labels, and in 1992, after a restructuring at PolyGram, returned to the label as director of A&R for catalog development. His tenure since has been marked by a joyous plundering of Universal’s Motown and R&B vaults, highlights including comprehensive boxed-set and multi-disc anthologies of the Motown leg- ends, recently developed Millennium packaging featuring rarities, Essential and Ultimate compilation series, and Deluxe Edition sets, including Marvin Gaye’s What’s Going On, for which Weinger received the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award for liner notes.

Other key Weinger efforts have included Motown’s Funk Essentials compilation series featuring such acts as Barry White and the Gap Band, and the creation of the motown.com Web site, for which he moderates the bulletin boards.

He also co-produced last year’s Grammy Award-nominated Standing in the Shadows of Motown soundtrack album, which involved highlighting the different members of Motown’s legendary Funk Brothers house band with what he calls “exotic mixes” made by stripping off the voice tracks and making the songs work as instrumental.

Weinger adds, “I hope this leads doing different kinds of things with the Motown catalog.”

TENDING TO LIONEL RICHIE

Weinger’s current activities include a two-disc Temptations “psychedelic soul” collection and a full Lionel Richie reissue campaign. The “cornerstone” of the forthcoming releases will be a 20th-anniversary remastered and expanded two-disc edition of Richie’s Can’t Slow Down. “That’s really a piece of investigative journalism—to find out about the making of the record and tell the story of Lionel Richie at that moment,” Weinger says, adding that “of all the stars in the UME universe, his catalog hasn’t been tended to.”

Saluting his fellow UME catalog developers on both coasts, Weinger says, “It’s a unique situation in that we have thriving East Coast labels with vaults—Motown, Mercury, Island, Def Jam—and the ability to have an A&R presence here gives me a great opportunity to really get deep into the catalog and make the best kind of product. We can intellectual- ize about an artist and project, but at the end of the day, after all the investigat- ing and compiling, it comes down to: Does it sound good? How does it feel? Is it right for the project?”
TOON IN: For parents looking for positive entertainment options for their children, there are a couple of new characters worth checking out. Lenny & Sid make their debut with the Feb. 25 release of *Lion King* and *Cronk* from Toonacious Family Entertainment. Distributed by Word, the new video series follows the exploits of the two rabbit friends. Lenny, and his friend, a feisty mouse named Sid.

Toonacious is the brainchild of three friends who met in a Burbank, Calif., Sunday-school class. Toonacious executive VP of creative production Tony Bancroft is an award-winning animation director, who created Pumbaa, the warthog in *The Lion King* and *Cronk* in *The Emperor's New Groove*. Previously with Walt Disney Studios for 12 years, Bancroft's credits also include directing *Mulan*. Executive VP of creative development Ben Chambers' résumé includes 16 years experience as a voice-over talent, writer, and broadcaster. President Bo Fager was previously CEO/president of Synctrix and was a co-founder of Cinebase Software.

"It was my vision to start this company because I started feeling like God wanted me to use my talent and abilities for something more," Bancroft says. "I've always wanted to start my own animation company. I created so many characters at Disney, but I never got to see them all the way through the process, and that could be a little frustrating sometimes to just have this one little spot in this big wheel that's turning. I really wanted to have more of an overall influence on the kinds of product I was involved in. I found willing companions in Chambers and Fager. After Bancroft had drawn Lenny & Sid, Chambers began developing their personalities. "I took them home and just kind of looked at them," Chambers says. "Sid had these real big eyes and he looked like a go-getter. He reminded me of when I was a little kid. I thought I could make his personality into Lenny. Lenny is a really shy, kind of bookish daydreamer—like Tony was when he was a kid—and Sid is just an outgoing, active little kid, like I was... It really is for us an opportunity to teach kids to seek someone out who is different and be friends. It helps to build parts of your character."

Chambers says he and Bancroft "know how to make a creative piece come together, but we need to run it as a business and low and behold, God brought Bo into our Sunday school." Fager's entrepreneurial skills completed the team, and the trio launched Toonacious. They hired Rick Bowles, formerly senior director of marketing for the Gospel Music Assn. and Christian Trade Assn. on *Billboard* (July 27, 2002), to be VP of sales and marketing for the new venture. To boost release-week sales of *Lenny & Sid*, Bowles has lined up premieres at churches in the top 25 children's video markets. They also plan an extensive promotional campaign via e-mail, a contest for a family to win a Disney vacation, floor displays, and other point-of-purchase materials at retail.

Plans call for some Toonacious product to be offtarget Dutch to the marketplace, "while other releases will be wholesome without a faith-based message," says "Our focus is to bring family entertainment to the marketplace," Fager says. "We are going to make sure that Toonacious is always going to create something that is safe and acceptable by all parents. This is a company that they can trust."
PANSY DIVISION Guitarist Finding Surprising Success With Dirty Power

BY LARRY FICK

Patrick Goodwin still smiles with equal parts surprise and minor disbelief every time he meets a fan of his band, Dirty Power.

"I honestly thought that people would find us to be completely uncool," he says. "There’s nothing about this band that’s hip or trendy or similar to anything out there right now."

Apparently, that is precisely what is attracting a fast-growing cadre of disciples to the San Francisco-based hard-rock quartet (see story, page 67). In a field of sound-alikes vying for attention with a bottomless bag of gimmicks, Dirty Power delivers a brand of no-frills music that relies exclusively on sharp musicianship and well-drawn songs.

Dirty Power also provides something that few young bands—historical reverence. The band’s eponymous disc, due March 18 on the independent Dead Teenager Records, is rich with loving references to such legendary hard-rockers as Judas Priest and AC/DC.

It is a creative move that could easily register as quaint or creakily retro in the wrong hands. But as processed through singer/guitarist Goodwin and cohorts Jeff Potts (drums), Steve Perrone (guitar), and Nick Ulman (bass), it resonates as a radical and fresh new sound. "This band is born out of a love of old-fashioned hard rock," Goodwin says. "We didn’t set out to sound like anything specific. We just wanted to make music that was fun and hard-edged."

Goodwin formed Dirty Power during a hiatus from Pansy Division, for which he has served as a guitarist. It quickly went from being a "fun side project" to a full-fledged group that is now an underground club favorite on the verge of a mainstream breakthrough.

"Now, people are telling us that we’re refreshing and cool," Goodwin says. "It’s wild, man. It proves that anything is possible when you do what you love."

RE-EMERGING: What do pop stars Mandy Moore and Backstreet Boys, contemporary jazz musicians Bobby Lyle and Jonathan Butler, and comedians Adam Sandler have in common? The answer is Mindi Abair, a saxophonist/keyboard player whose road work with the aforementioned artists paved the way for It Just Happens That Way (GRP/Verve, Feb. 25), her contemporary-jazz debut.

"I’ve made a living touring as a backup musician for other people, and those experiences led to this record," says Abair, who named her release after a segment of a Cannonball Adderley rap found on the late saxophonist’s 1962 Live in New York album. "I’ve done many different styles of music, and they all come into play in these songs. Everything I’ve learned is here, because those lessons take a lifetime of their own to master."

Some of those lessons were passed on to Abair by her father, saxophonist/keyboardist Lance Abair, whose choice of instrument and sonority, blue-eyed soul sound, and affectionately emulates. "I grew up listening to the road watching my dad’s band," she says, "and he would get upset and take these crazy solos and waggle his knees on the high notes. Seeing him perform formed my thoughts about music at a very young age."

Verve CEO/President Ron Goldstein says that despite smooth-jazz radio’s tight playlists, Abair’s potent mix of jazz, pop, soul, and rock makes her a natural for the format. "I can’t recall a new artist breaking out at the format in some time," says Goldstein, who nonetheless feels that radio is eager to embrace "fresh music that fits comfortably into the tight parameters that the format sets for itself. Over the last couple of years, the stations have programmed more R&B oldies, and Mindi sounds good alongside those songs."

While the first single released to radio is the instrumental "Lucy," It Just Happens That Way includes a take on Eagle Eye Cherry’s pop hit "Save Tonight" sung by Abair, which Goldstein hopes will satisfy urban AC’s need to program songs with vocals (Abair co-wrote every other track on the project).

"Our goal is to sell at least 100,000 units based largely on radio promotion," Goldstein says. "Mindi has the full package—talent, intelligence, charm, and good looks—but she is determined to be viewed as a musician, not just a pretty face with a saxophone."

Goldstein expects further promotional opportunities from exposure in press outlets not generally associated with jazz, such as teen-oriented publications and women’s lifestyle magazines.

FIRST FAMILY: Although five members of the Marsalis family— patriarch Ellis, and his sons Wynton, Branford, Delfeayo, and Jason—make up perhaps the most notable family in jazz, the five musicians have never before appeared together on the same recording. That fact is rectified on The Marsalis Family: A Jazz Celebration (Marsalis Music, Feb. 4), a live date recorded in August 2001 on the occasion of Ellis’ retirement from teaching at the University of New Orleans, and in the school’s establishment of a chair in his name.

"Performing with my sons was a special occasion, but it wasn’t something I could enjoy to the fullest, because I was so busy setting myself up for retirement,” Marsalis admits. “I had just returned from performing in Brazil, and there was a lot of stuff going on, but once we got onstage and started to play, it was really great.”

The concert, also recorded for a DVD and a PBS special, includes a guest appearance by former Marsalis family patriarch, Grover Washington Jr., on "St. James Infamy." Ellis (piano), Wynton (trumpet), Branford (saxophone), Delfeayo (trombone), and Jason (drums) will embark on an eight-city tour in late February, with bassist Regina Cleaves in tow. Bassist Roland Guerin appears on the album. AND: This year’s International Jazz Conference, held June 8-11 in Toronto, boosted more than 6,500 attendees hailing from 35 countries. Next year’s conference will be held Jan. 21-24 in New York. The National Alliance of Jazz Artists, Inc. has appointed its first national president, Professor Alan Broadbent, and bassist Abe Laboriel Sr. The recipient of thep所爱之人的宽慰。
That's The Ticket: INTIX Keeps Tabs On Latest Trends

Print-At-Home Sales, Bar-Coding Technology, And Security Concerns Are Top Of Mind At The Denver Confab

BY SUSANNE AULT
DENVER—The latest and greatest in box-office trends were fully explored during the International Ticketing Assn. convention (INTIX) here, attended by industry pros and venue executives ready to catch up on ticketing bar codes and latest technological advancements.

There was plenty to take in: Ticket-service providers, at 60 total, were the largest single group of exhibitors INTIX has attracted in its 24 years of existence.

Along with a crowded exhibition floor at INTIX 2003, which ran Jan. 21-24, the educational sessions were also packed. Roughly 150 people (approximately 25% of estimated 600 people in attendance) attended a session explaining how to start revamping old ticketing systems. One popular example is the switch from a straight mail and will-call ticket distribution system to one that also enables patrons to print their tickets from their home computers.

This was the first time that the INTIX organizes, with membership largely consisting of box-office managers and ticket-related vendors, rolled out the INTIX Intensive, a three-day program where people learned certification of upholding standards of the ticket technology and marketing.

“People are coming to the show to keep current with this industry,” INTIX president Jeffrey Larris says, adding that the exhibit floor is about 20% from INTIX 2002. “All the changes in technology make it such a dynamic field, so you can’t sit out for too long.”

PRINT-AT-HOME REVOLUTION

Many INTIX-goers feel pressured either hop on the technology bandwagon or get left in the dust. The Internet is primarily driving this movement—in just two years’ time, Ticketmaster has reported that more of its tickets are now being bought online than over the phone or at the box office, says VP of operations and support at Ticketmaster, which demonstrated at INTIX 2003 the 11 new products it launched in 2002, including Ticket Forwarding, where consumers can e-mail tickets for others to use, and Team Exchange, where people can resell their sports season tickets online.

Logan believes the company is signing up to 10 to 20 buildings a week to its bar-coding systems, on top of more than 400 venue clients that have already shifted to the system since 1995. And in its research, Ticketmaster has found that 40% of its arena tickets were sold via print-at-home (under the program name TicketFast), when given the choice between that and other options, between September 2001 and December 2002.

Logan adds, “This just says to us even more that we need to get good at working the Internet.”

Faciolin, a Ticketmaster competitor, demonstrated for box-office managers its digital technology, where an ID card, in the form of a consumer’s credit card or license, will act as a ticket. CEO Jane Kleinberger said counterfeiters can’t thwart even more, since there is no ticket to duplicate in the first place. Tickets.com, another exhibiting vendor, bowed its first online ticketing system for small- to medium-sized venues.

THE COST OF CONVENIENCE

A number of INTIX attendees do see advantages in upgrading their ticketing systems. Yet financial concerns are tripping up some of these desires. “Having a champagne on a beer-bottle budget doesn’t make sense for people,” says Jim Hogg, senior analyst for the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and INTIX 2003 conference host.

Total conversion from one ticket-service provider to another can cost as much as $1 million for buildings, which is the current estimate for Costa Mesa, Calif.’s Orange County Performing Arts Center for finding a company to connect all of its departments by one ticketing platform. And Logan says that just simply upgrading from Ticketmaster’s traditional offerings to its bar-coding system can mean shifting out tens of thousands of dollars.

Mark Levine, national director of ticketing for Clear Channel Entertainment’s theatrical division, enrolled in the technology part of the INTIX Intensive to get answers to security questions he has about print-at-home. Buying tickets is very attractive to consumers, with no waiting for mail and no standing in will-call lines. “The problem is the potential that a bar code can be legitimately false but actually be an exact copy that happened to get through the turnstile first. Someone who enters later, holding the original, might then be accused as being the counterfeiter.

“That doesn’t seem kosher,” he says, acknowledging that “a lot of people are curious about the technology, but it might not be as secure as we’d like it to be.”

Beyond the sprouting of fresh ticketing systems, the Internet has also empowered many concert players to sell tickets on their own. Third-party distributors, like Ticketmaster, do provide venues with plenty of convenience with their full-service coverage. But that, in turn, means convenience surcharges for audiences, said Mike Luba, manager for the jam String Cheese Incident, during the session titled “Whose Ticket Is It?”

Now that the Internet allows anyone to set up an e-commerce ticket operation, Luba tries to negotiate deals with venues to sell some of the band’s tickets himself—thereby avoiding some of these third-party ticket-company surcharges. Normally, String Cheese Inc.’s local granted 10% of the house to sell the rest going to the venue’s normal ticket agency with relatively low fees attached.

“We’re at these weird crossroads… And Ticketmaster realizes that the floodgates are open,” Luba said. “And they are fucked when people realize they are an obsolete business. They’re charging $14 (in surcharges) for something that really costs $3 or $4.”

Mean Fiddler Has Stake In Doctor Fest

BY JULIANA KORENTENG
LONDON—The Mean Fiddler Music Group (MFMG), the U.K. music-festival promoter, has kicked-started its ambitions to expand into continental Europe after becoming the majority shareholder in the revived Doctor Music Festival of Europe.

MFMG, already established in Britain—where it owns such top music venues as the Jazz Café and either owns or promotes such festivals as the British Carling Weekend and the Glastonbury Festival—already has links in the U.S. via the Fleadh Festival. But by buying a significant stake in the Doctor Music rock and pop festival from Spanish promoter and founder Neo Sala, MFMG’s London-based CEO Melvin Benn says the group has begun to make major inroads in Europe’s lucrative popular-music festivals.

According to Benn, the newly created joint venture means the festival is able to make a much-heralded return after a three-year absence when Sala was seeking an appropriate partner. “Doctor Music has a great name and is a well- thought-of festival,” Benn tells Billboard. “Neo Sala, whom we knew for almost two years and [who] has had a working relationship with other members [at MFMG] for several years, didn’t want to continue with it on his own, hence the festival’s absence.”

This year’s three-day event takes place July 25-27 on the picturesque Pla de Tapiolcs landscape in the province of Barcelona and 30 minutes from the Costa Brava beaches and caves. Ticket prices, yet to be confirmed at press time, are expected to be about $100 but will be confirmed with the complete lineup in the spring.

R.E.M. has already verified its presence for July 27, which will be the band’s only concert performance in Spain this year. R.E.M.’s participation will continue DMF’s tradition of luring major international acts like David Bowie, Bob Dylan, Beck, Garbage, and Massive Attack.

Launched in 1996 by Sala’s company, Doctor Music, the DMF became an annual event until 1998, when it was postponed for one year until 2000. This was followed by a three-year hiatus that ends this year.

The move adds another 25,000- 30,000 spectators to the 5 million attending MFMG’s U.K. and U.S. events and venues annually. Benn adds that investment in Spain was apt. He observes, “Spain has a sparse festival program at the moment, and it would appear there’s a gap in the popular-music festival market.”

While the U.K., with its population of 56 million, is served by up to 12 major international festivals, Spain’s population of 40 million appears to have only one other festival brand of this caliber—the Festival Internacional de Benicassim, which is located on the East Coast of Spain. Taking place Aug. 8-10 this year, the Benicassim festival has a capacity of about 35,000 and last year counted Radiohead, the Beastie Boys, and the Flaming Lips among its headliners.

Clear Channel Entertainment Europe, which already has a presence in 10 countries, is not yet in Spain. And the most recent local development was early last year, when Spanish promoters Gay & Co. in Barcelona and Madrid-based Sagllocco Group joined together to develop new gigs and festivals. Otherwise, Spain is mostly served by cultural-music festivals mainly aimed at fans of jazz, classical, or world music.

Additionally, Benn says this year’s DMF will meet the required health and hygiene standards. At the last festival in 2000, for example, there were 300 toilets, 150 hot-water shower units, 14 drinking bars, cash machines, and a 24-hour medical service.

He continues: “There’s an abundance of land in the area, so we shall have no difficulty setting up to meet the same standards expected of us in the U.K.”

Founded in 1981, Doctor Music today promotes more than 100 shows a year, which includes an estimated 350,000-plus spectators. At present, it is handling the Spanish stadium stint of Bruce Springsteen’s latest European tour.

Sala says, “This deal will enable us to continue the trend of offering Spanish music fans the opportunity to see more international and renowned artists in the best festival traditions.”
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R&B/HIP-HOP

Rhythm, Rap, and the Blues

by Gail Mitchell

INDUSTRY BRIEFS: Stephen Hill segues from VP to senior VP of music programming at BET. Since making its transition from Washington, D.C., to New York, the network’s music division has launched such shows as 106 & Park and Access Granted...Persaud Brothers Entertainment establishes Wyde Chylde Entertainment, a youth-targeted management company for artists and producers. With offices in New York, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, the new firm is headed by president Mark Persaud and is sister to the youth-aimed advertising/marketing company Persaud Brothers. Contact: 212-333-7195.

Wyde Chylde produces the Smith Brothers and Rackwon recently collaborated on “The Smith Brothers,” a single that will appear on the latter’s album, due this summer.

BERT’S BEAT: Yes, he’s Brandy’s husband and cousin to Rodney Jerkins. But familial ties aside, Robert “Big Bert” Smith is busy forging his own identity as a producer. “I try to approach each project differently,” the L.A.-based Smith says. “But overall I go for a more simplified, less computerized sound. More authentic with warm drums, piano, and bass lines. I like taking it back to the old school with a little more street.”

Five years into his mission, Smith has worked with Toni Braxton, Dave Hollister, and Kelly Rowland; his upcoming Big Bert Entertainment schedule includes projects with Brandy, Usher, Angie Stone, Whitney Houston, and Blaque, who recently signed with Elektra. “I see myself as R&B, hip-hop, rock, country...I don’t put a limit on anything,” says Smith, who originally wanted to join his dad’s trucking company.

A major pet project is his newly launched charity, All God’s Children. Based in Pleasantville, N.J., the organization “gives children a way out” through mentoring, after-school activities, and other programs.

ON THE RECORD: Black Ice, Def Jam’s first spoken-word artist, says his eponymous debut is now set for April. “I have a live band that I team up with,” he says, “and we create this sound that’s not standard hip-hop and not eclectic like the Roots. But it enlightens what I try to do, which is write about my life experiences while making sure people are entertained.”...Artists Jocelyn Enriquez and Rome will release new projects via Bayside Entertainment Distribution. Enriquez’s All My Life is set for Feb. 11; Rome’s Do It arrives March 11.

MEETING OF THE MINDS: Several urban industry-related gatherings dot this year’s calendar. Melding music and movies, the Salute to the Blues event Feb. 7 at New York’s Radio City Music Hall with India.Arie, Natalie Cole, Solomon Burke, Angie Stone, B.B. King, Mos Def, and others in tow. Benefiting the Blues Music Foundation, the concert is being filmed for later distribution with Antoine Fuqua (Training Day) as director and Martin Scorsese (Gangs of New York) as executive producer.

R&B, hip-hop, and gospel take center stage April 3-5 at Houston’s Radisson Hotel Astrodome Convention Center for the fifth annual Gospel Festival. Hosted by Mathew Knowles’ Music World Music, the festival combines music with informational panels in partnership with such sponsors as Pepsi, Radio One, Hip-Hop Broadcasting Corp., Anheuser-Busch, and Continental Airlines, among others. Contact Omni Music Group’s Gary Wade at 713-222-7891.

Soon thereafter is the 25th annual Black College Radio (BCR) convention (April 11-12), presented by the National Assn. of Black College Broadcasters. The host site is Atlanta’s Clark University; sponsors include Universal/Motown and VP Records. In honor of its silver celebration, BCR will inaugurate a wall of fame honoring student air personalities/producers and also award scholarships. For more info, call 212-587-1900 or 404-523-6136.

Dovetailing with BCR’s confab is the national Urban Hip-Hop Music Festival (April 12-13 at Atlanta’s Turner Field). It is being cross-promoted with Russell Simmons’ April 11 Hip-Hop Summit in Atlanta. For details, visit urbanhiphopmusicfest.com.

BY RASHAUN HALL

Philadelphia’s neo-soul exploration of the past few years may have some music fans thinking that every Philadelphia musician is about that particular genre. Not so. The city’s hardcore rap traditions are alive and well with Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam artist Freeway, who makes his debut Feb. 25 with Philadelphia Freeway.

Like many of today’s up-and-coming MCs, Freeway boasts both his reputation with guest appearances. “Rock the Mic,” his collaboration with fellow Philadelphia and Roc-a-Fella recording artist Beanie Sigel, served as his introduction to a national audience. The single peaked at No. 16 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart.

“Did that down in Miami,” Freeway says of the collaboration. “We were just doing songs. Nobody knew that that was going to be like that. When it started to happen, I was like, ‘Yeah, that’s cool.’”

Some fans believe that Freeway is too soft, but I’ve heard the beat, we made a hook to it, I laid my rhymes, and Beans heard it and wanted to get on it, so we made it happen.

LINING UP SUCCESS

Roc-a-Fella product manager Emmanuelle Cuny-Panicker believes such guest appearances added the appeal of Philadelphia Freeway. “That, along with [songs like] ‘1-900 Hustler’ and ‘Burnin’ Up,’ helped build his visibility,” Cuny-Panicker says. “Rock the Mic’ did so much at both radio and video in terms of building his name.”

Freeway followed the success of “Rock the Mic” with his own lead single, “Line Em Up.” Featuring Roc-a-Fella label-mate Cam’ron, the single peaked at No. 86 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart.

“I just heard the beat, and it came to me—‘Line ‘em Up. Shut ‘em down,’” Freeway says. “‘From there, I ran with the concept. Then Young Chris came to the studio and he was feeling it, so I let him get on it.’

Despite the successful collaborations, Freeway is quick to note that there is more to his debut set than special guest pairings. “The majority of my album is me vibing, everybody fell back, and they let me do my thing. The collaborations are when cats were there with me and feeling me.”

FREEWAY HITS THE PROMO ROAD

Roc-a-Fella has arranged for a retail promotion to piggyback 50 Cent’s Get Rich or Die Tryin’. Philadelphia Freeway samples will be bundled with 40,000 copies of the album, due Feb. 11. Roc-a-Fella has also planned a three-week TV advertising campaign at BET and MTV that will launch a week before release, and Freeway is scheduled to make a number of TV appearances, including on Rap City, the week of release.

According to Cuny-Panicker, Freeway, who is managed and booked by Troy Carter of Philadelphia-based Erving Wonder Management, embarked on a pre-promotional tour Jan. 27, where he is meeting with PDs and music directors in major markets across the country.

On the new-media front, there will be an insert with the CD that will enable fans to connect to the Roc-a-Wear Web site to receive a 40% discount off selected State Property merchandise.

With the success of such Roc-a-Fella artists as Beanie Sigel, DJ Clue, Cam’ron, and Jay-Z, Freeway believes he is now in a position to follow in their footsteps.

“It’s been crazy,” he says. “It’s what I’ve always wanted—a chance to get a position and do my thing. I’ve learned a lot, I’ve seen a lot, and I’ve been a lot of places.”

The rapper says those experiences have served as the inspiration for Philadelphia Freeway. “It’s a breath of fresh air,” he says of the set. “It’s something out of the ordinary. It’s not the normal album that you would hear from a cat. It’s the same shit, but I’m bringing it totally different.”

www.americanradiohistory.com
NEW RELEASES: Two established female acts are releasing studio albums with new labels.

Ranchera singer Graciela Beltrán, after a long tenure with EMI Latin that yielded more than a half-dozen albums, is releasing No Me Arrepiento de Nadie in March on Univision Records. Although the album is a return to banda, the style that popularized her after her beginnings in mariachi as a little girl, Beltrán conceives it’s more of a pop-oriented banda than what you would normally hear.

“We’ve preserved the essence of the banda sinfoníe, but we play with new instruments,” Beltrán says. “Some tracks have drums, others have electric guitar.” Accordions were used on the tracks “Qué Pesado” (Not a Shame) and “Qué Difícil Es” (How Hard Is It) which were recorded in various versions to gel into different radio formats.

Beltrán says she’s not worried that purists will criticize the mix. “Many bands, even Cuisillos, are doing this. Anything is possible if it’s banda or grupo or pop. But I think people are looking for something new, as long as you don’t lose the essence of Mexican music.”

Puerto Rican pop singer Millie, who was also with EMI, has been picked up by BMG U.S. Latin for her first studio album in three years. The eponymous disc, due Tuesday (4), was produced by Rafael Pérez Botija, who wrote all 10 tracks based on what Millie wanted to say. “We started talking about having a woman,” Millie says, who was modern, who could fall in love, but who didn’t necessarily need a man to be happy.

More challenging than the album’s message, though, is Millie’s task to reclaim a fan base that hasn’t seen her in a while, although she’s continued to tour constantly in Puerto Rico. “We’re considering a concert tour,” she says, “but the main thing is to promote the album to make up for the time I wasn’t around.”

Millie is featured in her album photos with a guitar, which she plays (although not on the album), her real instrumental strength is the flute, which she’s been playing since she was 11. “It’s become a very personal instrument that few people hear me play,” she says. “I take it out at family reunions.”

GRAMMY NEWS: As was announced last week (Billboard Bulletin, Jan. 24), CBS Television will again carry the Latin Grammy Awards domestically, and CBS Broadcast International will distribute them internationally for 2003.

While the show has originated from Los Angeles since its inception three years ago, it seems very likely that this time around it will go elsewhere, with New York, Miami, and San Juan as the most viable candidates. The urge to travel has been explored before, but this time it’s almost certain the show will move, according to board members of the Latin Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (LARAS).

What else can be expected to change? In an interview last year with Billboard, LARAS board of trustees president Manolo Díaz said lack of promotion and marketing adversely affected the Latin Grammys’ lower-than-expected ratings. This time, “the show will air with all the possible weight and support from CBS,” says Gabriel Abaroa, vice chairman of the LARAS board.

Abaroa is also currently in charge of LARAS’ executive office—following Enrique Fernández’s departure as VP early this year—and is widely expected to take over the leadership of the office later this year.

More importantly, Abaroa says, “this is the first Grammys that will be handled entirely by LARAS (as opposed to the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences) through its new board of directors. We’ll be working among a different Latinos, with support from the American academy.”

It’s no secret that the Latin Grammys tread a fine line, balancing what’s representative of Latin music with what will garner ratings. But this won’t stop the show: “We were the first to critically analyze things,” Abaroa says. “But we’re still committed. And for the Latin Academy, this is the assurance that Latin music continues to boom and continues to be present and we have a very, very big window of opportunity to show and express it. And ratings are an important factor, but not the only one.”

BY LEILA COBO

The latest Alexandre Pires album to be released in the Brazilian market features the singer in a talkative mood, chatting openly about his childhood, his mother, and the songs he had not been able to record previously but that are here for the first time, mistakes and all.

It doesn’t sound like your typical studio album, and it isn’t. Pires is one of the acts featured on the Minha Vida, Minha Musica (My Life, My Music) album series. Each album features an up-close-and-personal look at an individual artist. The series is produced by Express Expressions and is a joint venture between ad agency Ogilvy & Mather and Sergio Lopes, the former VP of marketing for Sony Music International Latin America.

The International Federation of Phonographic Industry’s Latin American office has approached Express Editions—created as an alternative marketing company for arts, entertainment, music, and sports—to come up with an innovative, self-sufficient project that would raise funds for the labels and support anti-piracy efforts. The labels were so taken with the idea that it became a purely commercial venture.

“The idea was to generate a creative solution,” Lopes says, “although it was hard to create a project that wouldn’t compete with what the labels were already doing.”

So, rather than being a purely musical CD, Minha Vida presents an intimate audio portrait of each artist talking about life and music in a highly personal setting. The format is a throwback to the days of radio drama, with actors sometimes incorporated as narrators.

Minha Vida recalls emotional moments in the life of an artist,” Lopes explains. “For example, we have artists who recorded songs that for one reason or another they decided to do to change their image. The artists and the label said, ‘This was never released, but it’s beautiful,’ and he plays it, that song is important in that context.”

For example, during an interview with Brazilian duo Bruno & Marrone, which performs sertanejo music (the rough equivalent of country), Bruno reveals that he has always wanted to record a Luís Miguel bolero, but he has never had the opportunity. So he performs one on the album.

The Minha Vida concept was first tried out last summer in Brazil, a major market that lends itself to testing new product. As well as albums featuring Pires and Bruno & Marrone, the series includes an album by Chitaizinho & Xororó.

Logistically, the artists’ labels—BMI for Pires, Abril Music for Bruno & Marrone, and Universal for Chitaizinho & Xororó—are in charge of manufacturing and distributing their respective albums. Express Editions is in charge of publicizing and marketing the product and does so largely through an agreement with TV networks such as pay per view, which runs a TV campaign advertising the albums with the agreement that if sales are generated, it gets paid.

The album production costs, Lopes says, are minimal, which keeps the price of the CDs low, too. Labels pay him no more than $10,000 to produce each album, and if he goes over budget, he foots the bill. Lopes says the labels pay him and SBT a percentage of the sales, if there are any.

Though he likes the idea of Minha Vida being available in video format, Lopes says, “We wanted to revitalize radio format, because videos leave very little to the imagination. And we didn’t want a film production. People’s emotions change in front of the camera. Our great contribution is offering a completely new and integrated product, that doesn’t cost the label anything.”

According to Lopes, sales of Minha Vida in Brazil have been strong. All three albums have attained at least forty-five percent of their release last summer. Pires’ album has sold 200,000 units, his label says.

March will see the release of the first album in the series in Mexico, called Mi Vida, Mi Música and featuring Limite singer Alicia Villarreal. The album will be released by Universal, and Express Editions has already enlisted the Televisa network as its media partner, which takes the place of SBT in Brazil.

Additionally, Lopes has an agreement in place in Argentina with media group Clarín, and conversations are under way to finalize a deal with a TV network in the U.S. Lopes says, “Our objective is to sell one million albums in the next 18 months.”

BY LEILA COBO

Sony Discos Signs Distribution Deal With Indi Z

Following a newly inked licensing deal with California-based indie Titán Records, Sony Discos has signed a distribution deal with another indie, Los Angeles-based Z Records, like Titán, Z specializes in regional Mexican product.

Although the deal is ostensibly a distribution agreement for the U.S. and Puerto Rico, Sony will also support the development of new acts signed to Z.

Sony’s alliance with Z is unusual, because Z is a subsidiary of Frainj One-Stop, which has distributed Z’s product—particularly that of Jesse Morales, a.k.a. El Original de la Sierra—with great success.

Z Records CEO George Prainj says, “My distribution sells mainly to mom-and-pop stores and people who sell at swap meets, and there are other types of retailers, like Wal-Mart, Target, and Virgin, where you get in to need you are associated with a major distributor. I know I’m missing out on sales by not having my products out there.” Prainj adds that he did not want other clients of Prainj One-Stop to think that Z Records artists were getting preferential treatment.

According to Prainj, the Sony distribution deal will cover his current acts, as well as any artists signed from this point on. It does not include three acts currently under license with Univision Records, among them Jessie Morales. His catalog is also with Univision, and he still owes albums to that label.

Prajín stresses that Morales is in good hands with Univision, which has actively promoted him, but he also wanted to focus on developing brand-new acts and expanding into other types of product, such as DVDs and karaoke DVDs.

The plans to launch five new acts this year are too many, he says, “I need to be sure Norteña, a band already popular in the Los Angeles area, followed by Alex Arellano, whose style is similar to that of Morales.

In a statement, Sony Discs chairman Oscar Llord said, “This partnership brings another important source of quality products, as well as the opportunity for Sony’s exclusive artists to tap George’s unparalleled talents as a producer.”
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**Latin Pop Albums**

**Tropical/Salsa Albums**

**Regional Mexican Albums**

**Billboard** February 8, 2003
Ishioka’s ‘King’ Reigns Over U.S., Japanese Dance Landscape

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

NEW YORK—On the dance/electronic landscape, it is not uncommon for independent labels to be here one day and gone the next. This is more true today, given the current state of the economy and the music industry. It is in this environment, though, that New York-based King Street Sounds, which specializes in soulful house music, ably thrives.

In fact, King Street celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. For label founder and president Hisa Ishioka, who moved from Japan to New York in 1985, such milestones are not taken lightly—nor is its namesake.

According to Ishioka, he owes his career in music to late DJ Larry Levan and the Paradise Garage, the now-defunct club located on King Street in New York’s West Village where Levan ruled the turntables. “Originally, I moved to New York to study the interiors of clubs and restaurants,” says Ishioka, who, at the time, was employed by a Japanese interior-design firm. “I was going to clubs like the Saint and St James. It wasn’t until a friend took me to the Garage that my views toward club music changed.

“From that day forward, I went to the Garage every weekend, until it closed in 1987,” he continues. “That’s where I received my musical education.” It’s also where the initial seeds of Ishioka’s career change were planted. “The Garage was my introduction to the music industry.”

By the late 80s, Ishioka was sending DJs like Levan, Frankie Knuckles, and David Morales on club tours of Japan. Since then, Ishioka’s Hi’s Production USA company has brought many other DJs, including Joe Claussell, François K., and Blaze, to Japan.

In 1990, Ishioka began compiling/coordinates dance compilations for such Japanese labels as Toshiya-EMI. “I was basically doing A&R for these labels in a work-for-hire capacity,” he notes. “I was finding all this new music for the various compilations.”

The producers of one such track, “Beat Freak” by Loop Trick, wanted a U.S. release. “At that time, I had no desire to open a label,” Ishioka explains. “I didn’t have enough money for sure, but I put the track out anyway, with remixes by Paul Joe and Blaze.”

King Street was born.

In the years since, King Street (and its 9-year-old imprint, Nine Grooves) has experienced much success on the Billboard Hot Dance Music/Club Play chart, with nearly 30 chart entries—more than half of which have gone top 10—including three No. 1s (Kimura Lovelace’s “Circles,” Urban Soul’s “Show Me,” and Pump Fictions’ “That Sound”).

“I’m very passionate about the music I release,” notes Ishioka, who promises new albums from Ananda Project, Kerri Chandler, Stephanie Cooke, and Blaze by year’s end. “Whether it’s a vocal recording or an instrumental track, I’m always looking for an emotion, a soul sensibility. It’s that soulful element that can be heard on all our releases.”

Such success has helped to explain why the label’s catalog features a who’s who of top producers, DJs, and artists, including Ultra Naté, Evelyn “Champagne” King, Blaze, Morales, Chris Lake (Ananda Project), Chandler, Cevin Fisher, Mondo Grosso, Danny Krivit, Peter Rauhofer, and Tony Humphries.

“King Street’s catalog is about quality,” says Judy Russell, who handles all sales at independent distributor Downtown 161 in New York. “Which is why we do very well with their product—that is, when it’s available and we can get it back in stock.

In addition to such recently released singles as GTS Featuring Karyn White’s “Super Woman” and Stephanie Cooke’s “Rain (Let It All Fall Down),” as well as full-lengths like Ananda Project and Russells, says she does very well with King Street’s many compilation series, especially Abstract Afro Lounge, Abstract Latin Lounge, and Michael Shraibman’s Asphodel Series, which helps to helm the series’ upcoming special 10th-anniversary volume.

Ishioka acknowledges that several tracks released on King Street (for Nine Grooves, for example, and sold in hi-fi Production USA—which, in addition to coordinating tours for U.S. DJs in Japan, is a production company that brings together Japanese and American artists and producers for musical collaborations.

“We coordinate recordings, remixes, and productions for Japanese acts wishing to work in the U.S.,” Ishioka explains. “Many Japanese producers and artists have a strong desire to go outside Japan to record with other artists and musicians. I bring creative people together. There’s a great synergy between King Street and Hi’s Production.”

In this way, Ishioka has helped nurture the careers of many Japanese artists and producers, including Towa Tei, Mondo Grosso, Monday Michiru, and GTS. “Ultimately, it’s about following my passion, about keeping the New York vibe alive.”

King Street will celebrate its 10th birthday with a party March 19 at the Raleigh Hotel in Miami, which coincides with the Winter Music Conference.

LIKE GOLD: It’s been nearly two years since Norwegian duo Kings of Convenience (KoC) released their gorgeous sophomore set, Quiet Is the New Loud. Since, one-half of the musical partnership, Erlend Øye, has worked on a couple of side projects. He contributed vocals to Röyksopp’s “Poor Lono” and “Remind Me” and recorded the Lee Hazlewood nugget “No Train to Stockholm” for the tribute album Total Loe!

Well, we’ve got great news for those who can’t get enough of Øye’s sweetly melancholical vocals. On Feb. 11 (one day earlier overseas), Source 360/Artwork releases Øye’s solo debut, the beautifully understated Unrest. A cross between the KoC remix project Venet, his work with Röyksopp, and Pet Shop Boys, Unrest finds Øye fully embracing his fondness for all things electronic, encompassing nu-electro, house, and leftfield.

“Working with Röyksopp, I realized that my voice works in the electronic genre,” Øye says. “And while I would’ve loved to make an entire album with them, they were busy. So, I found others to work with.”

Recorded in 10 cities during 12 months, Unrest features several producers, including Schneider TM (‘Like Gold’), Prefuse 73 (‘Every Party Has a Winner and a Loser’), Kompis (‘A Sudden Rush’), and Metro Area’s Morgan Geist (‘Ghost Trains’).

“I had no technical know-how when I embarked on this journey,” Øye recalls. “Throughout, I kept asking myself, ‘How can I make an electronic album?’ Now, I see this album as a musical awakening—a way for me to expand my musical horizons.”

As the future of KoC, Øye says he and Kings partner Eirik Glambek Bøe will “be releasing records until we’re 50. We’ll begin making our next record in the summer.”

NEWSY NEIGHBORS: Cory Robbins, president of Robbins Entertainment, has promoted three executives from within the label. Paul Mislov has been named senior VP of finance. Lisa Levy is now VP of sales and production, and John Parker’s new title is VP of A&R/dance promotion. They were, respectively, VP of finance, senior director of sales and production, and A&R promotions manager.

Geoffrey “DJ Geoff” Colon, formerly of MTA/2, is now handling promotion, marketing, and publicity for San Francisco-based UBL Music Group. Based in New York, Colon has worked on numerous DJ-created CDs for the label and will continue to do so. Upcoming compilations include Dance Essentials Vol. 3. Colon may be reached at geoffe@ublmusic.com.

Remix/producer Jason Novellino of N*E*R*D’s “Rock Star” is used in the commercial and trailer for the Touchstone film Shanghai Knights, which stars Jackie Chan and opens nationwide Friday (7). Nevins’ “Rock Star” remix was also featured in Universal Pictures’ Blue Crush and on its accompanying soundtrack.

Grammy Award-winning remixer Hex Hector recently spent time in the studio with Warlock Records VP Dan Lenchak and Anastasia. The trio—with Hector in the producer’s seat—completed a cover of Dan Hartman’s disco classic “Relight My Fire.” The track finds Anastasia reprising Leolatta Holloway’s jaw-dropping, dervish performance from the original. Expect it to appear on Martin’s forthcoming set for Columbia.

THE AWARD GOES TO: The 2003 nominations for the second annual DanceStar USA awards have been announced. Awards will be presented in 25 categories, including best international act and record of the year. For the complete list, go to billboard.com/awards.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS: Tim O’Loughlin, 27, the son of Next Plateau Entertainment founder Eddie O’Loughlin, died after a prolonged illness Jan. 11 in New York. He is survived by his father and mother, Kathy O’Loughlin, and a large extended family. Donations may be made in his name to the United Nations Asset/USA, 801 Second Ave., New York, 10017.

It will be a bittersweet year for O’Loughlin’s label, Fool’s Gold, and his wife, producer/engineer Gary Clugston, who died Jan. 23 in an apparent murder-suicide at their Chestnut Ridge, N.Y., home (see Obituaries, page 29).
### FEBRUARY 8, 2003

#### Hot Dance Music

**Club Play**

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**Maxi-Singles Sales**

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**Top Electronic Albums**

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**Billboard February 8, 2003**

- **Hot Dance Breakouts**
- **Club Play**
- **Maxi-Singles Sales**
- **Top Electronic Albums**

**Additional Notes:**
- **FEBRUARY 8, 2003**
- **www.billboard.com**
- **Billboard February 8, 2003**

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ON THE ROW: As expected, Curb Records’ new Nashville imprint will be called Asylum Records (Billboard, Jan. 18). LeAnn Rimes will shift from Curb to Asylum, which will release her next single, “Suddenly,” exclusively to country radio March 10. A previous WEA imprint, also called Asylum Records, operated in Nashville for several years before being consolidated into Warner Bros. in 2001.

Katherine Woods has been promoted from VP to senior VP of legal and business affairs at RCA Label Group (RLG) in Nashville. Woods will continue to serve as legal counsel for RLG and its associated labels. Prior to joining RLG in 1996, Woods was in private practice in the Nashville entertainment industry.

Tracy McGlocklin has formed Mission Management and will serve as the Music Row-based company’s president. Mission will co-manage Marty Stuart and Little Big Town in partnership with veteran manager Rendy Lovelace. McGlocklin previously spent 13 years with Sony Music Nashville, most recently as director of product management.

As first reported here last fall, Sony Music Nashville has signed Stuart to its artist roster (Billboard, Oct. 19, 2002). Stuart and his band, the Fabulous Superlatives, are at work on a new project due later this year. Meanwhile at Sony, Billy Ray Cyrus and Al Gore’s Monument Records artist roster.

British pop icon Cliff Richard recently hosted a songwriters camp in Nashville. The four-day event had 21 Nashville writers collaborating with Richard for his upcoming U.S. release. Participants included Gary Burr and Marcus Hummon.

ARTIST NEWS: Two country artists, Keith Urban and Tricky Pony’s Heidi Newfield, recently encountered a bit of vocal trouble. Newfield was due to have vocal cord surgery in January at the Vanderbilt Voice Clinic in Nashville. The group has rescheduled several performance dates during her recovery.

Urban, meanwhile, was put on week of vocal rest by his doctor as a result of what his publicist terms a “sudden vocal cord ailment.” He canceled several TV appearances, along with several concert dates.

MONROE MEMORIALIZED: Koch/Audium Records will release a Bill Monroe tribute album Feb. 11. The two-CD set, titled Bill Monroe: The Legend Lives On, features Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, the Whites, Ralph Stanley, Charlie Daniels, Conway Smith, and Del McCoury. In September, Koch/Audium will release a DVD and VHS, also titled Bill Monroe: The Legend Lives On, and featuring the artists on the CD. Prior to its national release, the DVD/VHS will be used as a premium offer in the March PBS subscriber drive by public television stations throughout the U.S.

ONE BAND SHOW: Tim McGraw will embark on an arena tour this spring. The tour, dubbed Tim McGraw & the Dancehall Doctors’ One Band Show, launches March 7 in Birmingham, Ala., and wraps May 30 in Syracuse, N.Y.

In a prepared statement, McGraw said, “This is the most ambitious tour we’ve ever set out to do. I want this tour to look and feel different than anything we’ve done in the past. We want the time and space to go deeper musically, to play album cuts and all kinds of songs that we jam on in rehearsal, but never get to play in concert.”

The tour, like McGraw’s previous outings, will be sponsored by Bud Light.

PASSAGES: Country DJ Hall of Famer Mike Oatman died Jan. 27 at a Houston hospital after a long battle with cancer. Along with partner Mike Lynch, Oatman co-founded the Great Empire Broadcasting chain best-known for its string of successful country stations. Oatman received the Country Radio Broadcasters (CRB) President’s Award in 1999, seven years after being inducted into its Hall of Fame. He served as president of CRB from 1985-1988. Oatman, who also served as the longtime morning host on Great Empire’s KFWD Wichita, Kan., in addition to running the broadcast chain, was known on the air as ‘Ol Mike. He was 63.

BY PHYLLIS STARK

NASHVILLE — After choosing to delay the release of his latest album while the dust settled from a regime change at his longtime label, MCA Nashville, Vince Gill is finally ready to re-enter the marketplace Feb. 11 with his self-produced Next Big Thing.

He’ll be hitting the road to support it. But rather than playing at the larger venues that housed his last few outings, Gill has opted to perform at a series of small clubs on his Back 2 Basics tour.

The 16-city intimate-venue trek not only will bring Gill close to his hardcore fans but will also give the artist a chance to reconnect with players in radio and retail in an “up-close-and-personal” situation, according to Terry Elam, who oversees Gill’s touring efforts for the management team at Fitzgerald-Hartley.

“For about 20 minutes after each show he’ll meet with radio, retail, and media people,” says Elam, who adds that in-store and radio station appearances are part of the plan. “Basically, from 2 p.m. until midnight [in each market] Vince will have a chance to reach the FIDs, GNS, and jocks, and talk to the retail people, as well as his fans.”

The largest room on the route is the 2,500-capacity Massey Hall in Toronto; the smallest is the 650-seat Pasteur Theater in Minneapolis. Despite the small size of the venues, Gill is not skipping on the presentation during the six-week run. “We’re carrying the whole show, which includes an off-line, one-song show called ’Vince’s World’,” Elam says. “A lot of people out there don’t know what a great player he is and just know him as a vocalist. This will give them a chance to see him as a singer, songwriter, and musician.”

Gill says his vision for the club dates is to do “a live listening party for this record. I thought it would be a fun idea.”

“I’ve been touring and playing and doing every conceivable kind of gig I think a human being can do in a career for close to 30 years now,” Gill says. “I kind of felt like, ‘Let’s try something, different.’ I said, ‘Let’s go find the coolest clubs in all these cities.’” Gill says such clubs are the places where he feels “the most comfortable.”

In the summer, Gill says he plans to hit the road again for some acoustic shows “with just me and my guitar.” Venues for that part of the tour will include West Coast venues and small, outdoor pavilions. For those shows, Gill says, he won’t have a set list and will just play songs that fans request. Gill is booked by Rick Ship on at the William Morris Agency.

MCA originally planned to release Gill’s album last fall, but the retirement of chairman Bruce Hinton and the installation of Mercury’s Luke Lewis as his replacement delayed the project. While Next Big Thing is Gill’s 11th album for the label, Lewis says, “I seem to have hooked up with him at a time when he’s reinvigorated.”

While Gill says he misses the old team at MCA and wishes it was still intact, he’s also “excited about the strategy over there and the new blood and working with people I’ve never worked with.”

Lewis says the Back 2 Basics tour will be a big part of the marketing plan for the album. And while it wasn’t meant to be a marketing move, Lewis says, “I think it’s going to turn out to be a great one for us. I have a feeling it’s going to get him fired up.”

AUXILIARY SINGING FOR GILL

While Gill is best-known for his big hit ballads, MCA chose a tempo song, the title cut, as the leadoff single from Next Big Thing. Lewis says, “I’ve been really encouraged by radio’s response to it. It’s a testimony to the respect everybody has for Vince. Gill has notched 26 top 10 hits on the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart, including five No. 1s.

Mark Grantin, PD at WWQM Madison, Wis., says, “After hearing the rough cut of this single, I wanted to put it on the air right away. It was that impressive and perfect for our audience. As soon as we had the final mix in our hands, we went on the air right away, and it’s researched exactly how we thought it would: very strong with our target, very little burn, great passion scores. It’s a hit.”

“Vince is an instantly recognizable voice and an artist that I genuinely think our audience is pulling for to succeed,” Grantin adds. “They’re wanting his current music to be great, and I think he’s going to deliver with this project.”

After years of working with producer Tony Brown, Gill decided to produce this album on his own, something he says he did with Brown’s support and encouragement. After Brown left MCA to launch Universal South Records, Gill felt it was a good time to try something new.

“I didn’t want politics and busi- ness to dictate where I would wind up or who I would work with,” Gill says of his decision to self-produce with the help of engineer Justin Niebank. In setting out to record the album, Gill says he was in “a great creative place.”

During the process, he sought feedback from an encouraging Mark Wright, MCA’s A&R chief, and from Brown. When he played the finished project for Brown, Gill says, “It was kind of bittersweet, and we both were getting choked up. If it was done, he said, ‘This is one of the best-sounding records you’ve ever made. These are great songs. You can be proud of it, you did a great job.’ Just having that validation meant the world.”

CELEBRITY GUESTS

Gill, who previously produced an album and mooned as “That Song” Isaacas, thinks he may have more such work in his future, noting, “Probably it will be a natural evolution for me to wind up producing.”

His vocal guests for this new album include Emmylou Harris, Lee Ann Womack, Leslie Satcher, Michael McDonal, wife Amy Grant, and daughter Jenny Gill. His studio band include Al Anderson and Mac McNally.

In addition to producing, Gill wrote or co-wrote every track on the album. He co-authored one of his best tracks, the beautiful ballad “Some- thing,” with Richard Marx.

The single, “Next Big Thing,” is a tongue-in-cheek look at the artist turnover in the country-music business. But Gill tackles the same subject again in the more serious album “Young Man’s Town.” That song reflects Gill’s own practical take on the music business. He sings, “When the lyrics and music were done you were wrong/Just teach ’em what you know, and pass it on down.”

“I think people’s first impression when they hear [“Young Man’s Town”] is ‘Well, that’s a bitter,’ and it couldn’t be further from the truth,” says Gill, who has nothing to be bitter about. “The real crux to that song is [that] it’s kind of like [parent] training. You know, you kids are going to screw things up, but you have to let them.”

Additional reporting provided by Ray Waddell in Nashville.
### Albums

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### Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan
JOHNNY MARR + THE HEALERS
Bestselling
PRODUCER: Johnny Marr
MUSIC/ArtistDirect 80119-01074
RELEASE DATE: Feb. 4
Since the Smiths split in 1987, songwriting and guitar virtuoso Johnny Marr has logged time in significant partnerships with The Meat Puppets, The The and New Order’s Bernard Sumner. The latter collaboration introduced Electronic to the world. Marr has also played with the Pretenders, Talking Heads, and Beck—as well as produced the debut of British band Harrow and written songs for Liam Gallagher and Beth Gibbons. But this electronic-tinged (and strong debut as frontman with the Healers, featuring drummer Zak Starkey (current Who drummer and the son of Ringo Starr) and bassist Alona Bevan. While his influential guitar abilities come as no surprise, Marr’s lovely voice—once relegated to the back of Morrissey’s crooning—does. A real revelation, indeed.

R&B/HIP-HOP

SOLANGE
Solo Star
PRODUCERS: Various
Music World/Music/Columbia 9699-86354
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 21
Walking in an older sibling’s footsteps can be challenging—especially if said sibling is Beyonce Knowles of Destiny’s Child. But that’s not stopping 16-year-old Solange from wanting to claim her place in the pop scene. On this-by-the-numbers debut, the teen draws from a hitmaker’s-often-moment that includes Timbaland, the Neptunes, the Underdogs, Rockville, and big sis, not to mention guest turns by Lil’ Romeo, N.O.R.E., B2K, and St. Lunatics’ Murphy Lee. And there lies the problem. Too many sculptors’ hands are trying to mold a new solo star whose individual musical identity gets lost in the process. The young artist fares best on such tracks as the up-tempo “So Be It” and ballad “Sky Away,” both of which she co-wrote and co-produced. Solo Star isn’t a bad first effort. But next time around, it will be nice to hear the real Solange.

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

FLUNK
For Sleepyheads Only
PRODUCER: Ulf Nygaard
Guidance Recordings 34651-06092
RELEASE DATE: Feb. 6
Flunk hails from the same land as Röyksopp and Kings of Convenience: Norway. And in a nod to both acts, this quartet seamlessly and beautifully puts the electronic into folk music and vice versa. Very late-night, bordering on a jam-like menace. For Steelyheads Only grooves along at a relaxed pace, which makes it perfect for a Sunday afternoon spent on the post-club social circuit. Good-out bliss. Anji’s sublime vocals on the act’s acoustic cover of New Order’s “Blue Monday” is worth the price of admission alone. But don’t overlook “Honey’s In Love,” which recalls the stylings of one of the original neo-soul sirens, berserk/uber. On a track like “Magic Potion,” Flunk veers into Massive Attack territory. Jamaica by way of Bristol.—MP

COUNTRY

STEVE WARNER
Steal Another Day
PRODUCER: Steve Warner
Selective/Teena 82641
RELEASE DATE: Feb. 4
Guitar pick, songwriter, and all-around good guy Steve Warner debuts on his own Selective/Teena label here, and it’s a home-grown project that blends recuits of previous hits with new material. Produced by Warner in his home studio. So far, so good. Not surprisingly, sincere (if sometimes sappy) balladry, and plenty of heart. While it may be hard for some to fault him for it, Warner wears that heart so openly on his sleeve it makes a big target on predictable weepies like “Snowfall on the Sand,” “The Christmas Prayer,” and “I Really Don’t Have Anything”—so much so that, while pretty, such tracks are somewhat snooze-inducing. Far, far better are the folking “Carmelita” (with Lee Roy Parnell), the heartfelt version of the title cut, and the crisp observation of “Welcome to This World.” Likewise, Warner’s “open-book” emotional stance works to perfection on the exquisitely delivered “There Will Come A Day (Holly’s Song) and the impressively styled “Love Me In My Heart Forever (For Chet),” and The Latin passion of “Kiss Me Anyway” is a winning Wariner. It's undeniably a major talent, and at a generous 16 cuts, his fans should be well-satisfied.—RW

(Continued on next page)
Latin

José José El Príncipe Con Triunfo 1 PRODUCERS: Ray Barretta, Chris Dattila BMG U.S. Latin 74321 98530 RELEASE DATE: Feb. 4 José José (take El Príncipe), gifted with one of the most beautiful voices in Latin balladry, continues to be remarkably active in the studio despite the fact that his vocal prowess has declined noticeably in recent years. Here, that problem is solved with a conceptual album and technology. El Príncipe Con Triunfo features original songs as well as rerecordings of his hits. The album kicks off with “Yo Amo a la Juventud,” a beautiful, heart-wrenching ballad that has been a favorite of José’s for years. The album’s title track, “El Príncipe Con Triunfo,” is a upbeat, anthemic number that showcases José’s incredible vocal range and emotional depth. The album features a mix of old favorites and new material, all expertly produced by Ray Barretta and Chris Dattila. The result is a stunning album that is sure to please fans of José’s and Latin music in general.

Blues

Smoke Joe Kubek & Benoîs King Roadhouse Research PRODUCER: Smoke Joe Kubek Blind Pig 58080 RELEASE DATE: Feb. 4 Roadhouse Research is Kubek and King’s debut album cut their previous eight albums with Rounder’s Bullseye imprint. Kubek is an old-school Texas blues guitarist, strongly influenced by Freddie King. King, who produced the album, displayed adroit rhythm and guitar vocals. Roadhouse Research is typical Kubek/King: Hard-hitting original tunes in a quartet of contributions, plus one mixed rock and one blues-rock, aimed at adult air.

New Age

Amethystum Aphellon PRODUCERS: Bystine Ramford Neurologic/Capitol 7243 5 80835 RELEASE DATE: Jan. 28 Aphellon is the new project of the earth where the earth is furthest from the sun, and Amethys-

tum creates a subtly twilit world of pastoral fantasy. For his second out as Amethys-
tum, Norwegian keyboardist

Jazz

Christian Howes\n\nJazz On Sale PRODUCERS: Christian Howes, Federico Muro Kheano 200302 RELEASE DATE: Jan. 21 On the album Kheano, jazz violinist Christian Howes teams with bassist Pablo Mártil and pianist Federico Lechner to track a rather lyrically tuned album. Kheano was described to him by Light, “Evensong,” and “Ad Astra.” Listening to this album might expect Amethys-
tum’s themes to be heroic and sweeping—

35

In Concert

With Peake shredding like a man possessed and Kroeger working the club as if it were stadium cup, Nickleback’s performance and vigor were grade-A professional. The crowd loved the fact that the album had its time of its life, but oddly, for the most part, the back of the room was copying the same groove as the people standing still. Where else would a monster No. 1 hit that just snagged a Grammy Award nom for record of the year be read as shimmering in the sound of a roof? Supporting Nickleback was Sacramento, Calif.-based quartet Oeleander, which also performed neosoul material from its debut album Jopride. Despite a slightly muddled sound that did not do its two-guitar attack justice, the group held its own. Oeleander made signature tunes “Why I’m Here” and “Are You There?” transcend themselves, turning the alterna-
tive rock pieces into metal-tinged jam sessions honed from spending years on the road. One wonders how far could these go if these performances were released as radio singles. —C.L.

Division of Laura Lee/ Burning Bridges Jan 22 Horseshoe Tavern, Toronto Having successfully resisted its initial temptation to be the next big thing, the band still seemed like an afterthought once Burning Bridges singer Dimitrio Coats took the stage. High-kicking, head-banging, and executing one cue after the other, Chad Kroeger seemed the most energized of the bunch, more given to grinning and nodding as his younger sibling moved about the stage. Allowing his duties as frontman and keeping up a steady chatter between songs, inquiring if the crowd had enough beer and appealing to those who had toiled out in the bitter weather, he declared, “We didn’t bring that cold wind with us from Vancouver.” Producing a digital video camera, Kroeger cleverly whipped the audience into a screaming throng through the Henshaw-esque “Where Do I Hide” by instructing it to shout “New York fucking rocks!” as he panned the crowd with the camera to gather footage for an upcoming DVD. “The audience gave me a taste of the materia-

of the region’s most distinguished composers: “... which was the son of...” by Arvo Part, “Lavonian Bourdon” by Veljo Tormis, and the deconstructed “Donna Nonostim” by Peter Vasks. There are also works by Emiru Ura and Rastavaara, Cyrisel Kleveland, Riste, Stenkolm, and Sandström; of Sandström’s two works, his elabora-
tion on Purcell’s shattering “Hear My Prayer, O Lord” is one of the many glimpses of... —PPV

Outdoor

Amandita! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony PRODUCERS: Chris Tetzeli, Lee Hirsch, Sherry Simpson ATO 0009 RELEASE DATE: Feb. 4 Music plays a crucial role in every society. Director Lee Hirsch and producers Sherry Simpson and Chris Tetzeli transform the role music played in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa with their documentary Amandita! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony. The film features inspiring footage of the Madibaz, a vocal ensemble that brings the message of unity and hope through their music. The film also highlights the challenges faced by these talented musicians in their fight for freedom. Tracks like Makhe’s “Bahlei Bonke” and Mathlasi’s “When You Come Back” are wonderful examples. Between the film and this sound-
track, Amandita! is a feast for the eyes, ears, and spirit. —PPV

Pop

PAPE & CHEIKH Mariana PRODUCER: Ben Findlay RealWorld/Naara 72438-13257 RELEASE DATE: Jan. 28 Papa Amadou Fally and Cheikhhou Faye created a sensation in Sen-
egal in 2001 with their song “Yatal Gueye” (Widening the Circle), a plea for peace and an alternative to the violence that was tearing the country apart. The accompanying soundtrack. The film in between the song and this sound-
track, Amandita! is a feast for the eyes, ears, and spirit. —PPV

Hymns

Classical

Baltic Voices 1 Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir; Tallinn Chamber Orchestra/Paul Hillier PRODUCERS: G. Young, Biało Michel Harmonia Mundi 907311 RELEASE DATE: Feb. 11 Some of the choirs involved in the performing the scores in recent years have been con-

reprinted here. However, it’s worth noting that a new edition of the book is currently in production.

reviews & previews

Billboard

Also reviewed online this week:

- Joan of Arc, So Much Dying Alive and Loveliness (Jade Tree)
- Father See You, How to Start a Fire (Tooth & Nail)
- Benny Green and Russell Malone, Live at Jazz at the Bistro (Telarc)

CHAD KROEGER OF NICKLEBACK

such cuts as “Breathe,” “Leader of Men,” and “Hanging,” and took the album’s

Tetzeli demonstrates, yet Howes, Chris Tetzeli, Lee Hirsch, Sherry Simpson

Tetzeli demonstrates, yet Howes, Chris Tetzeli, Lee Hirsch, Sherry Simpson

Tetzeli demonstrates, yet Howes, Chris Tetzeli, Lee Hirsch, Sherry Simpson
SINGLES

ROBBIE WILLIAMS Feel (3:42)
PRODUCERS: Guy Chambers, Steve Power
WRITERS: R. Williams, G. Chambers
PUBLISHERS: BMG/EMI
Virgin 17685 (CD promo)

The fact that Robbie Williams is one of the world’s best-known singers and yet is nearly anonymous in the U.S. is utterly flattering for pop fans who follow the international charts—and an embarrassment for American radio programmers whose conviction to melody-based music is at a striking low. Capitol worked valiantly to break the bad boy Brit here and eventually surrendered: now Virgin has taken on this worthy cause. “Feel” is an exceptional song on all levels—substantive and intelligent, majestic and melodic, and sung with great passion and panache by the singer/songwriter. In another time, Williams would have an obvious chart-topper here (as it has been in more than a dozen countries) and a probable Grammy contender. What a tragedy! it would be for this exception talent to remain invisible.

This is as obvious a hit song as they come. Can commercial, anyone?

WHITNEY HOUSTON Try It on My Own (4:23)
PRODUCER: RBabface
WRITERS: L. Edmonds, N. Walton, BabyFace, C. Sager, A. Simmons
PUBLISHERS: Brownville/E One/EMI-Blackwood/ECAS/Sony/ATV/Warner-Tamerlane/All About Me, BMI; NDBa/ 
GRB/E Two/Emi/April/Andrea's, ASCAP
Artista 82876 (CD promo)

If an artist is ready to promoting her own music, why should the public rally behind her? Perhaps that’s part of the problem behind Houston’s Just Whitney, a very good—albeit very short—album that’s singing with alarming speed at retail. Third single “Try It on My Own” is the best song on the disc, a classic Whitney ballad that pushes every diva button, from huge celestial notes to a creamy orchestral arrangement. Arista also commissioned Thunderpuss to writing the song into a dance thumper, hoping that tempo will foster radio favor, a la previous remixed ballads “I Learned from the Best” and “It’s Not Right But It’s Okay.” It’s heartbreakingly to see Houston’s career faltering in the most ordinary of self-admitted personal problems. One has to wonder if she can score a hit in spite of herself.

COUNTRY

TRAVIS TRITT Country Ain’t Country (3:47)
PRODUCERS: Billy Joe Walker Jr., Travis Tritt
WRITERS: C. Beachard, T. Boaz
PUBLISHERS: Acuff-Rose Music/Universal Songs of PolyGram International/Everything I Love Music, BMI
Columbia 59092 (CD promo)
Chart veteran Travis Tritt turns in a persona-
cally packed performance on this well-written single about changes in American rural life. The lyric chronicles the tale of a guy who left the country in a Ford, only to return as a laborer in a Lexus, pointing out to his father that people now trade heelers online. The song bemoans the change in attitudes and environment, as land once used for deer hunting has turned into a four-lane highway and neighbors now lock their doors. Tritt serves up a nostalgic look at what we’ve lost in the name of progress. The song should do well for him, as many listeners will readily relate to the circumstances and emotion in the lyric.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

LUCY WOODWARD Dumb Girls (3:41)
PRODUCER: Kevin Kadish
WRITERS: L. Woodward, I. Shanks

Anthony S. Martin’s song was incorrectly listed in a review of Tammy Cochran’s “Love Won’t Let Me” in the Jan. 18 issue. Martin produced the song with Billy Joe Walker Jr.

DVD REVIEWS

SWEET HOME ALABAMA

Buena Vista 29126
RELEASE DATE: Feb. 4

Insights into the making of this Reese Witherspoon vehicle are aptly on this DVD, which includes such features as a deleted-scene library, an alternate ending, an audio commentary from director Andy Tennant, and the Sesame Street song “Music for Minnie." The deleted scene feature is most telling, as viewers are truly brought into a film-maker’s mind as a project’s final sequence is being put together. Ten-

ter reveals that he cut his favorite scene in the movie for reasons of timing and flow and that an entire character was taken out to shed a different light on Witherspoon’s character. Tamerlane. An extensive alternate ending also highlights how different the film would have played, if an action more closely mirrored the pro-

ject’s opening sequence.

GARY BURTON Live Quantum Leap DJ-857
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 28

Gary Burton has been the premier jazz vibraphonist of the past 25 years, and this live set from MIDMID in 1981, while hardly definitive, reveals why Burton’s double maltex technique is unparalleled, and the many tight shots shots showing his work does nothing to dispel the magic. This DVD finds Burton with two hands. In the first set, he fronts the Hum Trio, a French group that rolls through a series of standards with Burton laying in glistening leads that cascade through the trio’s energetic accompaniment. Things get more playful when Burton joins the Shawn Colvin/Jamal Trio. There’s a bit of danger here as Burton works himself into this tightest unit, playing a series of classics like “Bogata.” Live is a straightforward presentation, shot with only a few cameras in a concert setting with normal stage lighting.

TADPOLE

Miramax 26835
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 21

What Tadpole lacks in DVD extras it makes up for in absolute unforbidden charm. This intimate comedy revolves around a 15-year-old’s crush on his stepmother’s distant cousin, a societal (Siegfried Weaver and Bebe Neuwirth), unmasking sweet-

ness, and enough empathetic laughs to thaw winter’s icy grip. It’s unfortunate that the film is being marketed more as an age-deficient seduction instead of the awkward coming-of-age tale that it is, but enthusiastic word-of-mouth and critical acclaim should help but send it on its way. The DVD does feature a wonderfully entertaining full-length commentary from director Gary Winick, which is endlessly informative and educational, given the various ways the cast and crew weaved around budgetary constraints. Forget the endless gimmicks that so many DVDs are loaded down with today; this fine film stands taller in its 75 minutes than most do after 100 deleted scenes.

FREE WILLY 10TH-ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Warner 24159
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 28

The beauty and mystery of marine life is brought to life in this live-inspiring, especially after watching such features as “A Conversation with Bob Talbot,” telling the story behind the making of one of the stellar extras featured on this disc. Talbot, who shot the opening sequence of Free Willy, takes viewers into the world of whale watching and shares some of his magical footage. Also look for the “Whale Ballet” feature, which offers even more dazzling footage. This kid-friendly disc offers an educational feature on whale anatomy and an “Escape the Nets” game, in which your remote control helps guide your whale around a number of undersea obstacles. Michael Jackson’s “Will You Be There” music video and theatrical trailers for Free Willy and its two sequels, as well as an “Answering Machine,” are also included. Pop this disc into your DVD-ROM, and you’ll find even more fun extras.

COUPLING: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

BILLBOARD Video 1713
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 21

Coupling, a half-hour comedy program focusing on the love lives of six British, 30-something friends, is not just waiting for a legion of American fans. The hilarious, six-episode first season is presented here with some utilizing extras. An exhaus-
tive behind-the-scenes interview sequence reveals what shows the actors think about their respective characters, how they deal with embarrassing scenes, and how the series was created by writer-rapper Moeta. Produc-
der Sue Vertue, among other topics. A cast bio and photo shoot feature is also included. This DVD is a perfect introduction for those who check it out now in its third season in the U.K., and which is being reworked domestically for network TV.
BY ERICA IACONO

After more than 30 years of successful rock ‘n’ roll-themed restaurants, hotels, and casinos, Hard Rock Cafe International has focused its attention on the memorabilia aspect of the franchise with the opening of the Hard Rock Vault (Billboard, Jan. 11) in Orlando.

The Vault, a 17,000-square-foot interactive attraction, is designed to offer an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at the evolution of music. Through rare memorabilia, guided tours, and interactive displays, visitors are given the opportunity to get an inside look at some of rock ‘n’ roll’s most influential artists.

According to Chris Tomasso, VP of marketing for Hard Rock International, the idea for the Vault first arose two years ago at the Hard Rock's 30th-anniversary celebration in London. "We kept hearing from the public that they would like to find out more about the memorabilia," he says. "We thought to ourselves, 'How can we expand on it?'

One of the first steps was to find a location for the venue and, according to Tomasso, Orlando was an obvious choice. Not only is Hard Rock's memorabilia warehouse located there, but the city is a massive tourist base, with Walt Disney World and Universal Studios attractions only a few miles away.

So while the Vault is primarily geared toward music aficionados, it can be marketed as a family-friendly destination. "Music fans come in all ages," Tomasso says. "If you're a music fan, this is definitely the place to go."

NOT YOUR AVERAGE ATTRACTION

While the Vault is part of the Orlando tourist scene, Tomasso is quick to point out that it is very different from the typical theme-park experience. Decorated in the same manner as the Hard Rock's restaurants and hotels, it is intended to provide a look back in atmosphere. Plush sofas and funky artwork decorate the lobby, where visitors can stop at a check-in desk to get started on the Hard Rock experience.

"We are surrounded by over-themed establishments," Tomasso says. "This is kind of an escapism."

From instruments to clothing and autographed memorabilia, the Vault houses 1,000 pieces of rock ‘n’ roll history, selected from more than 65,000 pieces that the Hard Rock archives contain. The collection of memorabilia, touted as "the best of the best," consists of many never-before-seen items. One of the most interesting is a quilt featuring a face card in the image of the late Frank Zappa. The quilt is made completely from the brisa and parties that were thrown onstage during Zappa’s 1981 world tour. According to memorabilia acquisition manager Don Bernstein, it is one of the displays that has won the most attention since the Dec. 23, 2002, opening. "People just stare and stare at this thing," he says. "It's an amazing piece of art."

Some of the pieces featured in the Vault are from more current artists. Visitors can find on display the black leather jacket Creed lead singer Scott Stapp wore in the video for "My Sacrifice," as well as the red vinyl jacket and boots Gwen Stefani wore on No Doubt's Tragic Kingdom album cover.

TOTAL IMMERSION

Another interesting area of the Vault is the Total Immersion Tour, a five-gallery guided tour highlighting the most important events and artists in music history. The galleries include the Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame, which provides a history of garage and punk music; the Dressing Room, which takes a look at the influence that music has had on fashion; Psychedelic Meltdown, which includes memorabilia from such bands as Grateful Dead and the Doors; the Light and the Dark, which pays homage to the British Invasion, namely the Beatles and the Rolling Stones; and the King's Chamber, which presents an insightful look into the career and impact of Elvis Presley.

According to Bernstein, the Vault's collection will remain as it is for a while, without any new additions. But that does not keep him from continuing to look for new rock ‘n’ roll treasures. "We're always in acquisition mode."

And although Internet and public auctions have become more popular as ways to acquire memorabilia—and therefore give more people better opportunities to purchase something for themselves—Bernstein says that it hasn't created any difficulty for them. For more than a decade he served as director of marketing and promotion for Deep Purple—valuable industry experience that proves helpful when trying to acquire possessions from musicians. "I think the artists are much more willing to work with me since they know my reputation," he says. "I'm trying to focus on the artists directly. It's an untapped market."

While it may be too soon to predict the success of the Vault, Bernstein is hoping that the new venture will be enough of a draw. "There are rock fans all over the world," he says. "I'm hoping they'll all be coming here one by one."

Amazon.com Reports Its Second Quarterly Profit

BY MATTHEW BENZ

NEW YORK—Amazon.com has reported a quarterly profit for the second time, helped by a 13% growth in its core North America books, music, and video/DVD (BMVD) division. It also announced that it will offer free shipping on orders of more than $25 on a full-time, year-round basis.

For fourth-quarter 2002, amazon.com posted a net income of $3 million, or 1 cent per share. It had a net profit of $5 million, or 1 cent per share, in the same period the previous year.

Total sales for the quarter were $1.43 billion, up 28%. BMVD sales, amazon.com's largest segment, were $606.1 million, up from $538 million in fourth-quarter 2001. For all of 2002, amazon.com narrowed its net loss to $149 million, or 39 cents per share, from $567 million, or $1.56 per share, in 2001.

BMVD sales were $1.87 billion, up 11% from $1.69 billion in 2001. Total sales rose 26% to $3.93 billion. Amazon.com CFO Tom Szkutak says, "Our continued operational progress and momentum allow us to offer year-round free shipping and at the same time increase our 2003 guidance." In 2003, Amazon expects sales to rise more than 15%, up from a previous forecast of at least 10%. In first-quarter 2003, it expects sales of $1.03 billion, up 21%.

The 2002 results cap a surprisingly strong year for the Seattle-based Internet retailer. Among the highlights, amazon.com began handling e-commerce activities for Virgin Entertainment Group in North America and Japan (Billboard, July 6, 2002) and took on certain back-end e-commerce functions for CDnow (Billboard, Nov. 23, 2002). Amazon.com also helps manage Web sites for Borders Books & Music and Circuit City (for non-music and movie products).

More notably, despite its continued losses, amazon.com saw its stock rise 75% in 2002. And though the fourth-quarter profit it reported was not as large as some analysts had forecast, the stock inched up further in the days following the results announcement, buoyed by the higher sales forecasts.

For its part, amazon.com said in its results announcement that its fourth-quarter profit "should not be viewed as a material positive event and is not predictive of future trends," because it would not have been possible without a one-time, one-off gain of $5 million.

It also noted the ill effects on gross margins of its free-shipping offer. For the fourth quarter, shipping costs rose 11% to $131 million, and shipping loss rose 173% to $30 million. Amazon.com said, "We continue to measure our shipping results relative to their effect on our overall financial results, with the viewpoint that shipping promotions are an effective marketing tool."
Navarre Sees Sales Increase In 2002

BY MATTHEW BENZ
NEW YORK—Navarre reports sales of $116.9 million for its fiscal 2003 third quarter, which ended Dec. 31, 2002, up 15% from the same period last year.

Navarre Distribution Services (NDS), which handles non-proprietary entertainment products including computer software, videogames, major-label music, and DVDs, saw sales rise 6% to $96 million from $90.4 million in the fiscal third quarter last year.

But Navarre Entertainment Media (NEM), which distributes proprietary products, posted revenue that was down 35% to $16.1 million, compared with $25.7 million for the same period last year. The company says the decrease in sales reflects the impact of Mannheim Steamroller’s double-platinum release, Extravaganza, sold during the fiscal 2002 third quarter.

For the nine months ended Dec. 31, 2002, Navarre reports that consolidated net sales increased 15.1% to $272.7 million, compared with $238.2 million in the first nine months of fiscal 2002.

On a divisional basis, NDS reported net sales of $222.2 million, up 12% compared with $197.9 million in the comparable nine-month period. NEM reported net sales of $45 million—an increase of 11.7% compared with the $40.3 million reported in the first nine months of the previous fiscal year.

Navarre president/CEO Eric Paulson said in a statement, “We are extremely pleased with our results in the quarter in light of a difficult retail environment, most particularly in the music sector.”

He adds, “While we had planned for a decline in NEM sales in the quarter due to not having a double-platinum release to match last year’s volume, our improved roster of artists and labels continues to sustain the overall foundation of our music business.”

Quarterly net income for the New Hope, Minn.-based company was $3 million, or 14 cents per share. Navarre had net income one year ago of $1 million, or 15 cents per share, including a $1.5 million gain on the repayment of a note by former subsidiary NetRadio (Billboard Bulletin, Oct. 18, 2001). It reported $1.1 million cash at the end of the quarter.

Gaming Sales Rose 10% Last Year

BY BARRY GARRITY
NEW YORK—Retail sales of videogame hardware, software, and accessories grew 10% in 2002, according to the latest sales figures from market research firm NPD Group. The videogame industry generated $10.3 billion in sales last year, surpassing the previous record high of $9.4 billion in 2001. Unit sales of videogame software sales were up 15% last year, led by titles including Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Madden NFL 2003, Super Mario Sunshine, Spider-Man, The Matrix, Halo, and Tom Clancy’s Splinter Cell.

A pair of Grand Theft Auto titles—Vice City and Grand Theft Auto 3—are from Rockstar Games, which ranked as the top-selling titles of the year. Epic Records Group released seven albums to accompany Vice City last October. Snippets of all the songs from the soundtracks can be heard during gameplay.

Sales of videogame hardware systems dipped 4% to $3.5 billion from $3.7 billion in 2001, but the category did post a 10% increase in unit volume. The decline in dollars and increase in unit volumes were attributed to price reductions of all hardware systems. Prices of GameBoy Advance, GameCube, Sony PlayStation 2, and Xbox dropped to almost one-third of their original price in the first half of 2002.

NPD Group senior account executive Richard Ow says, “In 2003, the videogame industry should expect unit-volume growth to outpace dollar-volume growth in the hardware category.”

Ow says NPD expects that dollar volume will struggle for continued growth through 2003, with the majority of the growth coming primarily from software sales that capitalize on the gaming systems sold to date.

He adds, “The full power of the current generation of hardware is still unrealized.”

Declarations Of Independents

BIG CHANGES AT SOUTHWEST: Robert Guillerman, president of Southwest Wholesale in Houston, called Declarations of Independents last week in the wake of the financially troubled firm’s layoff of its key distribution executives (In the News, Billboard, Feb. 1).

Guillerman says that the company has moved employees from the out-of-town office to handle distribution sales, its current focus. He also asserts that the company does not plan to file for bankruptcy protection, as has long been rumored.

Frank Jackson—who had acted as project manager for Southwest’s distribution operation and who was responsible for acquiring most of the company’s distributed Texas and Pacific labels—will now take the reins as operations manager for distribution. He will replace Rick Shedd, former VP of sales and retailing, who was laid off Jan. 21.

Guillerman says, “Frank is very good at target marketing, and there are things we’ll be able to excel at more with him.”

He says the reasons for terminating Shedd (who commuted weekly from Nashville to Houston) and the other distribution staffs—who were said to be some of the best-paid employees on Southwest’s payroll—were strictly economic in nature.

“It was a matter of overhead and return,” Ow says. “We hate to lose anyone, but we have people who have been here a long time that I plan on putting with these accounts.”

Jackson, who speaks respectfully of the distribution employees who exited, says, “It came down to, ‘We no longer do $75 million a year—we’re doing $20 million a year.’

One-stop employees Rene Foster, Mary Turner, and George Weinberg are being moved to the distribution side and will service Wherehouse, Sam Goody, and Best Buy. Those chains were previously serviced by California-based national accounts director Ty Visconti and Minnesota-based national accounts director Ron Barnes, who were also with local office.

Guillerman says that Foster, Turner, and Weinberg have all handled those accounts in their one-stop capacities and that there will not be any diminishment of those accounts.

“We plan to call on the accounts in person,” Guillerman maintains. “We will have someone in the field to handle some of the accounts. Someone from [Houston] will be traveling.”

Jackson says that most of the company’s 50 employees are now devoted to the distribution business, with 10 devoted to sales. About 10 Southwest staffers handle the company’s one-stop business, which was drastically cut back in a previous series of layoffs.

Jackson admits that he has his work cut out for him: “It’s hard right now because of all the negative press about the company . . . People have questions, and it’s challenging.”

Guillerman is attempting to allay some of those questions: He states categorically, and more than once, that Southwest will not seek bankruptcy protection.

Clearly, Southwest is, in Jackson’s words, “swimming upstream.” The company currently boasts a very slim list of around 10 exclusive distributed labels, the vast majority of its other offerings is one-off projects from regional imprints, many of them artist-operated.

Additionally, Southwest was one of the biggest independent creditors in Wherehouse’s bankruptcy filing (Billboard, Feb. 1), which took place as the company’s last round of layoffs.

According to sources familiar with the documents, Southwest is owed $558,600 by the Torrance, Calif.-based chain. Only Koch Entertainment Distribution, owed $1.2 million, took a bigger hit.

Guillerman acknowledges that his firm is not sitting pretty but also points out that others are in the same boat.

“This is a year to make sure we make it through,” he says. “I’m not the only one who’s nervous about the overall market conditions.”

IN THE MARKET: As noted, Southwest’s Barnes and Visconti, both veteran distribution salesmen, are seeking new employment opportunities. Barnes may be reached at 651-982-0467; Visconti may be contacted at 909-662-6517.
appeal

in light of the amount of debt on the company's balance sheet.

With financial adviser Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin, the Santa
Clar, Calif.-based company—manu-
ufacturers of the Rio line of digital music players and the Replay TV recorder—
seeks partners to invest or acquire
some or all of the company. As of Sept.
30, 2002, Sonicblue's debt included
$415.3 million in convertible debentures
and $24 million in other long-
term liabilities. Through the first nine
months of 2002, the company had a
net loss of $72.4 million, or 75 cents
per share, on sales of $205.1 million.
In September, it cut 25% of its staff of
250-300 employees (Billboard Bule-
lett, Sept. 9, 2002).

MORE CHOOSE MUSIC CHICHE: Music
Choice, a provider of music program-
ing to cable systems, says its new
customer base increased by 1.4 million
Music Choice realized a total increase of
4.7 million new customers in 2002,
bringing the total of cable and DirecTV
homes with Music Choice to 26.6 mil-
lion. Music Choice president/CEO
David Del Beccaro noted, "We are very
pleased to report that Music
Choice is now in one of every four
homes in the United States."

During the year, Music
Choice enhanced its
commercial-free
music channels with new
screens featuring
album art, music news, artist facts,
music history, new releases, and TV-screen
ads. The company also launched a shop-
mall feature for cable systems with
interactive TV channels.

MUZE PREVIEWS: Muze is offering a preview of Daryl Hall & John Oates'
latest release, Do It For Love, in its
entirely online at participating retail
sites ahead of its Feb. 11 street date.
Full songs for the entire album will
be available through Muze's Muze
Tunes streaming sound-sample serv-
cice, which is used by such entities as
Best Buy, MTV, VH1, jcpennyy, kmart.com, and Tower Records.

ARGuing FOR COMPULSORIES: A lead-
ing civil-liberties lawyer says the recent
cross-industry agreement calling for
private-sector solutions to the
distribution of digital music (Billboard Bul-
letin, Jan. 15) underscores the need for
compulsory licenses. The agree-
ment—drafted by the Record-
ing Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) and two
computer trade groups—gives the "appe-
ance of inter-industry negotiation
and consensus," says Fred von Lohmann,
senior intellectual-property attorney of
the EFF. However, it "doesn't change
the reality that there are 40 million file
sharers who aren't going away."

von Lohmann compares the furor
over file sharing to the advent of
cable TV and the subsequent outcry
from the networks. "The cable industry was
the Napster of the 70s," he says,
adding that the establishment of a
compulsory license would allow the
networks to continue getting paid and
help cable to flourish.

The RIAA says setting up compulsory
licensing for the distribution of music
calls for "eliminating government
regulation for the marketplace.

A spokesperson says, "We can't
think of anything worse for the Inter-
net. The RIAA questions why labels
would continue to invest in artists
and finance albums only to have the
government mandate "some artifi-
cially low price."

Loucyse seeks reverse stock split

special shareholders meeting will be held March 11

by Matthew Benz

Loucyse said it will seek approval
at a special stockholder meeting March 11 for a reverse stock split at a rate of up to 1 for 20.

The Seattle-based digital-media services firm aims to raise its stock price
above the minimum bid price of
$1 per share that the Nasdaq
Stock Market requires to main-
tain a listing. It has about 4.4 mil-
Tion shares outstanding.

Loucyse stock has traded for less
than $1 since Feb. 15, 2002. It shifted
last summer to the SmallCap

market from the Nasdaq National
Market to try to regain compliance with
the minimum-bid price rule.

Last late year, the company signed an agreement to supply music samples
to Amazon.com. It also recently
renewed its music-samples services
agreements with MSN Entertain-
ment and windowsMedia.com.

The company has licensing agree-
ments with all the major labels and
hundreds of indices and claims a
catalog of more than 3 million
music samples from more than
250,000 CDs.

American Radio History

march 11

 seeing how their potential new
srcation was an important change
n the company's strategy

sources of revenue

lease, which...
Hearing Bollywood’s Calling, Eros Finds A U.S. Market For Indian Films

BY CATHERINE CELLA

Although foreign films have often been hard to find in theaters outside of big cities, DVD is making it a small world after all. And Indian films seem poised to take center stage.

Both traditional Bollywood romantic musicals and more recent, story-driven movies from the likes of Mira Nair and Ismail Merchant are finding big audiences in the U.S. Hoping to bring Bollywood films further into the mainstream is Eros Entertainment, a Secaucus, N.J.-based film investment company and distributor.

With nearly 800 films on DVD, the 26-year-old firm has seen interest in Indian films steadily increase.

“The audience [for our films] is moving on from [being] only Indians to West Indians, Chinese, Koreans, Mexicans; pretty much everyone,” Eros DVD sales manager Madan Ahuja says. “People are fascinated by all the color in our films—there’s so much culture, and just the fact of Indian beauty.”

GOING MAINSTREAM

One such film, Devdas, stars former Miss World title-holder Aishwarya Rai. At $10.2 million, Devdas is Bollywood’s most expensive film to date, and it has already grossed $34 million worldwide. Devdas premiered at Cannes, France, last year and is India’s entry this year for Academy Award consideration, Eros is distributing the DVD of the movie, which is already out.

Based on a 1917 novel, the plot and dialogue are anachronistically melodramatic. The musical dance scenes, on the other hand, are as lavish and lavish as those in the Indian-inspired Moulin Rouge.

Ahuja says, “Hollywood is slowly starting to recognize and appreciate what Bollywood has to offer in terms of talent, in terms of culture, in terms of music.”

While Eros’ Web-site business is growing, sales are still largely through Indian retail stores. But Ahuja feels that going mainstream is the next logical step. To that end, Eros is stepping into a new era of crossover films, designed to appeal to Indians abroad, with such titles as American Desi and Bollywood Calling. These films are generally less music-driven and have storylines involving Indians living outside of India.

Ahuja notes, “Industry giants have begun to realize what Bollywood has to offer.”

One such “industry giant” is Tower. “We’re actually looking at a small Indian distributor to expand in that area,” Tower VP John Thrasher says. “There are some great films coming from India.”

Citing the Indian population as huge film buffs, Thrasher also notes that many of Tower’s flagship stores are located in key metropolitan cities. “There’s an ethnic mix there,” he continues, “People have come to our stores for a long time looking for eclectic fare. And we’re very happy to provide it.”

POPULAR CHOICES

One such film will be The Mystic Masseur (Cannes Tristar, Feb. 25), directed by Merchant. best-known for producing Merchant-Ivory films. Based on a book by Nobel Laureate V.S. Naipaul, the film is set in Trinidad, where Indians have lived for centuries.

Merchant’s new book, My Passage From India, details his career from Bombay to Hollywood—says, “It’s a slice of life that nobody offers these days, and it’s unburied, because you want to relish that slice to the utmost.”

Merchant also sees the popularity of Indian films growing, especially on DVD. “The audience is comprised primarily of second- and third-generation Indians who live abroad,” he says. “And they’re watching with their friends, too, who then acquire a taste for Indian film. So it’s increasing and will keep on increasing, especially as DVDs become more accessible.”

Before popular titles Monsoon Wedding and even Mississippi Masala, Mira Nair’s 1986 feature-film debut, Salaa Bombay! (Available on a special-edition DVD March 4 from MGM, Salaa Bombay! was nominated for an Academy Award and won dozens of international awards, including two at the Cannes Film Festival. The film tells the story of one boy among many homeless children on the streets of Bombay. Its DVD includes six features and contains commentaries from both the director and cinematographer. Nair’s illuminating contributions should interest any film lover.

I enjoy doing commentary, and it’s rare to have films which come out right,” she says. “That film was brutally hard to make, but when I finished it, it was like a blessing. It really lasts. So I was happy to revisit it.

“In fact, it’s been a big passion of mine to resurrect this film, because it’s become a classic and not yet easily available. That’s why we really worked on this DVD.”

Most impressive to Nair is the 45-minute documentary her assistant director made about where the children are now. All were actual street kids at the time of filming, a legacy of her documentary background.

“Before Salaa Bombay! I made seven cinema verite documentaries, Nair recalls. “While making India Cabaret, [which is about strippers in Bombay], I met gangs and gangs of street kids. I knew I wanted to work with real kids, because the map of life on their faces is impossible to reproduce with child actors.”

(To assist street kids, Nair established the Salaa Bomay Trust, which now has 17 centers that have helped 5,000 children.)

“As a filmmaker, I hope DVD will become as popular as VHS, if only to ensure that people will see films in the way that they were made,” says Nair, who particularly appreciates Criterion Collection DVDs. “You are at the mercy of so many more variables. With VHS, you agree and sees Indian films on DVD as a great opportunity. “Miraam and Columbia Tristar have certainly had a lot of good [Indian] films,” he noted. “And then we’ve just had a lot of immigration from India... Plus, this world is getting smaller, and people want to see what other cultures are like. I have a sense that world cinema is much more important to people.”

PALM’S U.S. PARTNER: Under a new multi-year agreement. Lions Gate Home Entertainment will be distributing all of Palm Pictures’ live-action home-video releases and select catalog titles in the U.S. The pact kicks off March 3 with the Spanish project See and Silence ($29.99 DVD) and will be followed by at least six other titles throughout 2003. (WEA will continue to distribute Palm’s music-oriented video projects.)

PALM Pictures GM Paul DeGouoyer says, “It will be great to work with Lions Gate, who has similar product [to our live-action releases] in their catalog. We basically enhance what they have to sell. We plan on working with them on between 12 and 16 releases a year.”

Peter Block, president of home entertainment, acquisitions, and new media for Lions Gate, notes that the deal allows Lions Gate “to not only handle certain films that we covet [including Sex and Lucid] but we also get a regular slate of quality pictures at a time when it’s harder and harder to identify and acquire independent films.”

In other Palm news, the company has collaborated with film directors Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, and Chris Cunningham for its new DVD line, the Directors’ Series. Each DVD will feature a director’s non-film work, including music videos, shorts, and commercials; new interviews; and unreleased footage from the director’s film projects. The series will debut in August with discs from the three directors, and Palm is in talks with other directors to contribute to the series.

MAGAZINE GOES DIGITAL: Music Video Distributors has signed a deal with Yellow Tape Film & Video Productions to release a quarterly magazine on DVD featuring live interviews, performance footage, and film shorts with urban artists. The first issue of Yellow Tape ($16.95) is scheduled for Jan. 28. It runs for 90 minutes and includes an interview with Suge Knight, a feature on the Adult Video News Awards in Las Vegas, and a piece on Miami as a center of African-American entertainment.

Yellow Tape founder and CEO Romel Mason says retailers have already expressed interest. Tower is stocking the first issue on endcaps across the country and will display Yellow Tape posters. BET and MTV will also air Yellow Tape commercials, which will include a direct-response telephone number. Additionally, Yellow Tape is currently planning a nationwide tour to film new material and meet with retailers.

WARNER NEWS: Warner Home Video (WHV) has promoted both Marsha King and Ronald J. Sanders to the post of executive VP/GM. King will retain her responsibilities as executive VP of new business development, business affairs, and administration. Sanders previously served as senior VP/co-managing director of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Both will report to WHV president James Cardwell.
Sound On Sound Opens New Room
Preproduction/Overdub Suite Studio D Features A Digidesign Pro Tools HD 3 System

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH
NEW YORK—In yet another manifestation of the digital audio workstation (DAW) to professional audio recording, Sound on Sound Recording, a multi-room commercial facility, has opened Studio D, a preproduction/overdub suite featuring a Digidesign Pro Tools HD 3 System.

Designed by Larry Swift of Lawrence P. Swift Designs, Studio D, along with several other recently or soon-to-be completed rooms at Sound on Sound, represents a sizable expansion to the midtown Manhattan facility. Along with Studio D, Sound on Sound's expansion includes a new reception area, technical department, kitchen, lounge, and offices, as well as additional preproduction rooms.

Of the significant expansion—undertaken in the midst of a recession and considerable anxiety in the music industry—Sound on Sound president David Amlen explains, "There are two facets to it. The first is we're responding to what our clients have asked us for. They said they don't want to have to leave here to go to other places, for acoustic treatment and attention to detail as Sound on Sound's other studios. The Pro Tools HD 3 system includes a 24-fader ProControl surface with EditPack multichannel mixing option. In addition to its 5.1 capability, the suite also features video decks in multiple formats and a 42-inch plasma screen. Clients, Amlen says, "use it as an overdubbing space, preproduction room, and maybe for tracking, if it's keyboards and vocals."

Long a rental option and the core of personal and home studios, commercial facilities are increasingly adding dedicated Pro Tools suites as the platinum standard in the DAW realm. Rare is the recording project that does not employ Pro Tools at some stage. Amlen says, "Almost every project we've done in the last couple years has involved Pro Tools at one point or another. Even the latest project we did for Concord Records, a jazz project, was recorded to Pro Tools. They did that because they have their own studio in Los Angeles, which is a Pro Tools-based studio. So they recorded to Pro Tools in a nice room with nice preamps, nice microphones, and now they can take it back to their place and mix in Pro Tools."

In addition to the above, another new Pro Tools suite, adjacent to Studio D, is online and occupied by producer/engineer Jan Folskjon, in partnership with Sound on Sound. Of the new preproduction rooms created by Sound on Sound's expansion, Amlen expects at least one to involve a similar partnership arrangement. "I felt that it was a real asset to have somebody like Jan here," Amlen says, "because of the Pro Tools expertise that he brings."
K-Rock, Hip-Hop Making Noise In South Korea

BY MARK RUSSELL

SEOUL—In recent years, South Korea has become a surprisingly strong cultural force in Asia. It has the strongest domestic film industry in Asia, and, increasingly, its movies are performing well throughout the continent. South Korea's television dramas are also getting picked up around Asia, from Japan to Uzbekistan. And, music, too, is getting in on the regional act.

Thus far, South Korea's biggest musical successes abroad have mirrored its biggest at home: K-Pop, the peninsula's particular combination of pretty-girl and pretty-boy dance bands and balladeers. Within South Korea, however, K-Pop has fallen on hard times. Internet file-sharing, high-profile scandals and oversaturation have combined to cut sales. But, in the wake of those problems, K-Rock and hip-hop are beginning to rise and fill the void, and, in the process, beginning to make noise overseas, too.

Taiwan Looks To A&R Efforts For Market Turnaround

BY TIM CULPAN

TAIPEI—Flipping through the TV channels in Taiwan during the first few minutes of the New Year, a viewer could see the same ad at almost every turn.

Warner Music Taiwan's bulk purchase of prime-TV commercial slots for the latest album from Sun Yanzi showed the label's commitment to propelling one of its leading acts to top-of-the-mind awareness among music-buyers here. The 60-second commercials appeared right after the New Year countdown on Taiwan's five terrestrial stations, ensuring that no less than 80% of the audience saw—and heard—the latest catchy tune from the 25-year-old Singaporean.

The TV ads coincided with 10-second radio spots purchased in the same key time slot. Revelers celebrating the New Year at karaoke parlors also could not escape Yanzi's

Sponsorships And Media Drive Artist Growth In Hong Kong Market

BY CLARENCE TSUI

HONG KONG—Among those familiar with the recent history of pop music in this gateway market—an era dominated by flashy idols singing karaoke-friendly ballads—no one would have expected what the past year brought. The most talked-about acts of 2002 were indeed a curious combination: a pair of fun-loving but squeaky-clean girls, a hunky Taiwanese loursome and a 34-year-old ex-heartthrob who hasn't released a new album in five years.

What surprised most observers about the pop duo Twins (EEG) is the relentless drive they made towards pop stardom. Charlene Choi and Gillian Chung released their debut EP in August 2001, but three of their subsequent releases ranked among the top 10 best-selling records at the 2002 IFPI Hong Kong top sales music awards. Their album Our Souvenir Book was crowned the best-selling Cantonese record of the year. They were also named the "most loved group in 2002" by Commercial Radio, the biggest radio station in Hong Kong.

When not working the media to promote its records, the duo gained exposure via sponsorship deals, endorsing products from Coca-Cola to properties in mainland China.

But why were Twins able to cover so much ground in such a short time? It came down to complete control, according to Lisa Lam, senior GM at EEG.

In contrast to artists at other labels, the majority of EEG
BY PHILIP CHEAH

SINGAPORE—Amid the music-retail gloom of 2002, a debut album by Singaporean artist A-Do has made a remarkable impact in the world of Chinese-language pop. The disc, *Getting Dark*, has sold some 700,000 copies in China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore.

The album was released first in Taiwan in April 2001, where it generated a press blitz. A-Do, a former construction foreman, was discovered in 1999 at a singing workshop. A-Do is signed to Yellow Records, a new label set up by Ocean Butterflies Production.

"It’s been a long while since we have heard a really touching sincere album with words and music talking about the real feelings of men," says Billy Koh, executive producer of Ocean Butterflies. "Radio has been flooded by too much junk, with only teenage idols and R&B in the last three to five years in Chinese pop. People are really sick of the canned-food copypop music."

Since Ocean Butterflies set up offices in Taiwan and Malaysia, it could orchestrate its marketing plan across Asia, in Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and China. A-Do’s first regional Asian concert tour will take place later this year.

Similar to A-Do, singer-songwriter Stefanie Sun also broke first in Taiwan when she was signed by Warner Taiwan, and that territory remains her strongest market. Her second album, *My Desired Happiness*, initially released in December 2000, has sold 380,000 units in Taiwan and some 40,000 units in Singapore alone. Her third album, *Kite*, released in July 2001, has sold more than 30,000 copies to date. Sun is now Singapore’s biggest pop export to China; each of her albums has sold more than 350,000 units in the market, according to her label. To sell her image on the mainland, Sun is featured in one music video singing on China’s Great Wall. "To break in 1999 was strategically important to sign to a big market like Taiwan," says Kathleen Tan, MD of Warner Singapore. "In Singapore, we spent aggressively on advertising for her, on TV and on radio. We positioned her as a regional Chinese act. Sun is just what the market needs after the Chinese pop market collapsed in 1998. She appeals across age and gender, and is a rare Chinese pop act whose back catalog consistently sells."

Even in the Malay-language genre, Singapore artist Ferhad had to break in Malaysia first, where the singer is signed to Malaysia’s Positive Tone label, distributed by EMI. Ferhad’s *Tahed* album has sold more than 10,000 units in Malaysia. Positive Tone’s managers, Darren Choy and Ahmad Izhan Omar, booked Ferhad into concert appearances across Malaysia. He also appeared on all the awards shows, even winning a best newcomer award on Anugerah ERA 2001, a major industry award. He also had a major hit single, "Higher Deeper," and the video was promoted heavily on Channel X and MTV Asia, giving him recognition across South East Asia. To raise Ferhad’s regional profile further on his second album, Positive Tone plans to record a duet with one of the Philippines’ best new acts, Kyla.

"Given that the Singapore market is so saturated and so local artists will naturally start thinking beyond the local market if they want to be big," says Valerie Lim, MD of EMI Singapore. "In fact, for Mandarin acts, I believe the gateway is up north in Taiwan or China."

Ocean Butterflies’ Billy Koh sees the trend in technological terms: "With the Internet and the online music, Chinese pop has become a world Chinese market," he says. "Anyone from anywhere, as long as you are really good, you will be well-received anywhere. The Internet is an equal competition. The success of A-Do and Stefanie Sun is not just the effort of the artists themselves."

The whole Xin-yao movement (Chinese indie music) of the early ‘80s was actually the seed of today’s fruit. If you ask me for the ‘secret magical formula,’ I think, first of all, one must be true to the music, to be able to be touched by the music."

Asia Pacific Quarterly

SOUTH KOREA

Continued from page APQ-1

In many ways, the current trend all goes back to the revolutionary Seo Taiji and the Boys. Korean music divides into two eras before Seo Taiji, and after. Before the band debuted in 1992, international rock and pop repertoire accounted for some 60% of the market. But, by the time Seo Taiji broke up in 1996, Korean music sales overtook international on the peninsula. Taiji’s band was the first major band to bring in hip-hop sounds and styles, both in its music and fashion. And the legacy of the band continues to bamboozle the local music scene to this day, shaping trends and underlying much of the scene.

PHENOMENAL ECHOES

Today’s K-Pop is the biggest echo of the Seo Taiji phenomenon. Scores of producers and labels tried to emulate the band’s sound, style and, most importantly, success. By the time pop struggles, one of the biggest gainers recently has been K-Rock, Youn Do-hyun’s soccer anthem dominated the airwaves during the World Cup in the summer, and he has remained in the public eye ever since. Other rock bands capitalized on the World Cup, too, getting the opportunity to play before the hundreds of thousands gathered around City Hall and other outdoor locations to watch the soccer games. It was an exposure most rock bands never get in Korea, and the music—live rock ‘n’ roll—was something that most young people here seldom see. And one of the most successful bands was the punk-rock group Crying Nut.

Crying Nut has been around for years, forming as high-school students in 1995. Mostly through sheer determination and non-stop touring, the members slowly built a following. One single, "Mal Darija (Let’s Ride a Horse)," cracked the top 30 around 1998. But, for the most part, Crying Nut, like all

sharp eye for overseas marketing. Crying Nut, then other Drug bands, have played at the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan, and Drug has talked with other labels in Asia and even Sweden about distribution. Unfortunately, the guys in Crying Nut are about to confront one of the biggest, most intransigent roadblocks facing bands in South Korea—mandatory military service. All men in the country must serve a minimum of 26 months. Singers who avoid it—like Shin Seung-hun, who got U.S. citizenship rather than serve—can find themselves barred from the peninsula. Drug has several bands on the go, notably another punk band, Lazyhime, which is poised for a full release in China next year.

At least rock music has a history here. The rise of hip-hop has taken people more by surprise. In the 1980s and early 90s, Korean music was largely rock, and Korean music took up about 40% of the overall market. Again, Seo Taiji and the

For Regional Impact

SOUTH KOREA

Continued from page APQ-1

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This is the two thousand and three MTV Asia Awards Congratulations Advertisement.

Favourite Artist Mainland China Winner - Yu Quan
Favourite Artist India Winner - A.R. Rahman
Favourite Artist Korea Winner - Regine Velasquez
Favourite Artist Philippines Winner - JT
Favourite Artist Taiwan Winner - Jay Chou

Favourite Female Artist Winner - Siti Nurhaliza
Favourite Male Artist Winner - Robbie Williams
Favourite Male Artist Winner - Sammi Cheng
Favourite Rock Act Winner - Linkin Park
Favourite Video Winner - Linkin Park
Favourite Video Winner - F4

Inspiration Award Winner - F4
Best Asian Film Winner - Devdas (Director Sanjay Leela Bhansali)
Favourite Pop Act Winner - Blue
Favourite Artist Hong Kong Winner - Sammi Cheng
Favourite Video Winner - Linkin Park (Pts of Authority remix)

For more information, please call Mishal Varma, VP - Programming and Talent & Artist Relations. Tel: (65) 6420 7147 Fax: (65) 6221 8586 Email: mishal.varma@mtv-asia.com

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HONG KONG

Continued from page APQ-1

acts—including Twins—are managed by a sister company under the Emperor Entertainment Group. “We can negotiate any deals with anyone for our artists. The biggest advantage we have is that we control the artists completely, rather than just part of them,” says Kan. The extent of Emperor Entertainment’s connections in the mass media surely helps too. Emperor chairman Yeung Shum-shing also owns a newspaper (Hong Kong Daily News), as well as several prominent youth-oriented magazines (among them New Monday and East Touch).

Another act that guaranteed massive media coverage in Hong Kong is the Taiwanese boy-band F4 (Sony). Evolving from a successful Taiwanese TV series, Meteor Garden, the quartet emerged as one of the most successful pop acts of the year. The group’s debut album, Meteor Rain, was one of the 10 best-selling Mandarin albums in Hong Kong, and F4 also achieved impressive sales for its second album, Fantasy 4ever.

Apart from good looks, F4’s continued appeal lies in a clever marketing strategy that focused on the individual band members as much as the group itself. Sony was not averse to “breaking up the band temporarily with solo” records: a stop-gap measure to sustain interest between F4 albums. “We instilled a lot of flexibility in F4’s arrangement so that any one of them could attend promotional activities by themselves—that guaranteed maximum exposure,” says Taipei, for example, easily endeared the group to the millions of prospective fans in mainland China.

“Hong Kong has a strategic location where news could easily spread from the past. Hacken Lee (Universal), a singer-songwriter from the late 1990s, made a strong comeback in 2002. He was named Hong Kong’s best-selling artist in order for the IFPI on the strength of two live albums and no significant new material. And he concluded 2002 with an award for the Most Popular Male Singer bestowed by TVB, Hong Kong’s leading TV station.

The revival of Lee’s fortune owes much to the work of Alex Chan, MD at Universal Music in Hong Kong. Chan’s decision to pursue alternatives to the wide array of young idols in Canto-pop was being Lee’s ride from the ashes. Lee appeals to the middle-class 30-somethings who are reluctant to spend money on today’s young idols, Chan says.

Lee’s first release on Universal was a two-CD recording of his concerts with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. It was “a perfect test-case that proves that his fans

SOUTHERN KOREA

Continued from page APQ-2
decayed in recent years. When Seo Taiji and the Boys were big on the scene, they pioneered product placement, using specific brands of eyewear or clothes during TV appearances. But such product placements are frowned upon by media companies and clothing brand-labels, who believe that TV shows are more accurately watched by TV stations, greatly reducing the market for sponsorships. In general, compared to four or five years ago, company officials say that it is hard to find significant sponsorship and that for the health of the music industry, media regulations need to be loosened for record companies to find other revenue streams.

Still, YG does have a sponsorship-deals, mostly in the clothing field. In Korea as elsewhere, hip-hop is as much about style and attitude as the music itself, making clothes an obvious market. One of YG’s artists, Sean, started his own clothing company, MF, which is now featured prominently by all the biggest labels in Korea. YG’s label strategy is to push a spectrum of artists, from dance-pop to “real” hip-hop. The main stream acts use the harder-edged ones for credibility, and “real” hip-hop uses the mainstream for broader commercial success. YG artists have even played in China, though their music has yet to be officially released there.

APQ-4

Residential: drive: Twins

Ariel Fung, MD of Sony Music Hong Kong

Sony was also adroit in recognizing the potential of the emerging markets that lie beyond Taiwan. Its decision to launch Fantasy 4ever in Hong Kong rather than towards both the mainland and Taiwan; the group might be initiated from Taiwan, but, in terms of making some noise, Hong Kong is the best place to do so,” says Fung. The real surprise package of 2002, however, was a pretty-faces

Strong comeback: Hacken Lee

Chou could signal a turnaround. Both acts are presented as genuine musicians who write music and play instruments, as well as being photogenic pop stars. The labels

TAIWAN

Continued from page APQ-1

upbeat track, “Magical.” Warner paid to have karaoke clubs cut in

with the song in the mid

night hour. The ad campaign on Sun Yanzi’s behalf may well be a sign that Warner, and the rest of the music industry here, is hoping for a bounce-back after 2003, the two years of sliding sales, due to piracy and an economic downturn.

Cursory, the success of Sun Yanzi and that of fellow chart-topper Jay Chou (Alfa Music International) may also be a hint that the A&R focus in Asia is shifting. If the trendsetters are correct, then creative A&R could be returning to Taiwan music in 2003, with labels hoping to focus on their market efforts on talent and making their acts more regional. While the industry has been quick to blame piracy and the economy for its ills—and those factors are undeniable—critics say an underlying problem has been Asia’s long-standing reliance on pre-packaged pop acts with catchy tunes yet little but marketing to distinguish one artist from another.

This year, however, Yanzi and

Storied diet: Sun Yanzi and Kuraki Mai

are keen to sell them on more than their cute looks.

“If it’s just an image, it doesn’t last,” notes Sam Chen, domestic GM for Warner Music Taiwan.

At the same time, Chen can’t help playing up the artist’s winning smile and personality. He’s also hoping that a strong campaign based on one track can be enough to lure music buyers. While Yanzi’s fifth album, To Be Continued, has 10 Chinese songs, Warner has focused on the track “Magical” in all its media spots. An upbeat track with Mandarin lyrics, “Magical” has a deliberate Indian flavor and is accompanied by a music video made to look like Bombay. Such a high-energy song, while no stranger to Sun, is not exactly the standard that made her first four albums successful. Yet Yanzi and Warner had no hesitation about putting all their focus on that one track.

Chen admits that both the marketing and A&R were indeed a big risk—but worth it. “The things we’ve been trying to do is lead her to places she’s never been before,” he says.

A lucrative sponsorship deal valued at an estimated $285,000 has made the financial risk more viable. One of the tracks on To Be Continued will be featured in commercials for Universal President Group’s brand of iced-tea. A sponsor’s logo on international copies of the CD, plus

www.billboard.com  www.americanradiohistory.com

BILLBOARD  FEBRUARY 8, 2003

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Combustion’s Engine Drives
More Than Typical Nashville Fare

BY JIM BESSMAN

On the surface, Combustion Music appears to be the typical Nashville music-publishing company.

“We have a house on Music Row with writers’ rooms, and they come in and write every day,” says Chris Farren, co-president of the company with Vector Management president Ken Levitan. “But our cuts have been so diverse, and our activities are very unlike the typical Nashville publisher.”

Indeed, Combustion Music, which also includes a production company and soundtrack label, is the atypical partnership of Farren—a songwriter/producer who brought 20 years of experience living and working in Los Angeles to Nashville—and Levitan, a Nashville music-business veteran who manages the likes of Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt.

According to Levitan, the company’s 2-year-old publishing side has scored more than 70 cuts, including India.Arie’s “Good Man” from the Combustion/Sony We Were Soldiers soundtrack album. Co-written by Combustion’s Drew Ramsey, the song was nominated for a Grammy Award in the best R&B song category.

So the main thing we’ve tried to do at Combustion is not be boxed in any matter or limited to any one format,” Levitan notes. “Our cuts range from Aaron Lines to Blake Shelton, Johnny Cash, and Martina McBride on the country side to

Dave Matthews, Michael McDonald, India.Arie, and Richie Sambora. We’re also developing new songwriter/artists that the press is jumping all over, like Nathan and Caleb Followill of Kings of Leon, which both Rolling Stone and NME have picked as one of the top new alternative bands of 2003.”

Levitan also singles out new signings Simon Bruce—an unbelievable rock alternative songwriter from Australia—Canadian writer/artistproducer Gordie Sampson, and singer/songwriter Andy Gulla-horn, who has penned songs for his artist wife, Jill Phillips.

Combustion’s other writers include Blair Daly, who has written for Lynyrd Skynyrd; Ashley Gorley, who has co-written with Lines and Kelli Cofey; and Houston Robert, who wrote “Smoke Rings in the Dark” for Gary Allan.

“We’ve signed 11 writers, but only four are pure country songwriters, and the other seven are in between country, rock, and R&B—or they’re also artists,” Farren continues. “People look at us and scratch their heads, wondering how these guys get cuts by Dave Matthews and India.Arie, but it’s blossomed through our combined film and management connections, production clients, and trips between the West Coast and New York: With me living in L.A. for 20 years and Ken being a globe-trotter, we both spend lots of time on either coast. But we choose to live in Nashville, where we want to incorporate the ability of all these great Nashville-based songwriters and give them the opportunity for broader exposure.”

Farren and Levitan joined forces when Farren produced the Warren Brothers, a former Vector Management client.

“When we started the publishing side of Combustion, it was a joint venture with Windswept Publishing, as I’d been a writer there for 12 years,” Farren says. “But we’ve since stepped up to a stand-alone, self-contained publishing company, administered by Windswept.”

HUTCHINSON’S PERFORMANCE:

“When you do something for the love of it and see the changes you have to go through and then look back and have it actually become a business—while you’re still holding on to the passion of it—…” says Performing Songwriter founder and publisher/editor Lydia Hutchinson, trailing off but conveying justifiable pride in the 10th-anniversary issue of her Nashville-based magazine.

“It has its own identity,” Hutchinson hastily adds. “It’s not tied into me as it used to be—where I used to know every single person who read it. It’s taken on its own life.”

Los Santos on the cover but also features spotlights on Susan Werner and Maia Sharp.

In ’95, Billy Joel turned down Rolling Stone and did an interview here,” Hutchinson waxes. “I started crying [because] the moment was so huge.” She further gushes over talking with Randy Newman about his song craft and sitting down with Chaka Khan and running one of Maurice White’s last full interviews when he was with Earth, Wind & Fire. “It’s a joy to talk to people who’ve been influential in my life,” she says, “then to spend a day with James Taylor on his birthday last year and do the first interview for his album—when he doesn’t do many print interviews, I don’t know what else I would want.”

Performing Songwriter Hutchinson concludes, “is a joyful place for people who love music,” in keeping with her stated goal of providing “a sense of community for the songwriting world, so that someone sitting somewhere in Peoria can feel part of something they love. And people like Janis Ian, who’s been writing a column for us since the first issue, have stayed through thick and thin. ‘People believed in the magazine and that’s why we’ve lasted for 10 years.’

YIPPEE!
The Harburg Foundation, which was created to ensure the continued influence of the legendary lyricist E.Y. “Yip” Harburg’s work and social outlook, has changed its name to the Yip Harburg Foundation.

“The word ‘Yip’ is more magical—and that’s what everybody called him!” says foundation president (and Harburg’s son) Ernie Harburg, who reports that its Web site is correspondingly now yipharburg.com. “Everything will have ‘Yip’ on it.” Harburg adds, noting that a book of his father’s lyrics is forthcoming, along with a documentary film. “We’re talking ‘Yip’ all the time!”

And if that’s not enough, the foundation itself has moved to a new theater building at 10th Street and 1st Avenue in Manhattan, “about four blocks from where Yip was raised—and a block from both the Yip Harburg room at the Tompkins Square Library and the Yip Harburg Audito-rium at Public School 19. It’s a veritable Yip Harburg neighborhood.”

There’s no change, though, in Harburg’s Glocca Morra Music publishing company—named, of course, after his song “How Are Things in Glocca Morra?” hit from the 1947 Broadway musical Fin-land’s Rainbow (music by Burton Lane).
Tower Pulls Out Of U.K.; HMV Quits Germany
Sale Of Tower's Mexico Stores Also Announced In Tough Week For Retailers

BY TOM FERGUSON

London—The harsh realities of music retailing in Europe were illustrated Jan. 24 when, within a few hours of each other, Tower Records and HMV confirmed that they were pulling out of, respectively, the U.K. and Germany—the continent's two largest music markets.

The first announcement of the day came from HMV Europe, which confirmed on the morning of Jan. 24 that it is to quit Germany, where it has three outlets, after some six years in the territory. Then in the late afternoon came confirmation in London that Tower's Sacramen
to, Calif., parent, MTS, was to pull out of its two London stores within the next three months, having "agreed [on] terms with Virgin Retail Group to assign its remaining [U.K.] store leases...and to transfer its staff when the retailer ceases trading."

HMV is closing its German stores in Frankfurt and Munich almost immediately—the company says they were to be shuttered at the end of January. Its Oberhausen outlet will continue trading until lease negotiations are concluded with the landlord, which HMV expects will be before the end of May. HMV's German head office, also in Oberhausen, will shut down once the retail outlets are closed. The company says that "most, if not all" of the 83 staffers in Germany will be laid off.

The German operation is headed by Oberhausen-based GM Marc Meyer, who reports to HMV Europe managing director Paul Ryde in London. Ryde says of the closures: "It's a tough market, and it's been a tough decision. We've tried our damnedest, and it just hasn't worked."

"I really wanted to make a go of it," he adds. "We only opened our second and third stores two years ago; it took quite a while to find sites that we were happy with. We were very careful about where we opened, and we've had really good people in Germany, but we've just not pulled it off. The business has just not made the returns that we need, and the [German] market is very, very tough. Our model of retail just doesn't suit this market; perhaps another one will."

The move leaves HMV Europe—the core of HMV Group's global business—wholly concentrated in the U.K. and Ireland. It currently has 156 U.K. stores and seven in Ireland.

On Jan. 16, the HMV Europe division reported like-for-like sales growth of 6% for the six months ending Oct. 26, 2002, compared with the same period in 2001.

Simon Wright, London-based CEO of Virgin Retail Group parent Virgin Entertainment Group, says he is sympathetic to Ryde's position. "We went to Germany several years ago and subsequently pulled out," he recalls. "The German music market is particularly bad at present, but it's also a very difficult market to get into."

But, Wright adds, "from a music retailer's point of view, the significant be actively involved in running the Tower stores: operations of both Tower and Mixup will be supervised by Mixup founder and board head Ian Massy. "Mixup and Tower will be totally separate," Massy says. "We'll respect Tower, and it will continue to be Tower."

Tower currently also has stores in Colombia, Argentina, and Ecuador, which have been operated by local licensees since their inception. In light of that, the Mexico move made sense, according to Tower director of marketing for international licensing Mike Jansta. "We want Tower to be successful, but this limits our risk in those markets," Jansta says.

Tower Records U.K. CEO Andy Lown will leave the company when the stores are handed over. He tells Billboard, "I've been professionally involved in the planning and implementation of this process for 18 months, and while I'll be sad to see the discontinuation of the Tower stores in the U.K. after more than 17 years, I'm still proud of them."

Lown says huge rent increases were key to Tower's U.K. problems. "Piccadilly was our flagship store," he says, "bringing in 50% of the turnover. It suffered a rent increase of over 50% about 18 months ago. That's a massive overnight hike in costs that I don't think most businesses could absorb and survive."

He adds that the increased strength and price-cutting strategies of supermarket chains also contributed to the situation.

STAFF REACTION
Lown says the reaction of Tower's 186 U.K. staffers to its decision has been "positive, professional, and very strong. Nothing less than I'd expected. We're committed to working with the vendors, continuing to serve our customers during the wind-down, and then working with Virgin Retail Group on the future."
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Hits of the World is compiled at Billboard/London.
**EUROCHART**

Eurocharts are compiled by Music & Media from the national singles and album sales charts of 18 European countries.

### SINGLES

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### COMMON CURRENCY

A weekly scoreboard of albums simultaneously attaining top 10 chart status in three or more leading world markets.

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**Global Music Pulse**

Edited by Nigel Williamson

**BANGING BEATS**: Bhangra, the folk beat from Punjab in Northern India, has spawned an unlikely European pop hit, with the success of Punjabi MC's "Mundian to Bach Ke" (Beware of the Boys). The infectious dance anthem links a traditional Indian vocal recorded in Punjab by Bhangra vocalist Labh Janjua to a sample of Busta Rhymes' "Gimme Some More." The song debuted on the U.K. charts at No. 5 upon its release in January. Punjabi MC (real name Rajinder Rai) is a 27-year-old British-Asian from Coventry, England, and the track (now on Instant Karma) was first released on his 1998 album Legalized on Nucharal Records, becoming a cult favorite on the Asian club scene. "I started this in 1993, with some hip-hop and some Indian folk sounds," Punjabi MC says. "Mundian to Bach Ke" has also sold 100,000 copies in Germany since its release. **NYA BHUSHAN**

**BOSNIAN VICTOR**: Bosnian pop prodigy Deen was the biggest winner at the first annual Music Awards. The awards ceremony was organized by Nazif Gjica, one of the most popular folk singers in the Balkans, and took place in January in Sarajevo. Deen, 20, took home awards for best pop artist and best pop album for his solo debut release, Ja Sam Vjeter Zaludjen (I Am a Wind In Love), released in April 2002. His current single, "Bojle Za Nas" (Better for Us), was nominated for best pop single of 2002. Sarajevo-born Deen, who started his career with boys’ band Seven Up in 1997, takes a realistic view of the awards and recognizes that the Bosnian music industry is still in its infancy. "There is no comparison between our music awards here and the ones in Croatia," he says. "The awards are based on sales and organized by the local music industry. Our have been inaugurated on the initiative of individuals." Deen is working on a follow-up to his successful debut, which was released throughout all the former territories of Yugoslavia. He tells Billboard, "I am working on a second album, collaborating with English-language songs with Munich-based producer Sebastian Thorer, and we will be testing their reception in the European market." **TATJUN KESON**

**LION'S SHARE**: Flemming "Bamse" Jorgensen ("bamse" is Danish for "teddy bear") has never heard of late South African songwriter Solomon Linda when he had a hit in 1975 with "Vimbersvej." He wrote Danish lyrics to "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," which has been recorded by acts as diverse as the Tokens, Pete Seeger & the Weavers (who called it "Wimoweh"), and Glen Campbell. What he did not know was that the song had been written by Linda, who recorded it in South Africa as "M'bube." When Jorgensen recently learned that Linda had received very little payment for the many covers of his hit song, he decided to reconcile with his band, Bamses Venner, and give all the royalties to Linda’s two daughters in Sweden, Johannesburg. The single will be released March 3 on Re:Art; an album featuring the track will follow two weeks later. **RE:ART**

**BACK TO AFRICA**: The life of legendary West African singer/guitarist Boubacar Traore — known to his fans as “Kar Kar” — has been documented by his French director Jacques Sarasin in the film Je Chanteur Pour Toi (I Will Sing for You). The film, which is accompanied by a soundtrack album of the same name, is narrated by Jonathan Demme and follows Traore, now based in Paris, on his return to Mali, the land of his birth. The album also features Grammy Award-winning Malian guitarist Ali Farka Toure. The film opened in French cinemas in January. **GERMAINE PON**

**HUMAN POP**: Belgian band Das Pop delivered one of the country’s most remarkable albums in 2000, L’Amour (First). Now the group — consisting of Niek Meul, Bent Van Looy, Reinhard Vanbergen, and Lieve Moors — is set to release the follow-up, L’Human Thing. Due for release Feb. 14 in Belgium, the album is preceded by the single "You," which is already achieving airplay on alternative and mainstream stations. The Human Thing is Das Pop’s first release on its own label, also nanoranced on sales and organized by the local music industry. Our have been inaugurated on the initiative of individuals.” Deen is working on a follow-up to his successful debut, which was released throughout all the former territories of Yugoslavia. He tells Billboard, "I am working on a new English-language songs with Munich-based producer Sebastian Thorer, and we will be testing their reception in the European market." **TATJUN KESON**

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Canada’s Be Good Tanyas Emerge From ‘Chinatown’ To Worldwide Success

BY LARRY LeBLANC
TORONTO—While the Be Good Tan-
as were recording their sophomore album, Chinatown, representatives of their label, Nettwerk Productions, deliberately stayed clear of the album, representatives from U.S. and English vehicle celebrated Australian performer Trish Klein (guitar, banjo, vocals) and reconoced such traditional blues as “House of the Rising Sun” and “In My Time of Dying,” better known as versions by the Animals and Led Zeppelin, respectively. There are also covers of Townes Van Zandt’s “Waiting Around to Die” and Peter Rowan’s “Midnight Moonlight.” Parson penned two of the original songs appearing on the album, and Ford penned four, including the focus track, “It’s Not Happening,” and “Junkie Song,” which reflects Vancouver’s well-publicized heroin problem. “We all live on the perimeter of Chinatown,” Parson notes. “That’s why we’ve called the album Chinatown. It’s our neighborhood.” Parson says the group felt confident helping the project themselves, because they had a clear vision of what they wanted. “We didn’t think we needed a producer,” she says. “Most of the songs had been road-tested. Also, what we do is so simple that it doesn’t require a lot more than the cliché on the wall, rich but what we had.”

For the sessions, the trio was augmented by its regular backup of bassist Andrew Burden and drummer Glenn Eidsness, as well as Jolie Holland on fiddle and vocals, Martin Green on accordion, and Ford’s mother, Diane Williams, on harmonies. One of the album’s many joys is the marvelous playing of cornetist Ola DeToilet.

The trio came together four years ago in the hohemian town of Nelson, British Columbia, where back-to-the-land supporters and neo-hippie artists thrive. Klein and Ford were playing in soulful folk band Saltwater June, and Ford also played with Parson in an early version of the Be Good Tanayas. Saltwater June broke up, and Klein joined the Be Good Tanayas. The band took its name from the song of the same name, written by her friend Obo Martin.

Parson says the trio continues to struggle with being an independent band while taking its music to a wider audience. “We were scared about signing with Nettwerk, and I still have misgivings about it, because it wasn’t in the plan for us. We still have some trepidation that this is going to be one of these people involved in our music. We played a show with Joan Rivers recently in New York. Now that was bizarre.”

France Bucks Trend In 2002

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND
CANNES, France—Despite the positive figures for the French market unveiled at the MIDEM trade fair Jan. 20 in Cannes, France (Billboard Bulletin, Jan. 21), the director general of the country’s labels body, SNEP, says France’s music business cannot rest on its laurels. France bucked the anticipated trend in most major markets during 2002 by posting a 1.4% rise in the value of music shipments to 1.3 billion euros ($1.4 billion), according to SNEP; units rose 3.3% to 171 million compared with 2001.

SNEP director general Herve Rony says local repertoire accounted for 58% of overall shipments last year. According to SNEP, nine of the 10 best-selling albums in France during 2002 were Francophone titles.

“The figures are good,” Rony says, and “France remains an untapped market. However, we do see potential clouds coming our way. There’s a tough international environment, CD burning is also affecting us, and the online piracy cloud has not stopped at the French border.”

A total of 39.3 million singles (against 38 milli- on in 2001), 125.7 million albums (against 122.8 million), and 3.8 million video music carriers (against 3 million) were shipped in 2002.

Another source of satisfaction last year was the industry in the 2002 figures was the ongoing success of French acts outside the coun-
y. Statistics for 2001 show that French and French-signed acts came close to 40 million units, an increase of 1.6% over 2000. Eric Morand, founder of French indie record company La Faim Music, says, “despite a bad international climate, sales by French artists are still on the rise, which is a tribute to the quality of the artists and the teams working with them.”

For the sessions, the trio was augmented by its regular backup of bassist Andrew Burden and drummer Glenn Eidsness, as well as Jolie Holland on fiddle and vocals, Martin Green on accordion, and Ford’s mother, Diane Williams, on harmonies. One of the album’s many joys is the marvelous playing of cornetist Ola DeToilet.

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Australian Market Fell Back In 2002

BY CHRISTIE ELIEZER
SYDNEY—After posting a 10% rise in unit shipments for 2001, annual figures from the Australian Record Industry Assn. (ARIA) showed a 4.4% fall in volume and a 5.9% decline in value for 2002.

Suppliers shipped 61 million units, including music video, compared with 63 million units in 2001. Value was down to $696.5 million Australian ($352.5 million) from $647.6 million Australian ($376.5 million) during the same period. Total single shipments fell from 12.4 million units in 2001 to 11.5 million in 2002; albums fell from 49.6 million to 47 million units.

One growing concern is that market share of local repertoire shrunk from 17.2% to 15.6%. Only five local acts—Kylie Minogue (Festival Mushroom Records [FMR]), Kasey Chambers (EMI), George (FMR), Silverchair (Eleven/EMI), and John Farnham (BMG)—were big sellers during the year, according to ARIA.

Those five represented 26% of the total volume of the 20 biggest-shipping albums of the year.

ARIA is considering introducing new events to increase the profile of Australian acts among consumers and the media. Last year, initiatives included a new award for chart-topping acts and showcasing debut acts before radio programmers proved successful.

ARIA has also made an impact on the figures. ARIA chief executive Stephen Peach says: “Piracy is about 9% of the Australian market,” he says. “What we have been seeing (during the past 12 months) is the emergence of ‘backyard’ CD burning operations, whereas once, CD burning operations were by large-scale operators.” Peach says he is confident that current discussions with the government will see changes to the Copyright Act this year, leading to more effective litigation regarding pirates.

Peach also adds that he expects file-sharing to continue to grow with broadband penetration. “The market penetration of broadband in Australia is still just 3%,” he says, “compared to the U.S., where it is between 10% and 12%. Inevitably, we expect the take-up in Australia to accelerate and create a problem as major as it is in America.”

Among the brighter points for suppliers and retailers was the ARIA figures, which is the accelerating growth of music DVDs, with shipments of 2.3 million units, worth $36.9 million Australian ($21.4 million), up from 955,000 units, worth $18.9 million Australian ($10.9 million), compared with the year before.

That is good news for independent retailers, who have been losing CD sales to heavy price discounting by mass merchants, says Gavin Ward, managing director of the 200-outlet indie chain the Leading Edge. “We independents are looking closely at music DVDs.” Ward says, “because mass marketers don’t understand it and keep away from it. But music makes up 30% of Leading Edge’s DVD sales, and over the next five years, we expect a massive shift (in sales) from CD to DVDs.”

The ARIA figures also show some signs of movement away from the rock-dominated album market of old. The body says the two biggest-selling album artists of the year were Universal’s Eminem and Sony’s Shakira, both of whom shipped 500,000 units in 2002. The consensus from retailers is that although units were down, a wider range of titles was sold overall, notably in the urban genre.

MTV Asia Awards Draw Industry Approval

BY STEVEN PATRICK
SINGAPORE—Canadian singer Avril Lavigne was the big international winner at the Asia Awards (MAA) Jan. 24 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

The BMG artist—who also performed live at the event—collected awards in the female artist and breakthrough artist categories and also won the style award. MTV’s second annual Asian music awards show—co-hosted by Shaggy and Sony-signed, Hong Kong-born Mandarin pop singer Coco Lee—also saw Asian artists looking beyond their respective home territories and tailoring their music and performances toward more regional and international audiences.

A joint live performance by a medley of their hits by four of the region’s top singers—He Yong Sun (Deca/Singapore), Kris Dayanti (Warner/Indonesia), Palmi (RPG Records/Thailand), and Siti Nurhaliza (SRC/Malaysia)—illustrated that regional approach. Similarly, Singapore’s Stephanie Sun (Warner), who performed her song “Magic” during the ceremony, made a point of thanking her supporters across the region—“whether they are from Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or China”—while accepting her award for favorite Singapore artist.

Industry insiders attending the event were positive about the progress they see it making. EMI Malaysia managing director Darren Choy says, “The whole presentation of the MAAs is a lot more spectacular than last year. It’s becoming more credible.”

Viewers voted on the awards either via short-messaging service or online between Nov. 1, 2001, and Jan. 15, 2002. A total of 19 awards were presented during the three-hour event—10 national, six international, and three special awards, including the style and movie awards. MTV says the show was broadcast live to 150 million homes regionally and was also in front of an audience of 7,000,000.

MTV SouthEast Asia and Network Group senior VP/managing director Peter Bullard claims that the “show put the cream of the cream from all over Asia and the world on one stage. The 10 performances [that night] were arguably the best of their kind, fusing the best of East and West. Both the live event and the finished TV product were world-class by any standards.”

But Choy does not see the event having a direct impact on sales, “because it’s a regional show, and it’s not targeted toward specific markets.” The event is, he suggests, “more a statement that MTV makes on the music being produced in Asia.”

Malaysia’s Nurhaliza, Hong Kong’s Sammi Cheng (Warner), and the Philippines’ Regine (Viva Music) won their respective countries’ favorite artist awards for the second year running. The remaining national winners were: Mainland China, Yu Quan (Rock Records); India, A.R. Rahman (Sony); Indonesia, Cokelat (Sony); Korea, J.-Y. (Yesung Entertainment); Taiwan, Jay Chou (Alpha Music/BMG); and Thailand, DB (HS Music).

Britain’s Robbie Williams (EMI) raised some eyebrows by giving away his international male artist award to a member of the audience during the event, which ended with The Police (EMI/UK), Kryz (EMI/Philippines), Ella (EMI/Malaysia), and a local artist singing “One Love,” a song specially composed for the evening. Other performers, who also acted as presenters during the evening, included Velamais, Missy Elliott (Warner), Atomic Ritten (EMI), and Suede (Sony).

Thai Government Toughens Anti-Piracy Stand

BY ANDREW HIRANSOMBOON
BANGKOK, Thailand—Signaling a stronger anti-piracy stance than it has in previous years, the Thai government has announced that it plans to target not only individual outlets here selling pirated goods but also the owners of the shopping malls where many are located.

A new Thai government report has found that pirated music titles, computer software, and movies are openly sold in 12 major shopping malls and commercial areas in Bangkok, which it names. They include properties owned by some of Thailand’s most influential business families. Deputy commerce minister Watana Muangsuk has now gone on record to insist that all wrong-doers will be prosecuted—with no exceptions.

The need to increase Thailand’s anti-piracy measures comes as Thailand’s most influential business families have long been accused by the government of being the major source of pirated music titles, computer software, and movies are openly sold in 12 major shopping malls and commercial areas in Bangkok, which it names. They include properties owned by some of Thailand’s most influential business families. Deputy commerce minister Watana Muangsuk has now gone on record to insist that all wrong-doers will be prosecuted—with no exceptions.

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Tough action and more severe punishment than we’ve seen in the past will be very helpful,” Chuanarun says. “While we believe that piracy will always exist, measures like these will help control it.”

As part of its campaign, the Commerce Ministry is trying to encourage greater cooperation between various state agencies. Some 13 of them, encompassing police, utilities, tax, customs, and consumer-protection agencies, recently signed a memorandum of understanding, which the government says will lead to further reductions in piracy. All parties to the agreement expressed a commitment to enforcing intellectual property rights and initiating new anti-piracy measures.
Billboard magazine and Billboard Bulletin sponsored a cocktail party at the 2003 MIDEM conference Tuesday, Jan. 21 at the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France, to thank the international community for its continued support. Billboard staffers Tom Ferguson, Irwin Kornfeld, and Gene Smith spoke about Billboard's plans for international coverage in 2003.

Guests at Billboard's "Thank You" reception at MIDEM listen to remarks by Billboard international editor Tom Ferguson.
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Radio To Labels: Drop Dead?

BY DANA HALL, SEAN ROSS, PHYLISS STARK, and BRAM TEITELMAN

Airplay is high, prompted by No. 1 with label folks but a distant No. 3 at radio. That survey also promised PD suggestions that label "get [their] own house in order" and stop "giving stations Amex gift checks," implying PDs see the high cost of doing business solely as someone else's fault. While some label execs do see some empathy, others just see it as par for the course for two industries that have always had different goals. Few senior VP of R&B promotion/marketing Larry Khan says that "there are some [industry-savvy] PDs who do care about what's happening to labels and "some who don't." And in defense of the latter, "They are experts in what they do and focused on their job." But Khan also says that today's tougher environment means that "the balance of power has shifted from the record company to the radio side" and that the camaraderie and friendship aspect of this business is less of an issue. Relationships mean less and less. Ten years ago, we could all be at a convention, and even though we didn't have common goals, there was still camaraderie, because of [our mutual] love of the music. That day is long gone.

A LITTLE BIT OF SYMPATHY

"The professional gentlemen and women of radio who care about the business as a whole see the big picture, understand and empathize with those artists, and those masters, who are mutual problems," Virgin VP of rock promotion Ray Gmeiner says. But, on both sides of the industry, he says, "there are those that have their head in the sand, do their own thing, and don't care about anything but their own thing. They're insensitive and don't see the big picture. We know who they are, and we know who the ones that are care. Epic VP of pop promotion Tommy Nappi says, "They had better have sympathy, because it affects them. But a lot of these guys don't know that." One R&B executive, who asked to remain anonymous, adds, "Our lack of success will affect their success. I don't believe the larger group of programmers understand that." And "even if the PD you work with on a daily basis is sympathetic, his budget constraints will deter him from incorporating the entire picture of what the records need, especially if he's looking to his superiors for support." The secret is to keep the lines of communication open and keep a positive mindset.

ASKING FOR LESS? A FEW ARE

So is any of this sympathy translating to more promotions of records for promotional support? Gmeiner says, "Those people that see the big picture are somewhat more understanding that they can't have their way all the time. Those people are realizing that [we all have] problems, and some are being a bit more reasonable in their expectations." But "I don't get those cut-and-dried requests," adds one PD. "I get more like, "Can you support us on this?" to the unnamed R&B exec says. Instead of saying, "It's all this or nothing," now they might ask for a lot but settle for part of a promotion. Therefore, they know we have certain budget restrictions." But he adds that PDs still feel justified in "asking for artists to perform at station shows for free. And that is becoming more difficult, because many of the stations are not making any money yet." And Khan says most stations expect the same support from labels, if not more. "For both the labels and radio, it's a numbers game but not necessarily a quarterly numbers, which foster this 'everybody for themselves' atmosphere. So no, programmers are not willing to take less of a promotion or even less favor, if it could hurt them competitively." That being the case, how possible is it really for labels to solve their own problems, as PDs suggest? Well, when it comes to file sharing, Khan says, "It's completely incumbent on the labels." While he appreciates Clear Channel's anti-bootlegging ads, "It has to be solved by us. I don't care if you're talking about the music business or movies—if the consumer can get something for free, why should they want to pay for it? It's not effective to have some rap artist who owns five cars and is wearing five-karat diamond earrings telling kids he's losing money because they buy a bootleg CD.

The diminutive, rotund, high-powered Carter stole the show with performances of the Fat's Waller standards "Mean To Me" and "Honeysuckle Rose." She collected a Tony Award for best featured actress in a musical and also won an Emmy Award after the cast reunited in 1982 for a TV special based on the musical. Ain't Misbehavin' was recognized with a Grammy Award in 1979 for best cast show album. The play was revived in 1988, with Carter taking top billing.

Eduardo "Gato" Alquinta, 57, of a heart attack, Jan. 15 in Coquimbo. A pioneer of Chilean music, Alquinta was the singer/guitarist and founder of Chilean folk-rock group La Tumba Rusa, which was celebrating four decades together this year.

Doris Fisher, 57, of illness, Jan. 15 in Los Angeles. A composer best known for her collaborations in the '40s with lyricist Allan Roberts, the duo created such hits as "That Ole Devil Called Love" for Billie Holiday, the Mills Brothers' "You Always Hurt the One You Love," and Ella Fitzgerald's "The Ink Spots' "Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall." The ASCAP member also co-wrote the classic "Tutti Frutti," which Little Richard took to No. 2 on the R&B charts in 1956. Fisher is survived by two children and two grandchildren.

Eddie Levine, 84, of cancer, Jan. 15 in Los Angeles. Holding several promotion positions with labels Kama Sutra, United Artists, and De-Lite, Levine earned the title "Fast Eddie" in the recording industry. During a career that spanned more than 40 years, Levine was VP of Blue Note Records and executive VP of Avenue Jazz. He was instrumental in developing the careers of such acts as Jimi Hendrix, Gordon Lightfoot, Kool & the Gang, Donald Byrd, and Horace Silver. He is survived by two sisters, a daughter, a grandson, and a great-grandson. A memorial service will be held Feb. 9 at the Baked Potato Jazz Club in Los Angeles.

Diana Lemchak, 40, and her husband, Gary Clugston, 37, in an apparent murder-suicide, Jan. 23 in Chestnut Ridge, N.Y. Lemchak, a 1984 graduate of Barnard College in Manhattan, started out as a production manager for a renowned record company, becoming its national distribution director before joining the then newly formed underground dance label Warlock Records in 1987. She was executive VP at the time of her death. Clugston worked with numerous R&B and dance acts, including Jamocha, TKA, Ultramagnetic MC's, and MC Lyte. A memorial is being planned by Lemchak for more information, contact Lemchak; for more information, e-mail memorial@warlockrecords.com.

Stan Martin, 64, of a stroke, Jan. 28 in New York. A longtime radio personality and broadcast executive, Martin began as one of the first on-air hosts of Tribune Broadcasting's WPXF-FM, eventually becoming the national syndicated host/producer/writer of Dick Clark's United States Radio Networks' Solid Gold Country. As station manager, Martin later transformed the New York Times Company's New York AM stations WOR and WOR-FM into the Williams WQEW-WAM. He is survived by his mother and two sisters. Contributions may be made to the Boys & Girls Republic, 888 East 6th St., New York, N.Y. 10009.
ROCK ROLLS UPHILL: Early in his career, rocking rapper Kid Rock seemed an unlikely candidate for country radio airplay. Don’t look now, but a track that got its first play from country stations is at the foundation of a rally that sees Kid’s latest album match its highest chart peak to date—and it doesn’t look like it’s done climbing yet.

With a 22% gain, his “Cocky” jumps 15-7 on The Billboard 200, which is where the album bowed more than a year ago when it hit stores Nov. 20, 2001. The title stands at 59,000 this frame, marking its third straight increase and its 12th in the past 15 weeks.

There’s more than one catalyst for the album’s rise, but the drum major for this march has been the song “Picture,” which features either Sheryl Crow or Allison Moorer, depending on which station you listen to. The track bowed on Hot Country Singles & Tracks in the Oct. 12, 2002, issue, rising this issue to No. 44, its best rank thus far. It entered the all-formats Hot 100 Airplay list at No. 70 in the Dec. 21, 2002, issue and has soared since it migrated to adult top 40 and mainstream top 40 stations, flying 26-19 this issue.

Kid’s prominent position in Country Music advertising has also lifted his profile, and this issue’s jump is further fueled by his Jan. 24 appearance with Crow on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno.

AND ALL THAT JAZZ: In the aftermath of the film’s triumph at the Golden Globe Awards, as well as its growth at the box office, the Chicago soundtrack sees a 10.5% gain over prior-week sales (92,000 units). It rises 4-2 on The Billboard 200 and is in contention to become the champ of next issue’s chart (see A Look Ahead, page 8).

The movie claim climbs 5-3 at the box office on $8.4 million in ticket sales. This issue’s tracking week also saw cast members Richard Gere, Renee Zellweger, and Queen Latifah visit The Tonight Show With Jay Leno while John C. Reilly hit Late Show With David Letterman.

With American Idol returning to Fox—with even better ratings than it had when the series became an instant summer hit—the competition from the first generation of Idol finalists re-enters the soundtrack list at No. 16 with a 34% spike.

The chart also sees Frida re-enter at No. 21 after its soundtrack won a Golden Globe (up 13%). Blue Crush (No. 22) and Sweet Home Alabama (No. 24) return to the chart following those films’ home-video bows, with the former riding a 44% gain.

AN HONOR JUST TO BE NOMINATED: Norah Jones locks her third week at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 (112,000 units, down 2%). For the second time during those three weeks, her Come Away With Me is the only title to sell 100,000 units. Not bad for an album that defies easy categorization and is still being discovered by radio a whole 11 months after its release. Of the 207 monitored stations from various formats now playing lead track “Don’t Know Why,” two are adult contemporary stations that aired it for the first time ever during the week of Jan. 20 (see Singles Minded, this page).

With the artist receiving five Grammy Award nominations and her album garnering three more nods, Jones has obviously benefited from exposure spun by Grammy consideration but is not the only act to do so. Joe Nichols posts his third straight increase, with a 7% bump moving him to No. 1 on Heatseekers, 16-12 on Top Country Albums, and 123-105 on the big chart. Dixie Chicks, who didn’t show up to pick up a pair of American Music Awards during that Jan. 13 telecast, nonetheless garner gains in two consecutive weeks (No. 1 on Top Country Albums; No. 4 on The Billboard 200); they’re aided by “Landslide,” which motors 15-10 on Top 40 Tracks.

Patti Austin’s For Ella re-entered Top Jazz Albums at No. 7 (where it remains), higher than the No. 12 peak it managed before it was nominated. Fat Joe (No. 160) and Floetry (No. 188) each re-entered the big chart since they were nominated; the former is this issue’s Facesetter on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums (69-56, up 48%). Jennifer Peña has two straight gains on Top Latin Albums (47-33, up 30%) and Spanish Harlem Orchestra (No. 59) re-entered for the first time since the Nov. 23, 2002, issue.

HAYING IT ALL: “All I Have” by Jennifer Lopez, featuring LL Cool J jumps 5-1 on The Billboard Hot 100, knocking off B2K’s “Bump, Bump, Bump” after only one week at the top. It is Lopez’s fourth No. 1 on the chart and LL Cool J’s first in his long career (see Chart Beat, page 88). “Have” earns Greatest Gainer/Airplay honors with an improvement of 18.9 million listener impressions. That is the largest gain for a song rising to No. 1 since Usher’s “U Got It Bad” gained 20.4 million listener impressions in the Jan. 19, 2002, issue as it reclaimed the No. 1 spot.

If B2K’s “Bump” fails to return to No. 1, it will be the first one-and-out No. 1 in almost two years. “Angel” by Shaggy Featuring Rayvon made a quick appearance at the top of the page in the March 31, 2001, issue.

EXTINUATING CIRCUMSTANCES: A new round of allegations is not enough to deter R. Kelly on the charts. “Ignition” continues to reign on the R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales chart for a 15th week, extending a record for that chart that he set in the previous issue. In doing so, Kelly bests his own mark of 13 weeks at No. 1 for “Bump N’ Grind” in 1994 that was later equalled by Deborah Cox’s “No One’s Supposed to Be Here” in 1998.

“Ignition” also earns Greatest Gainer/Sales honors on The Billboard Hot 100 with a unit gain of 22%, while the title’s overall audience jumps by 13%, indicating that radio and consumer appearances are being unfazed by Kelly’s legal troubles. The title jumps 17-13 on the Hot 100 while holding at No. 2, behind Kid Rock’s “Picture” on Hot 100 Singles Sales. On Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks, “Ignition” is pushed down a peg to No. 3 by 50 Cent’s “In Da Club,” which earns Greatest Gainer/Airplay honors, thanks to a 20% audience gain that moves it 4-2. Aaliyah’s “Miss You” also posts a modest gain at No. 1, making next issue’s chart champ a tough one to call; the top three are separated by fewer than 200 points. At the rate of its recent week-to-week increases, 50 Cent’s “Club” feels like the favorite.

MAD RUSH: Terri Clark competes in a crowded top five on Hot Country Singles & Tracks in hopes of scoring that chart’s first No. 1 single by a solo female in almost a year (Singles Minded and Chart Beat, Billboard, Jan. 18, 2002). Against 19 detections, Clark’s “I Just Wanna Be Mad” advances 5-3 but trails the No. 2 title by 377 plays and lags 1,116 spins behind the No. 1 song. Meanwhile, Mark Willis claims a fifth week atop the chart with “19 Something” while Blake Shelton’s “The Baby” gains 116 to hold at No. 2. This chart hasn’t sported a solo female chart-topper since Martina McBride’s “Blessed” reigned for two weeks beginning in the March 30, 2002, issue.

If Clark ultimately fails to hit the summit, the next likely female candidate is Shania Twain, whose “Up” gains 37 spins and rises 17-16. Not far behind Twain is newcomer Jennifer Hanson, whose debut single “Beautiful Goodbye” achieves airplay status in its 27th chart week (24-18). Hanson’s road to Airing status is the longest since Tammy Cochran’s “I Cry” took seven weeks to do so in the May 18, 2002, issue. The most weeks to reach Airing in the BDS era was logged by Gary Allan’s “Right Where I Need to Be,” which crossed the threshold in its 35th chart week in the issue dated March 31, 2001.

IN THE KNOW: After peaking at No. 14 two weeks ago, Norah Jones’ “Don’t Know Why” rebounds 18-16 in its 27th week on the Adult Contemporary chart with a gain of 38 detections, making it four of the past five weeks that it has posted an increase. Due to this growth, “Why” is allowed to remain on the chart even though it rests in recurrent territory (below No. 15 and more than 26 weeks on the chart). “Why” will be relegated to the recurrent chart in the next week in that it ranks lower than No. 15 and posts a loss in detections.
### Billboard 200 Chart

**Week Ending February 8, 2003**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 1 Song</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>No. 1 Weeks</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Weeks At Number 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>BABY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Come Away With Me</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>WHITNEY HOUSTON</strong></td>
<td><strong>Just Whitney...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>93</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>VARIOUS ARTISTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disneymania: Superstar Sing Disney... Their Way!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>T.A.T.U.</strong></td>
<td><strong>PACESETTER/HEATSEEKER IMPACT</strong></td>
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**Top 50 Songs**

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<th>No. 1 Weeks</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOLANGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>NEW</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>FEBRUARY</strong></td>
<td><strong>SONG OF THE WEEK</strong></td>
<td><strong>Solo Star</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>BABY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Birdman</strong></td>
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**New Entries**

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**Greatest Gainer**

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**Top Albums**

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<td><strong>SONG OF THE WEEK</strong></td>
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**Billboard® 200®**

Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.
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**Heatseekers**

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### What’s Next?

As we operate in a historically challenging retail environment, Billboard’s spotlight on NARM navigates through uncharted waters. We assess the health of specialty music chains, highlight online retail activity and report on new, innovative packaging that labels are using to boost consumer appeal.

Join Billboard and our 125,000 readers in more than 100 countries for this important report!

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**Contact:** Joe Mainone 646.654.4694
646.654.4799x jmainone@billboard.com

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### Billboard February 8, 2003

#### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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### Billboard February 8, 2003

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*Notes:*
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Continued from page 1

Pricing Defy the Economy
Kathy Spanberger, president of North America for indie firm Peer-Music Publishing, calls the state of valuations “curious . . . Sometimes there are multiples—especially multiples near and above 20—times that are thrown around that are completely unrealistic.”

Sanford C. Bernstein analyst Michael Nathanson acknowledges that in competitive markets, companies typically pay either the right or slightly above fair price in making acquisitions. “But what’s weird is they haven’t come down much, given the state of recorded music.”

Sellers see the situation differently. “I do not believe the market is overinflated,” says Randy Poe, president of Leiber & Stoller Music Publishing. “Songs properly promoted and properly exploited are always going to generate substantial amounts of income to justify the kinds of multiples that are being paid right now.”

So why do publishing values continue to rise?

“One of the reasons publishing valuations have been relatively high is because there are so few accumulations of good stuff,” says Michael Sukin, an attorney with the Sukin Rish Law Group who works with publishing clients. “It’s not like signing a new artist. There aren’t 500 choices. So when one catalog becomes available, it’s highly sought after.”

What’s more, publishing is viewed as the best place to invest in the music industry right now. It is regarded as a conservative investment that is fairly generative. And it is prized to take advantage of growing performance revenue, thanks to improvements in copyright law around the globe and the growing medium for music.

This has not been lost on major music companies, which, in their quest for stable revenue sources to underpin the recorded-music side of their businesses, have been aggressively moving to expand their catalogs by gobbling up independent assets.

The publishing arms of the major labels and other large publishers have been the most aggressive buyers of the biggest catalogs. Among the most recent deals:

- Sony/ATV Tree acquired Nashville’s historic Acuff-Rose Music Publishing last year for $157 million—a premium of 16 times NPS.
- In 2000, Universal Music Group acquired Rounder Music for an estimated $400 million—a multiple of 18 times NPS.
- EMI Music Publishing bought the Windspent Pacific Catalog for $200 million in 1999 at an estimated multiple of 20 times NPS.

Additionally, BMG last year picked up Zomba Music Publishing as part of a larger $2.74 billion acquisition deal with Zomba Music Group, and BMG Music Publishing last year acquired the publishing catalog of Toronto-based Song Corp., one of Canada’s biggest and most important music-publishing caches. (The latter deal was not subject to typical price inflation because the assets were acquired as part of a bankruptcy settlement.)

Naturally, the majors are said to figure into the discussions regarding the assets currently up for grabs. EMI, for instance, was reported late last year to be looking into the catalog of Boosey & Hawkes, which is home to the rights to compositions by Igor Strawinsky, Béla Bartók, and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

EMI Music Publishing chairman/CEO Martin Bandier acknowledges the company is exploring an acquisition for the catalog; however, he cautions that there is no deal at this point. He says, “There’s a lot to be done at Boosey & Hawkes for them to be able to dispose of their music-publishing business.

Arc Music—with its classic blues and R&B catalog that includes works by Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Howlin’ Wolf, and John Lee Hooker—and Leiber & Stoller Music/Quartet Music have also been looking. A very large publisher recently acquired part of Boosey’s classical music catalog; however, Sukin says, “There are more and more financial groups coming together and trying to make inroads. I bet you’ll see more.”

John T. Frankenheimer, co-chairman of law firm Loeb & Loeb, which oversaw the Acuff-Rose transaction, says interest in the publishing market on the part of financial institutions and investment groups makes sense.

“They recognize that there is a real opportunity,” he says. “If you have a large invested interest in royalties—own it, have your equities, you have bonds, you have real estate—you also are probably well-advised to have intellectual property assets that have a proven track record and can show proven earnings over an arc of time.”

The rise in competition from outside investors for publishing assets is also helping boost valuations. Spanberger says, “There’s more dollars chasing fewer deals, so pure economics drives up prices.”

Greater competition for publishing assets comes at a time when the biggest music publishers are starting to lose some of their own power to pursue acquisitions due to corporate belt-tightening.

Frankenheimer says, “A number of larger publishing companies are chasing each other in their own performance or their own valuations but because of the current situation of the parent companies, and it makes it more difficult for them to be as aggressive as the private equity firms.”

Advisors to publishing deals contend that the multiples that publishing catalogs were selling for previously—a multiple of six to seven times performance royalties and synchronization income—have been challenged by larger publishing companies as well.

They say it’s the extended and continuing use of such music at higher and higher license prices by film, television, and commercials that really drive the value of these catalogs. Advisors say the decrease in record sales, publishing executives say that going forward, valuations are going to be based more on performance and synchronization income and mechanical income will be downplayed. That could be good news for the prospects of these catalogs as Arc Music, Leiber & Stoller, and Boosey & Hawkes.

Just how much these assets will fetch is a subject of curiosity in publishing circles. Published reports have speculated that the Boosey & Hawkes catalog will sell for as much as $86 million. The Arc and Leiber & Stoller assets could go for even more, sources say.

Some in the industry fear that if the catalogs do sell for multiples that push the boundary of 20 times NPS, return on investment will be difficult to justify. Still, there is near-universal acknowledgement that, like it or not, it is a seller’s market. “It’s kind of like the real-estate market—it’s a good time to sell,” Spanberger says. “You’re getting a very high value.”
Dave Alder says, “We’re going to be featuring over 100 music titles and supporting those with DVDs like The Color Purple throughout the month. The promotion starts Feb. 4 and runs through March 24. We’re promoting the campaign with regional advertising across all formats and are developing a number of events surrounding the video side of things.”

UrbanWorks has worked out price-and-positioning programs for the title with a variety of major retailers, including Walmart. Ads are also running on BET, which will be rebroadcasting some of the programs throughout February.

Xenon Pictures is taking advantage of the educational market for their Black History Month releases: the direct-to-video Raising Tennis Aces: The Williams Stories ($14.98 VHS, $19.98 DVD) and The Rosa Parks Story ($19.98 DVD), a 2002 TV movie starring Angela Bassett. Both were released Jan. 21.

“These aren’t films that come with giant theatrical pedigrees,” Xenon president Leigh Savidge says, “but they are extremely relevant films that can shine now.”

Xenon is marketing the programs with traffic support in retail placement and consumer advertising. Savidge reports that schools and libraries have been placing large orders.

Additionally, on Jan. 14, the company released new DVDs including Nightlights: The True Story of the 332nd Fighter Group; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Historical Perspective; Mahalia Jackson: The Power & the Glory; and Sweet Sweatheart’s Baddassas Story (20th-anniversary edition) for $19.98 each.

Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, which released Claudine (starring an Academy Award-nominated Diahann Carroll and Sugar Hill (Wesley Snipes) for the first time on DVD Jan. 14, sees Black History Month as a great way to highlight titles to a specific audience. “The African-American audience is a very good market,” Fox senior VP of marketing Peter Staddon says. Fox will support titles with circulars and other advertising in markets with large African-American populations, such as Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Viacom Entertainment, MGM Home Entertainment, and Showtime Entertainment are also releasing new or catalog titles they are promoting in conjunction with Black History Month.

While major-label participation may not be as extensive as it has been in the past, some companies are coordinating significant campaigns. Among the most ambitious is Putumayo World Music’s efforts on behalf of its Global Soul collection. Released Jan. 21, the compilation draws upon the influence of R&B/soul/hip-hop around the world. The set includes tracks by France’s Doc Gyneco; U.S./A.K.‘s 1 Giant Leap Featuring Speech, Neneh Cherry, and Nellee Udahl; and Germany’s South Africa’s Joy Denalane. “This music will appeal to the typical world-music fan and almost anybody in the contemporary R&B/hip-hop movement,” Putumayo founder and CEO Dan Reynolds says. “The label isn’t going to imagine it’s worth investing money to break an artist in the urban world here. What we’re trying to do with this compilation is play a role in helping that process along.”

The label’s belief in the universal appeal of Global Soul is such that it has coordinated a major U.S. marketing campaign to coincide with Black History Month. On the print front, Putumayo is engaging such magazines as Vibe, Ozonereal, and Global Rhythm. At retail, the label is doing price and positioning, banners, and listen- ing stations with Virgin Megastores, Best Buy, and the Coalition of Independent Record Stores. Additionally, 2,500 specialty accounts are stocking the title, according to Putumayo.

In collaboration with BET Digital Networks, Putumayo is also producing a one-hour video program hosted by Speech of Arrested Development. Airing during February on BET’s outlets, the program will spotlight artists who have been inspired by contemporary R&B and neo-soul. “People in the U.S. aren’t usually as aware of music that’s going on outside the U.S.,” Speech says. “We have a lot to learn about the other colors and textures of music around the world.”

SPEECH

SOUL GOES GLOBAL

Speech is also the host of a Global Soul radio special produced for the label’s syndicated Putumayo World Music Hour, which airs to the 120 commercial and noncommercial stations that regularly carry the show, it is being offered to urban radio stations across the country.” We’re trying to reach the urban audience here without compromising the integrity of the music,” Putumayo director of marketing and promotion Cassandra Goins says. “There has been some resistance, because getting people to think out of the box is a challenge.”

Another key Black History Month event is Right Track Entertainment’s The Experience with George Duke, set for Feb. 26 in Chicago. The evening is another installment in the ongoing adult-focused Experience speaker series. Origin- ator Dedy Jones ties the event in with the 38- store urban retail collective Independent Music Group. Former Experience suitees have featured A Jarea and Will Downing.

Presented in conjunction with Duke’s label BPM Records and a retail partner, the event will comprise an interview with Duke, a question-and-answer segment, and an autograph session. Duke will also speak to music students at Chicago State University earlier that day.

“George is the perfect artist to feature during Black History Month,” Jones says. “He has worked with everyone from Miles Davis and Cannonball Adderley to Frank Zappa and Kelly Price. Not only can he provide a lot of information but also a lot of inspiration.”

The Heineken Music Initiative—which supports music education in urban communities in part through sales of artist compilations—is sponsoring a Black History Month radio campaign. The campaign is set to kick off Sat- urday (1) on such outlets as WQHT New York, KKBET Los Angeles, WEDR Miami, and WVEE Atlanta. The spots showcase Black Ice’s “Be Myself,” a poem about freedom of self-expres- sion. “It’s just a quick look at the times; how at a certain point our elders were going through the same kind of generation gap struggles,” says Black Ice, who also stars in the current Broadway show Def Poetry Jam.
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   Warby graduated from the University of Liverpool in 1995 with an honors degree in English language and literature. She reports to Billboard managing editor Michael Ellis.

The next installments of the showcase series will take place in Chicago and Nashville for the Midwest and Southeast regions, respectively. Deadline for Midwest entries is April 4. For information, call 888-800-5796 or visit disc-makers.com/music/imw.

Dirty Power has won the International Sales of the Independent Music World Series (IMWS). A national unsigned artist competition, the IMWS is presented by CD manufacturer Disc Makers in association with Billboard's Musician's Guide to Touring & Promotion and other sponsors. Dirty Power (see story, page 18) was among six finalists chosen by a Billboard judging panel to take part in a live showcase and competition Jan. 16 at the Knitting Factory in Los Angeles. The San Francisco-based rock band was voted best out of the six at the competition by a second panel of judges comprised of music business and media professionals, including two Billboard judges.

As the grand-prize winner, Dirty Power took home over $35,000 in prizes, including a complete Disc Makers CD manufacturing package, tons of music gear, memberships, and more.

The next installment of the showcase series will take place in Chicago and Nashville for the Midwest and Southeast regions, respectively. Deadline for Midwest entries is April 4. For information, call 888-800-5796 or visit disc-makers.com/music/imw.

Dirty Power has won the Independent Sales of the International Music World Series (IMWS). A national unsigned artist competition, the IMWS is presented by CD manufacturer Disc Makers in association with Billboard's Musician's Guide to Touring & Promotion and other sponsors. Dirty Power (see story, page 18) was among six finalists chosen by a Billboard judging panel to take part in a live showcase and competition Jan. 16 at the Knitting Factory in Los Angeles. The San Francisco-based rock band was voted best out of the six at the competition by a second panel of judges comprised of music business and media professionals, including two Billboard judges.

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TO HAVE IT ALL: It's not the longest wait in history for a No. 1 song on The Billboard Hot 100, but you still have to credit LL Cool J for having a lot of patience. He made his first appearance on the chart 15 years and seven months ago, and this issue he collects his first chart-topper.

The song that did it for LL Cool J is "All I Have" (Epic), his collaboration with Jennifer Lopez. It's a track that almost didn't make her latest album, This Is Me... Then. The album was complete—for producer Cory Rooney thought—when Tommy Mottola, then-head of Sony Music, heard a demo track he thought could be a hit and asked Rooney to work on it. Before it he even played it for Lopez, Rooney asked LL Cool J to meet him at Benihana's. That's where Rooney played the song for him and asked him to guest star on the recording with Lopez. It was only after LL Cool J agreed that Rooney played the track for Lopez while she was making a film in Philadelphia. The night of the VH1 Fashion Awards, Lopez drove to New York and recorded "All I Have."

The song is Lopez's fourth to reach pole position. "If You Had My Love" was her first, with a five-week run that started in June 1999. "I'm Real," featuring Ja Rule, also had a five-week reign, starting in September 2001. Ja Rule joined Lopez on the follow-up, "Ain't It Funny," which spent six weeks at top beginning in March 2002.

LL Cool J was most recently in the top 10 with"Lux U Better," which peaked at No. 4 in November 2002. His biggest hits until now were "Hey Lover," which peaked at No. 3 in December 1995, and "Louchin,'" which went to No. 3 in August 1996.

LL Cool J's other song in the top 40 portion of the Hot 100 this issue—"Paradise" (Def Jam), with guest star Ameritz—slides 36-40.

GOT GAME: For the 12th week, "The Game of Love" by Santana Featuring Michelle Branch is No. 1 on Adult Top 40 Tracks. Its predecessor in pole position was "Complicated" by Avril Lavigne. Add the 16-week reign of "Complicated" to the 12-week run of "Game," and you have a 28-week domination of this tally by one label: Arista.

It's the longest run for one label to hold the No. 1 spot in this chart's history. The previous record was 25 weeks, held by one song: "Smoothly" by Santana, with guest artist Rob Thomas. That single was also released on Arista.

BUENOS AIRES VS. CHICAGO: The soundtrack to Chicago moves up to No. 2 on The Billboard 200, tying Exhale as the most successful movie adaptation of a Broadway musical since Grease was No. 1 for 12 weeks in 1978.


Music In The Morning

WPLJ (95.5) New York's Scott & Todd in The Morning show held its 11th annual benefit broadcast and rock'n'roll auction from Bethesda Children's Hospital in Westchester, N.Y. This year's lineup included Joan Osborne, Rob Thomas of Matchbox Twenty, Dave Matthews, and John Mayer. WPLJ raised more than $300,000 in donations for the children's hospital. Pictured, from left, are WPLJ's Todd Pettengill, Matthews, Thomas, Mayer, and WPLJ's Scott Shannon.

Miller In The Evening

During a tour in support of his solo debut on Elektra, The Instigator, Rhett Miller, left, played at House of Blues (HOB) in West Hollywood. He is pictured with HOB talent buyer Mike Krebs.

Weekend At Bernie's

Boz Scaggs, left, is pictured with mastering engineer Bernie Grundman during sessions for But Beautiful, a collection of American standards performed with a jazz quartet. Stated to hit the shelves this month, this is Scaggs's first independent release, in collaboration with Jimmy Buffet's Mailboat Records.

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