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Management: Emilio Estefan Jr. for Estefan Enterprises.
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'96 was a stormy year in the record business.

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Renaissance Soul: Retail, Radio & Labels See R&B Revival

For Badu, Marketing, Broad Appeal Pay Off
BY SHAWNEE SMITH

NEW YORK—Retail and radio are attributing the breakout success of debut artist Erykah Badu to her multifaceted, cross-generational appeal and an aggressive marketing plan.

Badu's debut Kedar Entertainment album "Buduim" notched first-week sales of 159,000 units, and it totals 968,000 units sold to date since its release on Feb. 11, according to SoundScan.

(Continued on page 112)

McDonald's To Offer Disney Compilations
BY CRAIG ROSEN

LOS ANGELES—Nearly three years after an EMI Records Group premium promotion with McDonald's angered music retailers, Walt Disney Records hopes a similar campaign will make the label heroes to consumers and retailers.

(Continued on page 118)

IN THE NEWS

Retail Reacts To Teaming Of Wal-Mart, Aerosmith
PAGE 12

Indies Tops In First-Ever Study Of U.S. Latin Mkt.
BY JOHN LANNERT

Latino independent labels dominated the U.S. Latin record industry in 1996, according to a distributor market-share report issued by SoundScan.

The report, which is based on 1996 album sales from SoundScan reporters in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, is the first of its kind to be issued by SoundScan. It also marks the first time that the sales activity of the U.S. Latin record business has been officially documented.

According to the Hartsdale, N.Y., company, which collects point-of-sale information from retail and rack accounts, Latin indie accounts for nearly 37% of the 15 million units sold by SoundScan-tracked retailers.

(Continued on page 112)

Labels, Artists Renew Commitment To Quality
BY J.R. REYNOLDS

LOS ANGELES—Traditional R&B is coming back in a big way, with records from the genre performing strongly among hip-hop and R&B singles charts, and albums easily keeping pace with other styles on the Hot R&B Singles chart.

A key reason for R&B's vigor is a renewed commitment to melody and positive lyrics on the part of artists, backed by equally creative marketing strategies by label executives.

(Continued on page 111)

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(Continued on page 112)

R&B Adult Radio Finds Treasure In Young Acts
BY DOUG REECE

LOS ANGELES—R&B adult stations, which draw upon one of the richest catalogs of hits in any music genre, are for nearly 37% of the 15 million units sold by SoundScan-tracked retailers.

(Continued on page 112)

Vets Say New Acts Help Revitalize Their Careers
BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—"Old school" is definitely luck in session on the charts and at radio, as veteran R&B performers are enjoying a new burst of commercial prominence.

A host of talent, including '90s R&B pioneers, '90s soul pathfinders, and 70s and '80s funksters, have roared back onto the current charts. Observers say that a bumper-crop of contemporary R&B artists who are mining the genre's bedrock styles, and the continued presence of old-school samples on hip-hop tracks, have helped pave the way for acceptance of the old-school grads at both mainstream R&B and Urban.

(Continued on page 110)

Trans World Stronger After Restructuring
BY DON JEFFREY

NEW YORK—Trans World Entertainment, which has undergone a painful restructuring for the past two years, has turned around and reported a strong fourth quarter and fiscal year. It now says it is poised for growth again.

The Albany, N.Y.-based chain closed 15 stores in 1996, has increased its market share in Urban and R&B music, and has generated positive sales growth for the last two quarters.

(Continued on page 121)

Warner Bros., Reprise Labels Downsize Staff
PAGE 12

Wake up with us...

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Anita Cochran: ‘Back To The Family’

There is much talk of late that we shall soon be able to clone ourselves. Civil libertarians and marketers, we have always known the power to foster and forge new life—along with the challenge of cherishing it—and our success rate with such matters has thus far fallen shy of impeccability. But in all we manage to savor, there seem few developments more surprising than offering who freely choose to emulate or augment the best traits of their parents. The scientist could call this mere coincidence, and the cleric might pronounce it a blessing, but only the artist, who sometimes every secret of the human heart, understands it as an ordinary miracle.

“My father and me, we played almost every day—’he’d say, ‘Go get your guitar!’” recalls singer-musician-instrumentalist Anita Cochran, a girlish blond talent whose debut album, “Back To You” (Warner Nashville, due April 22), is as much a showcase for her fourquare songwriting as it is for her flamboyant Fender Strat and Telecaster. In guitar circles, her accomplishments have gone beyond all anyone’s conception of the country music process stems from an upbringing in a crowded household (three older brothers vs. Anita) where music saturated every hill, trace, and breathing spell. “My dad was a great guitar player,” Cochran continues. “He plays Chet Atkins- and Merle Travis-style, so I grew up with that as influences. My mom also played guitar and singing, and all my aunts and uncles play guitar and sing, so it’s a very common trait in our family.

“I started playing when I was about 4,” Cochran adds, “and the very first song I learned was ‘Folsom Prison Blues.’ I remember being 5 when I joined my mom and dad’s band and would go away with them every weekend, doing country in talent shows and all that kind of stuff, and that realized that she was playing all the instruments. The well-rounded, no-props completeness she showed as an artist was just incredible.”

“When Jim said, ‘Come down,’ I loaded my truck and drove to Nashville in 1995,” says Cochran with a shy giggle. “I brought all my Tuscan recording equipment and all my instruments, including my first Telecaster, a ’52 reissue from Wonderland Music in West Bloomfield, Mich., that I was finally able to afford in ’92—I think I played ‘Country Boy’ by Ricky Skaggs, go on it as soon as I bought it. That truck was pretty well packed.”

Cochran plainly had the gear to make the transition from Midwestern obscurity to Music City repute, and the appeal of “Back To You” is due to its sure ability, economy of manner, and honest sentiment. The great promise it holds matches the homespun work ethic that birthed it, Cochran’s demure but determined intent being to, quite simply, repay the belief her folks had placed in her. “I’m very close with my family,” she confirms. “I found my ‘family’ in that kind of love lost, and I-it happened to me, and I put myself in her situation, realizing I am a product of the people I love.”

It may sometimes seem that the human race is on the verge of doing its’ worst. To think, act, and become better than we honestly know ourselves to be is probably the only heroism possible in any practical sense, and it’s also the premise of most art. The starting gate is often the smallest, little instant in anybody’s day, like the sound of some father making a gift of his good time to his kid: “Go get your guitar!”
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Produced by Michael Phillip Wojtowicz
Management: Jonny B & Co.
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Michael Tilson Thomas
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"Prokofiev: Romeo & Juliet (Scenes From The Ballet)"

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"So Much To Say"

Nat King Cole
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"When I Fall In Love"

Bruce Springsteen
Best Contemporary Folk Album
"The Ghost Of Tom Joad"

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Enrique Iglesias
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"Enrique Iglesias"

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Louis Armstrong, "Mack the Knife"
Marc Blitzstein, Berthold Brecht and Kurt Weill – Writers
Gene Autry, "Back in the Saddle"
Gene Autry and Ray Whitley – Writers
George Gershwin, "An American In Paris"
Nathaniel Shilkret, "An American In Paris"
George Gershwin – Writer
Free Ride For Local-Language Song Adapters

BY M. WILLIAM KRASILSKOV

Why are American and British composers and musicians, some among the most numerous German, Spanish, Italian, and other non-English-speaking writers? International performance rights societies normally license their songs to English-speaking societies. As a result, for many years, these societies received receipts for European performances that fail to disclose the several instances where Continental societies take a further charge for social assistance plans for local members and a further “cut-in” charge for unused local-language versions of English-language pop standards.

American and British writers have a special dedication applied on logged performances of English-language records, and the money goes local-language adapters who had no part in delivering the songs sung by Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and other American and British artists.

It all reminds me of a vintage Tin Pan Alley joke: “How do three people collaborate on a song together?” Answer: “One writes the music, another writes the words, and the third says, ‘That’s good!’” In the matter under discussion, the American and British writers deliver not only a winning song that continues to get played over the years, but one that is performed by artists who never learned a word of German, Spanish, French or their languages and certainly did not record the song in those tongues.

More specifically, why is there an involvement of non-language adapters? Perhaps the original English-language versions of songs by such artists as Chuck Berry, Paul Anka, and Bob Dylan and by entreaties such songwriters as Hoyo Carminich, Vincent Yousman, Dorothy Fields, and the Gershwin’s? Why should Otis Blackwell get less than full royalties on Elvis Presley-recorded versions of his songs “All Shook Up” and “Don’t Be Cruel?”

Music is an invisible “export” in the world of international trade. Local-language versions are sometimes encouraged and sometimes successful, but nevertheless, original English-language versions are often the only ones, regardless of whether the language and the names the same, the third says, “That’s good!” In the matter under discussion, the American and British writers deliver not only a winning song that continues to get played over the years, but one that is performed by artists who never learned a word of German, Spanish, French or their languages and certainly did not record the song in those tongues.

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Considered to have “contributed to the exploitation” of the original song. It took some 10 years to occur, but, at a meeting of the Administrative Council of Amalfi, Italy, a stronger resolution was adopted. This 1991 resolution incorporated a 1980 Declaration of the International Council of Authors of Music and co-sponsors that a sublyricist should never collect on royalties when there is no dispute that it was the American or British song. The Amalfi Resolution recommends that the local societies’ distributions should be for a performance of a local version, that shares should be equally distributed to the original lyricist and the sublyricist; and that for performance of an instrumental version or a version in which its music was included. The resolution, which was performed, the original lyricist should receive double the share of the sublyricist. The resolution says these recommendations should apply to all performances from Jan. 1, 1991, onward, regardless of when the original works were composed.

CISAC resolutions do not have binding legal force over member societies; however, local societies have adopted these or similar terms for distribution of royalties. Unfortunately, some societies are applying this only to works that were registered with the societies after a specific date, and no one has addressed the issue of correcting payment schedules on songs originating prior to this. Perhaps the justification for this inertia is that it would be a burdensome clerical task to adjust tens of thousands of earlier registry schedules. Nevertheless, it is clear that the objecting English-language author or composer should send a specific termination notice or demand for correction of unauthorized cut-in.

As to the social assistance tax, in the age of international horse-trading under General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade principles, it seems that American and British negotiators should object to the unfair imbalance of this excessive tax. Otherwise, they might have been cashing in on this injustice for several decades with no excuse for perpetuating the injustice a copyright world. In a news release last year by Rus Kaas, the Fugees, Gravity, and Chino XL, to name a few, why seek for more of the same self-destruction that’s been force-fed to the public at large?

As a merchant and producer for hip-hop at Terrace Records, I try out of my way to offer an alternative to music buyers who seek these artists. Why? Because I believe in hip-hop. When Afrika Bambaataa founded the Universal Zulu Nation, a variation of color were created to build and develop with knowledge, skill, and unity. In a few of the great records released last year by Ras Kaas, the Fugees, Gravity, and Chino XL, to name a few, why seek for more of the same self-destruction that’s been force-fed to the public at large?

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EMI-Capitol Forms Arm For Catalog Sales

NEW YORK—In an effort to further enhance the sales of catalog, EMI-Capitol Music North America has created EMI-Capitol Entertainment Properties, which will be staffed by about 125 employees and headed by president Bruce Kirkland, the former Capitol Records executive VP.

Kirkland, who primarily focus on titles from artists no longer signed to EMI-Capitol labels, will handle such trophy properties as the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Frank Sinatra, Garth Brooks, Pink Floyd, Steve Miller Band, Nat "King" Cole, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Joe Cocker, and Dolly Parton.

The move continues a trend that has occurred in the industry as catalog sales have softened because of the turn-around in music retail. Due to a price war and oversaturated music retail space, stores have been cutting down on inventory and as a result carrying fewer catalog titles. The six major have seen catalog sales drop by as much as 25% and have responded by adding catalog sales slots to their distribution companies, and, in some instances, at the labels as well.

PolyGram Group Distribution created the PolyGram Catalog Development Group to oversee the six catalog titles, special markets, and the Chronicles division. It oversees product lines expected to generate $50 million in revenue this year. Last year, EMI-Capitol created the (Continued on page 112)

2 More Studios Expected To Issue Titles On DVD

BY SETH GOLDSTEIN

NEW YORK—Hardware manufacturers have filled in most of the blank spaces on the DVD launch map. Now it’s software’s turn, and trade sources say at least two of the Hollywood studios that have withheld commitment to DVD have pulled the plug on their slipping titles in the next couple of months.

“Those are others,” said Ingram Entertainment sales and marketing executive VP Vern Fross at a March 6 announcement of the arrival of Toshiba America Consumer Products’ DVD players. Ingram, the biggest U.S. distributor of prerecorded cassette, will market DVD titles to Toshiba’s consumer electronics dealers who normally don’t carry rental or sell-through video.

Fross would not name the majors he believes will follow Warner Home Video and Columbia TriStar Home Video, leading the late-March rollout of the 6-inch optical disc format. But Disney and 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment reportedly are close to climbing aboard the DVD bandwagon and, in fact, have already told their video distributors what titles they expect to issue and when, observers indicate.

As for the others, Paramount and Universal say they’re awaiting copy protection legislation specific to DVD before entering the business. “Most of them are doing their due diligence,” (Continued on page 114)

Zomba Buys Benson Group Plans Christian Music Umbrella Co.

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—In the wake of Zomba’s acquisition of the Benson Music Group (Billboard Bulletin, March 4), there will be a restructuring of Zomba’s Christian music ventures in the next few months. Company executives will determine the best game plan for Zomba’s Christian music imprint, which now includes Brentwood Music, Reunion Records, and the Benson Music Group.

Zomba first entered the Christian market three years ago with the purchase of Brentwood Music, which includes the Ransoms, Brentwood, Sublime, Essential, and Brentwood Kids labels. The foray into the Christian market has been a fruitful one for Zomba, most notably marked by the platinum success of Essential/Silver-tone act Jars Of Clay.

In October, Zomba purchased Reunion from BMG, acquiring a roster that includes Michael W. Smith, Gary Chapman, Kathy Troccoli, and Third Day, Dan Zobmba adds Benson to the family, purchasing it from Music Entertainment Group (MEG), a venture capital company formed by the late Michael R. Smith and Mark Brickman, brickman, E.R. Wargur, Pineus, and Co. Benson Music Group also includes Diadem Records, which Zomba acquired in 1996. Among the artists on the Benson and Diadem rosters are 4HIM, Bob Carlisle, Mathew Good, Phil Walker, Fred Hammond, New Song, and Dino.

Following Farrell’s death last year, MEG president/CEO Steve Fret took over Benson’s helm. He will now be based in New York, working with Zomba during the restructuring. (Continued on page 26)
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Stansfield's 'Real' Soul
Arista To Relaunch Singer In U.S.

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—Lisa Stansfield's live performance March 4 at a label showcase here has confirmed her status as England's foremost exponent of traditional R&B pop soul.

Her presti- gious showcase, at Riverside Studios in Hammersmith in west Lon- don, was attended by Arista executives from around the world. "I'm here to testify to what all of you know," Arista Records president Clive Davis told the multinational crowd, "that Lisa Stansfield is a star." She is already shining strongly again on the U.K.'s sales and airplay charts; a remix of her 1989 vocal with Coldcut, "People Hold On," is a recent surprise top five entry, and the new single "The Real Thing" is receiving blanket play. Stansfield's self-titled fourth album is being released by Arista in the U.S. March 24, with U.S. release to follow April 25.

Her live performance, like the upcoming album, underlined the fact (Continued on page 18) that Lisa Stansfield is a star.

Casual Tonalities Imports Japan's Pugs To States

BY STEVE MCCLURE

TOKYO—Few Japanese bands boast a transatlantic keyboardist. But then, few Japanese bands are as surreal as the Pugs, whose leader, Hoppy Kamagawa, wears costumes onstage that would make Ed Wood Jr. green with envy.

The Pugs are by far the most visually oriented band in the steady stream of Japanese alternative acts trying to make a go of it in the U.S. (Continued on page 52)
Selena’s Influence Felt At Tejano Music Awards

BY RAMIRO BURR

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Nearly two years after his death, Selena’s music continues to permeate the Tejano music scene. The late singer was directly or indirectly responsible for influencing 15 Tejano Music Awards (TMA) presented here March 1.

Comedian Paul Rodriguez hosted the awards, which were voted on by the public (with the exception of select industry categories). Held at the cavernous Alamodome, the ceremony featured performances by Ruben and Alfonso Ramos, Jay Perez, Elida Reyna, Nydia Rojas, Ricardo Castillon, and Michael Salgado, among others. Of special interest was the performance by Grupo Limite from Monterrey, Mexico; it arrived fresh from a record-breaking performance, along with Emilio, Feb. 22 at the Astrodome in Houston. Limite/Emilio set a new attendance record there at 61,993.

At the awards show, Selena took posthumous honors for song of the year (“Siempre Hace Frio”), Tejano crossover song (“Yo Quiero Saber”), and female vocalist of the year. But her unofficial successor, 13-year-old Jennifer Peña, grabbed female entrant honors, marking the first in the last eight consecutive years that Selena did not win in both categories.

Peña was discovered by Selena’s father, Abraham Quintanilla Jr., in May 1995, and has been managed and booked by his Q Productions agency since then. Quintanilla also produced Peña’s debut album, “Dulura,” and assisted in getting Peña signed to a recording contract with EMi, the label for which Selena recorded.

Selena’s influence was also felt by Pete Astudillo, her former backup singer from Laredo, Texas, who grabbed two album awards, one for best album/orchestra and one overall, for his “Como Te Extraño,” the title track of which was Astudillo’s tribute to Selena and his late mother.

Emilio grabbed vocal duo honors with brother Ramul and was also named artist of the year. Despite the honors, this year marked the first time in five years that he did not sweep both male categories.

Instead, fast-rising sister-sensation Michelle Salgado captured male-vocalist honors. Newcomer Bobby Pulido, son of famed Tejano/country pioneer Roberto, was named most-promising band. In the video category, voted on by a panel of judges, officials announced a tie between “Hay Unos Ojos,” by Nydia Rojas and Ricardo Castillon in a duet, and “Paloma Negra,” by Austin’s Ruben Ramirez.

Since the early ’90s, Tejano has been one of the fastest-growing genres in American music, exploding in popularity and fandom beyond its base in the Southwest. In recent years, it has generated record-setting album sales, performance revenues, and chart successes.

From the start, Selena and Emilio have provided direction and inspiration, both launching successful crossover careers: Selena posthumously with her “Dreaming Of You” pop album, which sold 3 million copies, according to her label, and Emilio with his debut country album, “Life Is Good” on Capitol Nashville, which is approaching sales of 400,000 copies, according to the label.

The awards ceremonies capped a busy week of events here. On Feb. 20, the famed fairTalent Showcase, officials estimated some 20,000 fans flocked to Market Square to see new bands and line up for autographs.

Morissette Ties Hootie At 15 Million

BY CHRISS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—Alanis Morissette’s “Jagged Little Pill” kept going and going in February, racking up a certification for a new sales peak of 15 million units from the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA).

The Canadian singer/songwriter’s 1995 Maverick/RCA effort was the best-selling debut album by a female artist, is one of the three albums in the Billboard (Epic), which trails the reigning champ, Boston’s self-titled 1976 Epic album, by just a million units and is tied with Hootie & the Blowfish’s “Cracked Rear View” (Atlantic), their 1994 major-label debut on Atlantic.

A pair of double-CD sets achieved multiplatinum awards in February. The Beatles’ “Anthology 3” vaulted to triple-platinum (equating to 3 million units), since certifications reflect the number of discs in a package; the set became the Fab Four’s 20th multiplatinum release. And “Emanacipation,” 4’s NPG/EMI label debut, went double-platinum (equaling sales of 2 million).

Beyond Morissette’s continuing triumphant performance, it was a good month for women in music. Grammy Swain’s Tejano/mercy Nashville, 9 million.

On Toni Braxton’s “Fool’s Gold,” contemporary Christian groups Point Of Grace (Word) and the Newsboys (Star Song), and R&B vocalist Dru Hill (Island).

Whitney Houston’s “I Believe In You & Me” became the pop/R&B vocalist’s fourth platinum single and 14th gold single.

A complete list of February RIAA certifications follows:

MULTIPLATINUM ALBUMS


Shania Twain, “The Woman In Me,” Mercury Nashville, 9 million.


Celine Dion, “She’s So Unusual,” Epic, 6 million.

No Doubt, “Tragic Kingdom,” Trauma/Interscope, 6 million.

Blue Traveler, “Four,” A&M, 6 million.


Jewel, “Pieces Of You,” Atlantic, 3 million.

Brooks & Dunn, “Waitin’ On Sun,” (Continued on page 26)

Comedy Revival Bodes Well For Ray Stevens’ MCA Set

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—With such comedians as Jeff Foxworthy, Bill Engvall, and Cedric “T.” Judd gaining exposure on the charts, TV, and the concert tour, country music is enjoying a healthy resurgence. Veteran comedian Ray Stevens aims to tap into that ground swell while giving the new kids a run for their money with the Tuesday (11) release of “Hum It” on MCA Nashville.

The album comes after a number of direct-marketing successes for Stevens. In 1996, he produced “Ray Stevens’ Comedy Video Classics,” direct-marketed the title through a TV ad campaign, and sold more than 2 million units, according to Stevens. He followed that in 1998 with “Ray Stevens Live,” a performance video of a show in Branson, Mo., which sold more than 1 million units, according to Stevens. In 1999, he produced a longform music video, “Get Serious,” which had a successful run through direct marketing before being released to retail late last year via MCA.

Stevens and executives at MCA are hoping that the level of visibility the comedian has achieved with his TV marketing, will help to boost sales for the new set in the retail arena.

“People used to think that direct marketing would hurt retail,” Stevens says, “but it’s just the opposite. It promotes it because there are so many people out there that see ads that won’t pick up the phone and buy the record, but if they see it in the store later, they’ll remember seeing it on TV and buy it.”

(Continued on page 26)
ENRIQUE IGLESIAS

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Artists & Music

Tucker Marks Milestones With New Set On Capitol

By CHET FLIPPO

NASHVILLE—Tanya Tucker is celebrating her 25th anniversary in country music with the release of her 30th studio album, a not-including and an unprecedented—for her—hitz into mainstream media.

The album, "Complicated," ships March 15 along with "Nickle" Day. Tucker will appear on The Opry Winfrey Show March 27. Soon after her "Opry" role, Tucker will be on The Today Show, "DateLine NBC," Late Show With David Letterman, Late Show With Tom Snyder, and On The Record With Ralph Emery. She will also be featured on TNN and "A&E Biography." Tucker is also a major print campaign, says Capitol Nashville VP of publicity Lori Lytle. "Her book and film No. 1 in women's fiction and CD stores as Borders Books & Music, Tower, and Wal-Mart.

"In the stores," says Lytle, "we'll have a handmade book of the album with CD, with the cover story, an interview, and in-country and in-store.

"We also have an on-air giveaways of autographed books in the top 10 markets.

Paul Bailey, music buyer for Tower Records in Brea, Calif., is optimistic about the album's success. "Tanya always starts out strong," he says. "Her fans sniff out the new release, and then radio sends in newer fans who buy the album based on the single. With her traditional and distinctive voice, she really ropes 'em in."

Tucker is said to have learned about the album with a strengths-switching from the individual producer, and a co-writer Jan Deveney. Indeed, "Lisa Stansfield's" includes credible remarks of two songs from the era that remains the couple's "Lisa Stansfield's" Never Going To Gotta You Up" (at Davis' own suggestion, and featuring the 12 inch version of "I Need To Know""). She's added to the list of "Lisa Stansfield's" Syllables to become available. "We're hoping for a tremendous amount of support from both pop and R&B formats," says Ennis. He adds that Stansfield has already made one promotional visit to the U.S. to conduct press interviews. While she has secured a total of nine Brit Award nominations in her multi-platinum career, two of which resulted in victories, Stansfield knows she has trans-Atlantic ground to make up. "If we want to make an album for a British market specifically," she says of the new set, but adds, "I can..."

LISA STANSFIELD'S 'REAL SOUL'

(Continued from page 15)

dio's introduction of Stansfield's impressive 45-minute set, which featured many songs from the new album, plus such favorites as "Change" and "All Around The World," put Stansfield in excited company.

He evoked the memory of other stars from his personal gallery, such as Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, and Toni Braxton, signaling Arista's determination to reign in the momentum of Stansfield's U.S. platinum-selling 1992 debut album, "Affection." That momentum also played a role in getting the support of all American R&B fans, as she racked up three Billboard No. 1's on the Hot R&B/Soul Singles chart with 1990's "All Around The World," 1991's "What's Den 11" and 1992's "All Woman."

While R&B's widespread return to the lyric and melodic craftsmanship of a gender is witnessed, especially in the U.K., English-based soul freaks like Stansfield are up against stern comparisons from the music's mother country. "So Natural," her third British album in 1985, kept her in the public eye at home, but was not released in America. "People want Lisa Stansfield back," says Tom Ennis, VP of product management at Arista USA. "And I want to know where she's been, and I think this album is going to be a triumph for her."

Asha will take "The Real Thing" to R&B and pop formats March 26 for an April 7 debut date, with a "series" of 12-inch mixes. Ennis said it will be available for an anticipated seven-week tour. "We're hoping for a tremendous amount of support from both pop and R&B formats," says Ennis. He adds that Stansfield has already made one promotional visit to the U.S. to conduct press interviews. While she has secured a total of nine Brit Award nominations in her multi-platinum career, two of which resulted in victories, Stansfield knows she has trans-Atlantic ground to make up. "If we want to make an album for a British market specifically," she says of the new set, but adds, "I can..."

Atlantic Ups R&B Royalty Reform Rates

"Label Aims To Meet Industry Standard For Vintage Acts"

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Atlantic Records has expanded its 1986 royalty reform measures for legendary R&B acts to include all artists who appeared on its label before 1960.

As of March 1, Atlantic started paying all of those artists a royalty rate of 10% based on retail list price, as opposed to the current industry standard of 4% to 6% (Billboard Bulletin, March 6).

Included in the reforms are hun- dreds of blue-eyed soul, rock, and pop artists, including such stars as Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, John Coltrane, the Modern Jazz Quartet, King Curtis, Bobby Darin, and the Rascals.

David "Fathead" Newman, who first came to prominence in the 1960s as the saxophoneist with Atlantic star Ray Charles, says that he is "delighted" by the announcement and that "it was a long time coming."

Beginning in 1950, Newman recorded 25 albums on his own for the label, many of them soul-jazz classics. A still-active artist on Kool Koolipolis Records, Newman was a featured soloist in the recent R Vere Records band tour featuring the music of the Robert Altman film "Kansas City." (Billboard, Feb. 1.)

Newman adds that "the gesture is par- ticularly appropriate" for artists who are no longer active.

As part of the reform package, Atlantic also excused the "unreoced" balance" of the performers in applicable cases. Many of the artists, those from 1960 to the early '80s, were also nonwriters and, as such, do not receive songwriter royalties.

In 1986, Atlantic was the first label to initiate royalty reform by introduc- ing lump sum retroactive royalty pay- ments to 35 of its first-generation stars, including Ray Charles, Chucky Willis, Ruth Brown, and Joe Turner. The reform was part of Atlantic's 40th anniversary celebration.

In recent years, however, Atlantic had fallen behind efforts by other companies to introduce 10% royalty reforms. In 1989, MCA instituted the 10% royalty for its Chess and Check- mates libraries, while Capitol Records has offered royalty reform measures for artists of all genres who appeared on Capitol and its affiliated labels, including Aladdin, Blue Note, and Imperial, before 1972.

Sony, which two years ago announced a 10% royalty and excused all their artists, announced a 10% R&B acts (Billboard, March 4, 1995), expanded those reforms over the past year to 280 unnamed artists.

Calls for reforms originally came from the Rhythm & Blues Foundation. However, the foundation no longer major radio outlets, including London's Capital FM. TV appearances by Stansfield include "The Chart Show," "The Oprah Winfrey Show," and "The Today Show." Saturday (the 8) the mass-ratings "National Lottery Live."

Lois Clark, head of music at top 40 Metro FM Wellington, where "The Real Thing" is currently B-listed, describes the single as "back to the old school" and "a little bit out of the last album, but this is a great radio record, it really jumps out at you. Metro has six of Stansfield's previous hits in rotation. Andy Smith, rock department manager at Tower Records' Piccadilly store, was at the London showcase. "The set- ting was perfect, and the sound was fantatc," he says. "It was taking to a few people afterwards, and they were all really impressed. She's one of those timeless acts, and I think she'll come back just as strong as the first album.

Adds Levenda, "When you blend traditional soul with the English market and urban pop culture, you can get something quite special. Every time I hear Lisa Stansfield I think of my record that passes into the mainstream, like Soul II Soul or Omar's "There's Nothing Like This." Lisa has all the style and the "American" with the "British" Included."

Arista UK marketing director George Lewins says the British mar- keting team is "very enthusiastic. The Real Thing," commercially available as a single here Monday (10), is on some 90 indepen- dent local radio playlists at press time from a possible total of more than a million and has the support of several other artst royalty reform as one of its goals. It continues to offer grants and life-time achievement awards to hun- dreds of R&B artists and provides hundreds of thousands of dollars in emergency financial and medical aid. The foundation held its annual awards ceremony in New York Feb. 27 (see story, page 33).

Los Angeles Foundation member and Washington attorney Hal Begle, who represents Ruth Brown and several other R&B stars, has continued to be one of its supporters, with the help of such allies as EMI Music president Jim Fiifi and artist Bonnie Raitt.

The second wave of reforms came as a result of a decision by Ahmet Erte- gu, co-founder/co-CEO/co-chairman of the Atlantic Group, to extend to Philip Wild, the label's senior VP of business and legal affairs.

Newman says "it was a humane and considerate gesture for Atlantic to do for Ahmet, who's been in the business a long time and knows it will help in artist-record company relations. I'm sure it will be well received.

Companies that have not initiated reforms include, according to Begle, Island (R.E.M., Oingo Two, and others), PolyGram (Mercury, Motown, and others) and Fantasy (Stax, Spe- cialty, Prestige, and others). MCA's reforms do not extend to its Duke and Peacock label artists of the '50s and '60s.
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Depeche Mode Back From The Brink
Reprise Set An ‘Ultra’-Important Effort

■ BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—The members of Depeche Mode have returned from the precipice of oblivion to their home turf of the international charts.

“They’re their first studio set in four years,” producer Steve Lillywhite said at an Atlantic Records lunch in the U.S. April 15 and is, even by the band’s own admission, an album that almost did not come to pass. After the mid-1980s’ platinum global gargantuan that attended 1990’s “Violator” and the transatlantic No. 1 placements for 1993’s “Songs Of Faith And Devotion,” lead singer Dave Gahan, who once produced much publicized drug overdose and attempted suicide—without the departure of 19-year member Alan Wilder) seemed to have called time on the long-running British group.

But the 360-degree rotation in their fortunes is now complete. The sold-out “Barrel Of A Gun,” the opening single from “Ultra,” served notice to the band their return to health by bursting onto the U.K. charts at No. 47 the week after its release by Mute last month. The track is a top 10 sales in several European territories, including Germany (on Intermedia, Spain on BMG, Sweden on MNW), and Denmark and Finland (both on Mute/MD).

Depeche Mode says,” says June Fearon, music director at modern rock WRLG Nashville, who compares the “feeling of noise” of “Barrel Of A Gun” to that of “I Feel You,” the opening single from “Songs Of Faith And Devotion.” “[Ultra] got some O.K. phones, but it is a different Depeche record,” she says. “I definitely think the fans are out there if they can deliver another ‘Violator.’ They definitely have a fan base here in Nashville. You land it on, I’ll play it.”

From the pop standpoint, the band and Mute/MD says, was scored as a major hit on the second single, “It’s No Good,” due to go to modern rock March 19 and top April 10, and for which a video clip is set to play in the hard-edged sound. No matter, says the band’s Andy Fletcher. “The aim with ‘Barrel’ was to make an impact, to say ‘we’re back,’ not necessarily to have a big hit single.

In America it’s done well in its limited avenues—it hasn’t got onto top 40 radio because there’s no way they’d play it.” The single peaked at No. 11 on Billboard’s Modern Rock Tracks chart.

It’s another progression in the

Mercury’s INXS ‘Elegantly’ Returns From Its Time Off

■ BY CHUCK TAYLOR

NEW YORK—With the April 15 release of “Elegantly Wasted,” the 11th album in 17 years from INXS, it might seem ironic to tag the project a rebirth.

But since the Aussie-based band’s last effort, 1993’s “Full Moon, Dirty Hearts,” which sold only 147,000 copies in the U.S. according to SoundScan, INXS has weathered a number of upsets that have made business as usual all but impossible.

Remarkably, through all the turmoil the band’s lineup has stayed intact for nearly two decades. INXS comprises Michael Hutchence, brothers Andrew, Jon, and Tim Farriss; Garry Gary Beers; and Kirk Pengilly.

The sextet’s greatest success came with its 1987 single, “Kiss,” which was certified platinum-platinum in the U.S. and spawned its third No. 1 hit, “Never Tell Tonight,” “Deep Insanity,” and “New Sensation,” which peaked, respectively, at Nos. 1, 2, and 3 on that chart. But its last hit on the Hot 100 was “Not Enough Time” from 1992’s “Welcome To Wherever You Are,” which barely cracked the top 80.

Now, following a self-imposed exile since 1994, INXS vows that it is rejuvenated, excited about the new project, and ready to rock live, always one of the group’s strengths. Underlying that willing spirit is the omens of “Elegantly Wasted” most likely will re-establish the band or label it forever as an ’80s artform.

“I actually think we were lucky,” reflects lead singer Hutchence. “After a lot of success in the ’80s, we just went off the radar for a few years. We’ve always been pretty hard to pigeonhole anyway, we weren’t lumping in with the other bands that won’t be able to break off the chains of the ’80s. I feel like we’re a whole new band in a sense.”

New worldwide band manager Paul Craig, who had worked on and off as the U.K. manager for INXS since 1987, adds that the group’s time off in the mid-’90s was an essential stage.

After putting out four albums in four years (1990’s “X,” 1991 “Live Baby Live,” “Welcome To Wherever You Are,” and “Full Moon, Dirty Hearts”), “it’s fair to say that at the end of that period, they were tired,” Craig says. “Like anything, it took

Java Picks Up Terence Trent D’Arby;
VH1 Saves The Music With ‘Honors’

STUFF: Look for Jazz Records, the new joint venture between producer/writer Glen Ballard and Capitol Records, to announce Terence Trent D’Arby as its first signing. Ballard, who is an executive producer and co-wrote Alanis Morissette’s 15-times platinum “Jagged Little Pill,” and Capitol entered into the $500 deal last September (Billboard, Sept. 28, 1996). In addition to acting as a talent source, Ballard will serve as executive producer for projects. D’Arby’s first three albums were on Columbia; his last album, 1990’s “Vibrato,” came out on Work.

Sheryl Crow, Celine Dion, the artist formerly known as Prince, and the Wallflowers have also been confirmed as signees on Ballard’s for the fourth annual VH1 Honors April 10 at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles. This year’s event will celebrate music education, with proceeds going to VH1’s new Save the Music initiative, which is designed to help sustain and/or revitalize public school music programs. In all, of VH1’s fund-raising efforts for the foreseee.

INXS

by Melinda Newman

The band’s new album, “Elegantly Wasted,” is its first since 1990, and it features an up-tempo sound that has fans feeling a sense of completeness.

According to sources, lead singer Steve Perry, who has spent the past few years living in Spain, is set to release a new album in the fall. The album, “Wildlife,” has already been recorded and is reportedly scheduled for release in May on Warner Bros.

But before all is said and done, INXS has plans for a new album in the works. The band has just begun recording a new album, tentatively titled “The Colour & Shape,” that is slotted for release May 30 on CBS. In a recent statement, INXS frontman Dave Gahan says that the band is “looking to make a family member.”

No replacement has been named.

To clarify an item we ran last week, Sammy Hagar has signed on with the Track Factory, the Lively Factory’s record label. The label is Bubba Shewberg’s overall entertainment company, which includes a film division as well as other areas. The Track Factory is a joint ventures between Universal Music and Lively Entertainment.

GRAMMY GRAB BAG: The Grammy Awards and the attendant press coverage are always a good time to get the latest news. Here’s Part II of the Best Goes to the Grammys.

Fiona Apple said she was writing material for her next album but declined to give any details. "I’ll be writing no matter what happens to me, but I think about it makes me feel pressurer." When asked to name her fave among the Grammy nominees, she pled ignorance, confessing, "I’m not a real music listener ... Similarly, when asked what was her CD player right now, multiple nominee Jill said, "I don’t have a CD player. I have a book, I can read." No wonder record sales are down.

For Rick Brooks of Artists’ Brooks & Dunn, a victory in the best country performance by a duo or group category for "My Maria" means a boost to the duo’s image. "There’s always a hip factor to it," he said. "It’s a sad fact that we can’t possibly have a band going on popular our side. The band will be back on the streets in a few months."

WICHITA IN THE NEW YORK for the Grammys, Richard Branson had lunch at his flagship Virgin Megastore in Times Square, which opened last spring. "I twist arms when I go in there and see if I can walk out with a record or two," he said. Meanwhile, he is focused on establishing his new label worldwide. "It’s been away from the industry for about four years, so it’s exciting. We’re getting a tremendous team of people together, not just in America, but in almost every country in the world." The label’s first product, he said, will hit the streets in two months.

Dave Matthews, whose band won in the best rock performance by a duo or group with vocal category, said that the band will begin work on their studio following a headlining tour. Matthews expects to reunite with producer Steve Lillywhite. "We’ve been very lucky with Steve. We’re just making the assumption that he’ll drag the English bastard back in with us," he said.

Emmylou Harris is touring with the band that backed her on her critically acclaimed, Daniel Lanois-produced "Wrecking Ball." "I’m a road animal, what can I say?" she said. "Right now I’m really enjoying playing the music from the Wrecking Ball in connection with the old material. At some point, I’ll figure out what I’m doing next."

Harris and band just returned from Europe and plan to do some East Coast dates before going back to Europe in the summer.

The N-Zed’s Fred Schneider wanted to make one thing clear at a post-grammy party at Barneys in Barneys, but any runners that I decided not to (continued) the band are untrue. It’s on the Internet, and I’m in shock. We’re still together. "No news on a new date for new music: "Cindy [Wilson] just had a baby, so things are on hold," said Schneider. who is working on a solo project. "You’ll be surprised," he said.

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by Chuck Taylor and Larry Figueroa.

(Continued on page 21)
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Artists & Music

MERCURY'S INXS 'ELEGANTLY' RETURNS FROM ITS TIME OFF

(Continued from page 20)

them some time to re-evaluate where they were, where they wanted to be and how to get there.

Yeah, sometimes that space is really important or beneficial than seeing each other. You get together and you have a story to tell about your life, something interesting to the other.

The first worldwide single from "Elegantly Wasted," the newly playlisted and upbeat title track will be released to radio Monday (10). Mer-

curry drummed up dance mixes for the cut, as he has for the band for the past 10 years. The album contains the single's in the past, as well as an AC mix that softens the guitar rifts.

A video has been serviced to MTV and VH1; it was directed by Walter Storm, who commandeered a number of clips for the U.K.'s Prodigy.

Mercury's target, according to product development director Mache


Witney says, "We came in and we did the little three-song sampler at the studio and we came away, and we were into it about a day or so, and Syd said, 'I don't know. This track was a second take. The group also backed ris-

ing alt.country singer-songwriter Robbie Fulks on several tracks on his Bloodshot Records album "Coun-

try Love Songs" (Bloodshot, Dec. 22, 1996).

"Workin' with Syd probably just propelled us [for the album]," Wit

ney says. "Donnie had been workin' the Park Central Squares, and he had a little band with him in between before we went on hiatus. Joe was writin'

songs. So we had a backlog of material.

"So when we got back, I said, 'You know what I wanna do? I really think that the world would entertain some other product from us. We were rehearse for a couple of weeks, learn this body of material, let me book about 20-30 days around the South, we would go out and do the on-the-job training, and then let's come back and record [an album] real quick, and see it around and see if anybody would swing." So we had a little meeting

rus of "doo doo doo" makes the first single, "Semi-Charmed Life," sound like a yawning pop, but it's actually the stor

telling story of a one-night stand. The album, written mostly by Jenkins with musical collabor-

ation from guitarist Kevin Cadogan, recalls the huge material, aggressive Smiths or
to Eyeball, 20). Records

Taylor says. "It's just so catchy. It's got a summer time feel to it." It's reminiscent of the band's first single, "One of the only singles known," says Eye-

ler's marketing plan is to have the band slowly into widespread media exposure. The band's first radio play, of course, has already submitted a "Semi-Charmed Life" video clip that will begin to play at third and modern rock radio before trying for broader outlets.

We have a very deliberate plan, well paced, because this kind of a song can fly out of your hands before you can

pull in the reins on it," she says. "This plays a week. It's power pop, but it has an attitude," Taylor says. "It's just so

catchy. It's got a summer time feel to it." It's reminiscent of the band's first single, "One of the on my own momentum, is going to cross over faster than we expect.

The slowdown plan, she says, is "so it doesn't lose its momentum. This is a first-time, tremendously successful project that doesn't have depth to it. The record, of course, has already submitted a "Semi-Charmed Life" video clip that will begin to play at third and modern rock radio before trying for broader outlets.

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The band will embark on a preshow seven-city tour in major U.S. markets; however, shortly after the release of the album, INXS will steal away for several weeks for a Euro-

tour, probably not returning to the States until summer. Other global plans will also be announced.

Meanwhile, upcoming TV appearances include "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" and "Late Show with David Letterman," along with appearances on Comedy Central and ESPN. Mer-

curry will also aggressively pursue press opportunities.

All forces alongside "Elegantly Waited" maintain that once the word is out, INXS will cement its status as a band for all time. Acknowledges Craig, "It's going to take a lot of people to have open minds. But these guys are as fresh now and vibrant as ever, and more energized and focused than they've been in a long time."
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RAY STEVENS RETURNS TO MCA WITH COMEDY BOOM IN TOW
(Continued from 16)
MCA Nashville VP of sales and marketing Dave Weigand believes the TV exposure is a big plus. "It's almost like free advertising of the product," he says.

Joni Kerlikowske, GM of Tower Nashville, agrees that the TV visibility will be a benefit when MCA releases "Hum It." "It really helps name recognition," he says. "We'll do OK with the new release, but it will probably do even better at mass merchants like Wal-Mart and Kmart."

Though he has been extremely successful with direct marketing, garnering numerous accolades for these titles, Stevens says he wanted what only a label can offer. "If you want to be in the stores, you have to be with a record company," he says.

Stevens has been on MCA before, and it was the label's track record with his product that prompted him to return. "I think I've been on every label, and I was looking back at my old statements and MCA sold more Ray Stevens records than anybody," he says.

"We're thrilled to have him back on MCA," says MCA Nashville chairman Bruce Hinton. "Ray has been a long-time friend, and I always had the greatest respect for his talent. Ray has been on the cutting edge of marketing his music, and we have no doubt he will continue the streak."

"This is going to be a fun project for us to work," he says. "We haven't worked a Ray Stevens project for years, and we are really excited about it. His greatest-kits [album] is a staple in our catalog. It consistently sells."

Weigand is pleased that country comedy is enjoying increased popularity. "I'm thrilled there is a resurgence," he says, "it think about it, there's a lot of entertainment and creativity that goes into comedy, be it country comedy or any kind of comedy, especially if you are dealing with comedy deals."

"I'm a musician first and foremost, and I like all kinds of music," he adds. "I've made all kinds of records, and more people know me for comedy than for [noncomic songs like] 'Everything Is Beautiful,' and I'm appreciative of what it takes to write and produce a record that is funny and at the same time musical and entertainment on several levels, appealing to all the senses."

Bringing together comedic talent and marketing skills is a skill for which Stevens is well known. Though he has won Grammys for such noncomedy tunes as "Misty" and "Everything Is Beautiful," it is such comedy records as "The Streel," "Guitarzan," and "Mississippi Squirrel Revival" with which he is most closely identified.

Stevens says he began "Hum It" with about 30 songs, then narrowed it down to 10. "I knew the direction I wanted to go in," he says. "For this project, I wanted it to be totally comedy songs, because that's what people expect me to do. There is one song that kind of spills over into the area of a straight song, 'I'll Be In Atlanta.' It's a comedy song, but a high-class comedy song because it's a takeoff on 'Gone With The Wind.'"

MCA has not yet decided on the first single, having chosen to solicit opinions from radio before determining a focus track. Though veteran artists have a tough time getting played on country radio, Stevens is hoping that his status as a comedian might spur stations to give him a shot.

Weigand says that MCA plans a grass-roots radio push for "Hum It."

"We are going to be working this track to 130 nonreporting stations," he says, "and a lot of these stations are in secondary markets... usually in small towns that have a Wal-Mart or kmart. We are exploring promotional opportunities there."

Scott Borchetta, MCA Nashville senior VP of promotion, says that the label will be working with John Hart, head of Nashville-based independent research and marketing firm Bullseye Callout, to assist with the album's launch.

Consumer advertising will also be key: "Ray is going to be producing 30- and 60-second [radio] spots that we are going to use to promote the album," Weigand says. "A lot of those spots will be tagging Wal-Mart stores."

Booked by William Morris, Stevens will tour to support the album. His 1997 dates include a return to Branson for 44 dates at the Wayne Newton Theatre. (Stevens sold his successful Branson theater after three seasons of performing two shows a day, six days a week.) Stevens manages himself and has his own eponymous publishing company. His next project for MCA will be a Christmas album, slated for release later this year.

ZOMBA BUYS BENSON GROUP
(Continued from page 12)
Brentwood president/CEO Jim Van Hook will oversee Zomba’s Nashville Christian Music entities. Former Star Song Communications president Jeff Mosley has been named president of the Benson Record Division, and Brentwood VP of publishing Dale Mathews has been appointed president of the combined Benson, Brentwood, and Diadem music publishing division.

Clive Calder, chairman/CEO of the Zomba Group, says that Benson’s Christian and gospel copyrights are a “tremendous asset.” Benson’s publishing arm, founded in 1962, has all songs recorded by such key performers as Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, and Willie Nelson. Recently, Whitney Houston covered Dottie Rambo’s “I Go To The Rock” on “The Preacher’s Wife” soundtrack. The company’s catalog numbers about 46,000 copyrights.

The Christian music industry has been undergoing a great deal of consolidation. Last fall, Gaylord Enter- tainment purchased Word Records and Music. In the past few years, EMI purchased the Sparrow, Star Song, and PoreFront labels and formed EMI Christian Music Group, which includes the afore- mentioned labels as well as EMI Christian Publishing and Chordant Distribution.

Following Zomba’s acquisition of Benson, the former are let go and 17 relocated to other positions within the company. “Anytime there’s an acquisition like this, consolidations are inevitable because if you’ve got two people doing the same thing, you don’t need both of them,” Van Hook says. “We identified about 50 positions we don’t really need any longer... Fortunately we were able to move a number of those people to Brentwood, where there were openings because Brentwood has continued to grow fast.”

Van Hook says there will be a re- structuring in the near future that may be similar to EMI’s creation of Chordant and EMI Christian Music Group. Van Hook will head the new entity.

“In Zomba’s eyes, they only have one Christian entity, and I’m in charge of heading that up,” he says.

So as I build a stronger manage- ment team and various other lead- ership positions are filled, my role instead of being president/CEO will be more as just COO. For example, we’re still looking for a president for Reunion. [Longtime president Terry Hemmings opted not to renew his contract when Zomba purchased Reunion.]

“We think in the next few weeks, we’ll have that slot filled. And we are installing Jeff Mosley as president of Benson. He’ll be responsible for 18-20 people [in] A&R and marketing, because sales will answer to our senior VP of sales and marketing, and finance people will answer to our finance people... Mosley will answer to me as CEO.”

“We’re definitely headed toward a distribution company that will have a new name,” he adds. “And it will be fed by these various label jobs [including] Brentwood, Essential, Ransom, Reunion, Benson, Diadem, and Verity.”

F. Ray Stevens (Continued from page 16)

JELENO MUSIC AWARDS
(Continued from page 16)
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Artists & Music

All That Glitters Is Gold At The 39th Annual Grammy Awards

New York—The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences hon-ored top performers, songwriters, producers, engineers, and arrangers Feb. 28 at the 39th annual Grammy Awards, held at Madison Square Garden here. While no one artist swept the awards, superstars Celine Dion, Eric Clapton, and Babyface took home some of the top honors. (Backstage photos: Chuck Pulin)

Canadian sensation Celine Dion won album of the year and best pop album for "Falling Into You" on 500 Music/Epic.

Cassandra Wilson beams as she shows off her award for best jazz vocal performance for her Blue Note album "New Moon Daughter."

The legendary Pete Seeger won the award for best traditional folk album for "Pete" on the Living Music label.

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton makes news—and helps Simon & Schuster Audio capture its third best spoken word or nonmusical album Grammy—with her award-winning reading of her book "It Takes a Village."

Tony Rich celebrates his best R&B album nod for "Words" on LaFace/Arista.

LaFace/Arista recording artist Toni Braxton doubles up on Grammys for best female pop vocal performance, for "Un-Break My Heart," and best female R&B vocal performance, for "You're Makin' Me High."

Executives and entertainers are all smiles as they celebrate their Grammy wins at Sony Music Entertainment's soiree. Shown, from left, are Polly Anthony, president, 550 Music; David Glue, chairman, Epic Records Group; Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, Epic artist and Sony/ATV Music Publishing writer; Tracey Edmonds; Steve Wonder; 550 Music's Celine Dion; Thomas D. Moltola, president/COO, Sony Music Entertainment; René Angélil, Dion's manager and husband; and Richard Griffiths, president, Epic Records.

The party's going on at BMG Entertainment's post-Grammy gala, and Bad Boy Entertainment president and producer/artist Sean "Puffy" Combs, front, got things off to a lively start. Shown joining in the fun, from left, are Rudi Gassner, president/CEO, BMG Entertainment International; Grammy-winning LaFace artist Toni Rich; Michael Dornemann, chairman/CEO, BMG Entertainment; L.A. Reid, president, LaFace; and Strauss Zelnick, president/CEO, BMG Entertainment North America.

Young Curb artist LeAnn Rimes is the first country performer in the history of the Grammys to take home the best new artist award. Rimes also scored the best female country vocal honor for "Blue," which also won best country song for writer Bill Mack.

A&M's Sheryl Crow waves her Grammys for best rock album, for her self-titled set, and best female rock vocal, for "If It Makes You Happy."

Universal Music Group executives celebrate their Grammys in style. Pictured in the back row, from left, are Ken Wilson, black music division president, MCA Records; Heavy D, president, Uptown Records; Ed Rosenblatt, chairman/CEO, Geffen Records; Zach Horowitz, president, Universal Music Group; Bill Bennett, president, Geffen, Jay Bobber, president, MCA; Mel LeWinter, co-chairman, Universal Music Group; Henry Droz, president, Universal Music & Video Distribution; David Cohen, head of business and legal affairs, Interscope Records; and Bruce Hinton, chairman, MCA Nashville. In the front row, from left, are Tommy LiPuma, president, GRP Recording Co.; Jean Riggins, black music president, Universal Records; Doug Morris, chairman/CEO, Universal Music Group; Tony Brown, president, MCA Nashville; Kedar Massenburg, senior VP of A&R, Universal Records, and president, Kedar Entertainment.

Warner Music Group and Reprise Records executives mix and mingle with their artists at the label's post-Grammy bash. Pictured, from left, are Rich Fitzgerald, executive VP/GM, Reprise; Bob Daly, chairman/co-CEO, Warner Music Group; multiaward winner Eric Clapton; Russ Thyrel, CEO, Warner Bros. Records Inc.; songwriter Carole Bayer Sager, Daly's wife; Terry Semel, chairman/co-CEO, Warner Music Group; and Jane Semel.

The folks from EMI-Capitol Music Group: North America live it up at New York's Tavern on the Green. Pictured, from left, are Grammy-winning Blue Note artist Cassandra Wilson; Gary Gersh, president/CEO, Capitol Records; singer Ruth Brown; Capitol artist Bonnie Raitt; Charles Koppelman, chairman/CEO, EMI-Capitol Music Group North America; and Jim Fife, president/CEO, EMI Music.

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THE ROMAN EMPIRE SALUTES TONY BENNETT, NATALIE COLE & CELINE DION ON THEIR REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS.

CONGRATULATIONS ON ALL YOUR GRAMMY WINNING PERFORMANCES.

CAESARS PALACE
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ITT
CLARKSVILLE: The MCA/ Way Cool debut from the Clarks, "Somebody Maybe," is No. 2 on the Middle Atlantic Regional Roundup this week.

The album bowed Feb. 25.

The Pittsburgh, Pa.-based act has long been supported by local television and radio stations and recently finished a series of dates in its home market that have helped strengthen the album's first week standing.

According to Doug Smith, senior buyer at Carnegie, Pa.-based retail Nation- al Record Mart, the album is at No. 3 in chainwide sales.

This, says Smith, is largely due to buyer anticipation, heavy local airplay, in-store performances, and at-show sales.

Smith says the chain had sold 4,000 units of the album when it was released on the Band's King Mouse label but ran out of product in December.

"At about the same time, WYVE [Pittsburgh] started playing the album more than ever," says Smith, "so there was a lot of pent-up demand."

National Record Mart hosted the band for an in-store signing and sold copies of "Somebody Maybe" at recent performances.

Two indie releases by the act, a 1991 self-titled album and the 1994 set, "Love Gone Sour, Suspcion And Bad Debt," have also performed well in the area.

These two albums have sold 5,000 and 15,000 units respectively, according to SoundScan.

The first single from "Somebody Maybe," "Caroline," was serviced to triple-play on Holiday. The title track from a 1996 Tasha Taylor Holiday's debut album on MCA, "Jut The Way You Is," is breaking out in the Southwest, including stations such as WJH Daytona Beach, Fla., have the single in heavy rotation. A clip for the song, which contains an R&B radio Jan. 28, is also being played. The album will be released March 25.

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#2 Switzerland
#10 Germany
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The Tour

April South America April North America
03 Caracas, Venezuela 25 San Francisco, The Warfield
04 Caracas, Venezuela 26 Los Angeles, House of Blues
06 San Jose, Costa Rica May New York
09 Mexico City, Mexico
11 Buenos Aires, Argentina
12 Buenos Aires, Argentina
14 Sao Paulo, Brazil
15 Sao Paulo, Brazil
17 Curitiba, Brazil
18 Puerto Alegre, Brazil
20 Sao Paulo, Brazil
23 Lima, Peru

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**Hot R&B Airplay**

**MARCH 15, 1997**

Compiled from a national sample of airplay supplied by Broadcast Data Systems' Radio Track service. 95 R&B stations are electronically monitored on Mondays for 4-7 a.m. Top 40 and R&B tracks. Airplay statistics are based on an average of six cross-referenced times of airplay with Arbitron listener data. This data is used in the Hot R&B Singles chart.

### TURNTABLE TAPES

**Billboard HOT R&B SINGLES A-Z**

**MARCH 15, 1997**

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

### HOT R&B AIRPLAY CURRENT A-Z

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<td>Down to the Bone</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Blackground</td>
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<td>290</td>
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<tr>
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<td>If They Knew</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Blackground</td>
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### HOT R&B AIRPLAY CURRENT E-MIX

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<td>3</td>
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<td>Blackground</td>
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<td>Blackground</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**R&B**

**THE RHYTHM & THE BLUES**

(Continued from page 38)

Source's 1973 self-titled debut set, along with five bonus tracks from the set's catalog.

**INDUSTRY INTELLIGENCE:**

Avatar Records president Larry Robinson is producing his first feature film, "Blunt Force," a 20th Century Fox release, has been in development for the last six months by Avatar executive Lynnette Jenkins. Doug McHenry and George Jackson are the film's executive producers. Avatar will also produce the picture's soundtrack. Christopher Roker was named Sin-Drome Records urban and jazz/R&B promotion executive; director. He is most recently owned of his own marketing and promotion shop, Essential Performance. Recently, Avatar released the film "The Outsiders" which was directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

**WONDER RECORD:**

Steve Wonder fans won't want to miss Motown's "Do It Right," the sixth release on the "Artistic" reading. "Steve Wonder--Song Review: A Greatest Hits Collection" is a two-CD dream that features 31 tracks, including 16 of the songs from the Wonder's No. 1 R&B hits. The project also contains previously unreleased material, including "Stay Grown." From the 1984 film "The Outsiders" which was directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

**BILL LAWRENCE**

(Continued from page 32)

guest MC Lyte, was featured on the "Set It Off" soundtrack. It was serviced Jan. 7 to R&B stations, mix shows, record pools, and specialty teams. The video was serviced Jan. 14 to BET and the Box. Billboard sent out several promotional CDs and videos to hair salons across the country, as well as several entertainment programs that program music for supermarkets and shopping malls. "Come On" was also featured on Elektra's quarterly video sampler that the company sends to music and clothing retailers. Ads are scheduled to run in fanzines and in the fashion and mainstream press.

"Consumers are going to see another side of Billy," says Murray. "She was just20 when she'd debuted, but now she's 23. She's sort of bridging that gap between a young woman and a woman in control of her life. At press time, no promotion tour schedule had been released, and no booking agent had been selected. The international campaign will be determined after the project develops domestically.

**PIONEER AWARDS**

(Continued from page 33)

Little Steven, Tracy Chapman, and Aresha Franklin — there's no question that these people are at the top of their field, and it was absolutely befitting.

The foundation's next event is the Rockport Rhythm & Blues Festival July 25-27 in Newport, R.I. The organization is assisting in the programming of the event.

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(SOUTH)

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ALL A DREAM

Dropping April 8

BIG MIKE
STILL SERIOUS

3K KRAZY
STACKIN CHIPS

IN QAKTOWN

FEATURING THE FIRST SINGLE
KEEP IT ON THE REAL

-10-
**Dance ARTISTS & MUSIC**

**Foundation of House Music Is Its Communal Spirit**

BACK TO THE FUTURE: Loosely defined, the word “house” means an entity that contains family—or it tangibly or spiritually. With that in mind, it’s wholly appropriate that such a word would also be used to describe the sound that has long dominated dance music. Family is the true essence of house music. To say there is that kind of bond connecting all of us who pledge allegiance to the vibrant flag of clubland would be a serious understatement.

Sure, citizens of other genres have emotional connections. But we’re willing to argue that few have endured the daunting and frequently rocky road to acceptance that dance music has traveled—and continue to do so. Despite minor intercommunal differences, having walked countless miles in the same shoes has united us against the world. And it has made us infinitely stronger with each recording.

With the creative pace and ongoing evolution that house music runs at an exhausting rate, it’s crucial to periodically take stock of its history. To do that, one must make a psychic pilgrimage back in time to Chicago, circa 1985, and a quaint little joint called the Warehouse, where now-legendary producer/DJ Frankie Knuckles helped give life to an entity that is far greater than can be articulated in a handful of words. You can break it down in technical terms—a 4/4 beat, larger-than-life vocals. But that doesn’t communicate the soulful vigor, the sexual grind, or the uplifted rush of house music—all of which are essential to fully understanding the music. If you want to truly “get it,” you must immerse yourself in the grooves and leave the textbooks behind.

Enter “Chicago House Reunion,” a Broken Records album that gathers the architects of the sound to take a collective bow. They’re all here—Knuckles, Farley “Jackmaster” Funk, Marshall Jefferson, Tyree Cooper, Raphie Rosario, DJ Pierre, Ten City, Wayne Williams, Darryl Pandy, Seven Inch’s Rachel, and Jesse Saunders, who is also the mastermind/executive producer of this project. Without the pioneering efforts of these folks, the rest of us might not have such a warm musical place to call home—or a springboard from which literally hundreds of variations have been created.

The true beauty of dance music is that it allows for full expression and interpretation of a common concept. Name another realm—in or out of the music industry—where race, gender, sexuality, or political perspective are not as relevant as the art. In fact, while you’re at it, try to name another part of the world where diversity is encouraged as much as it is embraced. For proof, all you have to do is listen to the jams of “Chicago House Reunion” wash over your senses. There are as many differences as there are inherent similarities.

Saunders and Broken Records are promoting “Chicago House Reunion,” due in stores May 5, with a worldwide club tour. The album’s participants will appear on the tour, which will tentatively open in Chicago in late July and trek across the States for several weeks before hitting the U.K. and Europe in the fall. So far, Chicago’s WGCJ has come aboard as partial sponsor of the tour, with EVO Sonic Radio in Cologne, Germany, in line to sponsor the tour worldwide. Saunders is in discussion with other potential backers.

As club-rooted music deserves finds it way into the mainstream consciousness of pop radio and onto superstar recordings by U2 and numerous others, it’s vital for all of us to maintain a connection with its roots and hang on to the integrity and pure passion that erupted on that fateful night in the Warehouse. When all is said and done, that is what will continue to carry us through.

GRAMMY NOTEBOOK: Speaking of clubland and its citizens carrying on to a higher level, my experience backstage at the recent Grammy Awards was seasoned with a handful of extremely encouraging moments. The bottom line: Proper industry respect is right around the corner—starting with the hint of an imminent category honoring achievement in dance music.

“I’ve been a primary advocate for such a category for three years,” said Michael Greene, president/CEO of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. “I think we’ve worn the voting committee down to where we might finally see it this year.”

There also is a number of major artists acknowledging the growing influence of dance music in their music this year. Toni Braxton, who took home trophies in the best female pop vocal performance and best R&B female vocal performance categories, was particularly reverent toward clubland. “The dance community has helped me a lot this year,” she said, adding that she’ll be including an uptempo track or two on her next LaFace collection. “I’ve actually been wanting to do something like that for a while now.”

You can also expect to see Seal dig into harder, more eclectic rhythms on his next Warner Bros. album. “I’ve been thoroughly enjoying the music that’s come from the underground this year, particularly from London,” he said, citing trip-hop renegades DJ Shadow as one of his current faves. “I’m certain that the exposure and influence of his music and other drum’n’bass types of artists will be felt in my new songs.”

Even gospel icon Shirley Caesar, who shared with her eponymous choir the best gospel album by a chorus award for the glorious “Just A Word,” noted that it was time to infuse street sounds into other forms of music. “It’s a good way to reach the youth,” she said. “It also acknowledges the exciting new dimension to the music we’re already making. If the youth love it, then it merit our respect and insights.”

As gratifying as it was to hear such positive words from such well-regarded artists, I’m looking forward to the year when clubland’s own performers will be visible at the Grammys—milking around, collecting accolades, and sharing insights. If you have any trepidation over the possible creation of a dance music category, it’s that it will be dominated by pop and rock stars who are merely dabbling in dance beats, rather than those who have been toughing it out on the front (Continued on page 46).

---

**Dance TRAX**

**by Larry Flick**

---

**DANCE_breakouts**

MARCH 15, 1997

CLUB PLAY

1. THAT SOUND PUMP FRICTION KING STREET

2. ONE IN A MILLION ALANIS MORissette

3. MUEVE LA CADERA PROYECTO UNO LEEV RHYTHM RACER

4. YUM YUM PULSE FEATURING ANTONETTE ROBBINS

5. SAXMANIA MARRUGOS ANA ROOGE

---

**Maxi-Singles Sales**

1. MESSIN’ WITH MY MIND CELEIDA & THE HEAVY HITTERS WWII

2. LITTLE WONDER DAVID BOWIE, VIRGIN

3. STAR PEOPLE GEORGE MICHAEL, A&M

4. FOREVER YOUNG TEMPEST "KAP" KNAPHEIDE

5. KISS ME OFF MY FEET DONELLI JONES

---

breakouts: Titles with future chart potential based on club play or sales reported this week

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**Billboard March 15, 1997**

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"People Can't Be What They Don't Know Exists"
**HOT DANCE MUSIC**

CLUB PLAY

COMPILED FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF DANCE CLUB PLAYLISTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
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<td>DISCOGRAPHY</td>
<td>ISLAND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP BY STEP</td>
<td>WHITNEY HOUSTON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON'T STOP MOVIN'</td>
<td>LIVIN' JOY</td>
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<td>RUNAWAY</td>
<td>NUYORICAN SOUL FEATURING INDIA</td>
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<td>THE MIGHTY OUB KATZ</td>
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<td>MOMENTS</td>
<td>STRINGEMENT</td>
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<td>SAY ME FEEL ALRIGHT</td>
<td>EVENKNOW</td>
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<tr>
<td>I'M A LITEHOUND</td>
<td>GORDON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEOPLE HOLD ON</td>
<td>LISA STANGFIELD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUL TO BARE</td>
<td>JOI CARDWELL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA</td>
<td>MADONNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVE IT UP</td>
<td>VICTOR CAL DONATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSMIC GIRL</td>
<td>ARKMOULI</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAY ME FEEL ALRIGHT</td>
<td>EVENKNOW</td>
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<tr>
<td>BACK TOGETHER Again</td>
<td>SOUL FEATURING SANDY B.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A SONG OF A PREACHER</td>
<td>MARC JOSEPH</td>
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<tr>
<td>ULTRA FLAVA</td>
<td>D 1220/1230/1231</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAVANA</td>
<td>KENNY G.</td>
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<td>CALLING YOUR NAME</td>
<td>L E TYPE</td>
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**POWER PICK**

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<td>GET UP</td>
<td>BRYON STANDING</td>
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<td>TOUCH</td>
<td>FRANCE JOUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAKE MY DAY</td>
<td>ARISE</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEVER MISS THE WATER</td>
<td>MAHALA KHAN FEAT. MESHNEL NUNO DOMINGUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT'S JUST ANOTHER GROOVE</td>
<td>EVENKNOW</td>
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<tr>
<td>BREAK IN THE MIDDLE</td>
<td>SPICE GIRLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>CALL ME</td>
<td>J C BALLARD</td>
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<td>ONLY YOU</td>
<td>SHAY JONES</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUMPIN' IT</td>
<td>PROVERO UNO</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLEEPING BEAUTY</td>
<td>ASHLEY MACISAAC</td>
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**Hot Shot Debut**

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<td>GEORGE MIX</td>
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<td>ME FREE</td>
<td>J UNK</td>
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<td>THE LITTLE BIT OF LOVE</td>
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**Greatest Gainer**

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<tr>
<td>SAY YOU FEEL ALRIGHT</td>
<td>EVENKNOW</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHERE ARE YOU</td>
<td>DA JAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>I WANT YOU</td>
<td>LARADIA</td>
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<td>NO REGRETS</td>
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**Maxi-Singles Sales**

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<td>DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA</td>
<td>MADONNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN-BREAK MY HEART</td>
<td>K AND J</td>
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<tr>
<td>I'M NOT FEELING YOU</td>
<td>Yvette MICHIE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THE SONG IS</td>
<td>DA JAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A SONG OF A PREACHER</td>
<td>MAHALA KHAN FEAT. MESHNEL NUNO DOMINGUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOULITORIAL</td>
<td>MC LYTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DON'T SPEAK</td>
<td>CLUELESS</td>
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<td>MARK MORRISON</td>
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<td>JUN</td>
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<td>LET ME CRY</td>
<td>ZHANE</td>
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<td>THE ME</td>
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After 25 Years, Tanya Is Not Tuckered Out; 'Reba's Cybercast' On CMT, AOL

CONGRATULATIONS to Tanya Tucker, who's celebrating her 25th anniversary in country music (see article, page 18). There are not many country artists around still charting from 25 years ago, as Nashville Scene reminds her. She just laughs and says she's more interested in the future than the past. She was 13 when she first charted with "Delta Dawn." After 30 albums, she says she doesn't look back. "I think I would have copies of all of them. But I don't have a copy of that," she says. "I do play the album 'Changes,' though; I've worn out a copy of that." When told that Tower Records has 20 of her albums listed on its Internet site, she's pleased. "That's pretty cool," she says. "That's pretty damn good. I should go and get it." Through the ups and downs of her career, Tucker has maintained an interest in country music - even when she went to Hollywood and went pop. "I got enough of Hollywood," she says, "but I'm kind of whored around. I'm a little bit of a working woman, I guess. I don't make mistakes, but I'm a little bit off your own way." For as far as she went. Next on the horizon, as she's pondering a change, she'd like to try a "presentation show," a sort of "Life And Times Of." she says. "Not a big production, you know, but I'm trying to have a little bit of my own."

ON THE RECORD: Asbury Records has the soundtrack for the upcoming Bill Paxton movie, "Traveler." Asbury acts Bryan White, Mandy Barnett, Royal Wade Rimes, Kevin Sharp, Thrasher Shriver, the Cox Family, and Lila McCann are joned on the dist by Randy Travis, Al Green, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, and others. Movie and soundtrack are due in April. Edsel Records, a subsidiary of the U.K.'s Denson Records, is quietly building a solid line of country releases. The spring catalog includes two essential collections on Don Williams and Jack Greene, neither before available on CD. "Don Williams: Volume 1 And Volume 2" gathers his first two Allen Reynolds produced albums on Jack Clement's JMI Records, with such classic cuts as Bob McDill's "Amanda" and "Come Early Morning." Jack Greene was a long-time sideman on whom Ernest Tubb finally encouraged to step up front. As a result, Greene wrote the first Country Music Assn. Awards show in 1967, propelled by his recording of "There Goes My Everything." That song and 19 other cuts are on "Jack Greene: The Jolly Green Giant." Other planned Edsel spring releases include packages on Tubb, Freddy Fender, and Conway Twitty... Warner's Series is finally doing what has been promised but never done - release an album by Southwestern club legends Bill & Bonnie Hearn, who have influenced artists ranging from Lyle Lovett to Jerry Jeff Walker, Nanci Griffith, and the Blue Herons. Bill will appear on the Hears' album "Diamonds In The Rough." Jim Rooney produces. Bill & Bonnie will perform at South by Southwest Saturday (15) and at the Station Inn in Nashville March 29.
<table>
<thead>
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**HOT SHOT DEBUT**

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<td>GEORGE STRAIT</td>
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**COMPILED FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF RETAIL STORE AND RACK SALES REPORTS COLLECTED, COMPILED, AND PRODUCED BY Billboard**

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**Notes:**
- No. 1: Deana Carter
- No. 2: John Michael Montgomery
- No. 3: Mindy McCready
- No. 4: Cold Outside
- No. 5: Six Days on the Road
- No. 6: Politics, Religion and Her
- No. 7: Little Things
- No. 8: Places I've Never Had
- No. 9: Change Her Mind
- No. 10: Genie Waterman
- No. 11: Trisha Yearwood
- No. 12: Gary Allan
- No. 13: Terry Fennel
- No. 14: Sons of the Desert
- No. 15: The Hopecches
- No. 16: Long Trail of Tears
- No. 17: Be Honest
- No. 18: Stephanie Bentley
- No. 19: George Ducas
- No. 20: The Exclusive Duke
- No. 21: Terry Mccoy
- No. 22: The Little Ramona
- No. 23: Bing Crosby
- No. 24: Maria Montoya
- No. 25: Bryan Adams
- No. 26: Jim Brickman

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**Output:**

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**Billboard Top Country Singles Sales**

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**Recording impressions from a national sample of retail stores and rack sales reports collected, compiled, and produced by Billboard.**

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25. Bryan Adams
26. Jim Brickman
Artists & Music

Majority perform competition, drew response at hurting, Notas... With radio hit. De each Chilean singer pronouncement, by festival open affair of José Miguel Meneguzzi, Paolo Meneguzzi, winner and known into song competition, allowed major labels an opportunity to showcase developing acts. The attendant expenses for the showcases were borne by the labels, which brought in such artists as Meneguzzi, Vanessa-Mae, Flavio Cesar, and Marcus Llamas. Except for the aforementioned Meneguzzi, the crowd reaction was lukewarm to the baby acts. The grumbling has captured the attention of Viña's mayor, Rodrigo González. He now wants Viña a municipal government to have final approval of festival participants. Until this year, Megavisión had absolute authority to select the acts. In exchange for this creative freedom, the channel granted Viña's municipal government the right to keep all ticket proceeds, a sum that historically hovers around $1 million. Given Viña's hefty TV ratings, Megavisión is not likely to cede its creative decision-making to González. Amid the uproar, there was the song competition, whose winning entry, "Para Vivir Un Dulce Amor," was penned by Argentinian composers Victor Hércules and Carlos Nilsson and performed by Carlos Elián. Chilean singer Claudio Carrizo won the best vocalist category, and legendary folk singer Tito Fernández triumphed in the folklore category with "Cartagena." If the invitees to Viña were not up to artistic par, then the audience was not deserving of better talent. Nicknamed "the monster" for its demanding attitude, the

(Continued on next page)

EMMANUEL
Amor Total

Pedro Fernández
Descos y Delirios

Los Del Rio, Los Cantantes, No Mercy, and E O Tahan. Even important artists Victor Manuel & Ana Belén, Laura Pausini, Shakira, and Los Pericos failed to cause a big stir among the crowd or the media. Another big complaint was that only one Chilean act—La Sociiedad—took part in the festival. Even a new artistic wrinkle introduced at Viña this year fell flat. For the first time, an "emerging artists" segment allowed major labels an opportunity to showcase developing acts. The attendant expenses for the showcases were borne by the labels, which brought in such artists as Meneguzzi, Vanessa-Mae, Flavio Cesar, and Marcus Llamas. Except for the aforementioned Meneguzzi, the crowd reaction was lukewarm to the baby acts. The grumbling has captured the attention of Viña's mayor, Rodrigo González. He now wants Viña a municipal government to have final approval of festival participants. Until this year, Megavisión had absolute authority to select the acts. In exchange for this creative freedom, the channel granted Viña's municipal government the right to keep all ticket proceeds, a sum that historically hovers around $1 million. Given Viña's hefty TV ratings, Megavisión is not likely to cede its creative decision-making to González. Amid the uproar, there was the song competition, whose winning entry, "Para Vivir Un Dulce Amor," was penned by Argentinian composers Victor Hércules and Carlos Nilsson and performed by Carlos Elián. Chilean singer Claudio Carrizo won the best vocalist category, and legendary folk singer Tito Fernández triumphed in the folklore category with "Cartagena." If the invitees to Viña were not up to artistic par, then the audience was not deserving of better talent. Nicknamed "the monster" for its demanding attitude, the

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(Continued on next page)
Artists & Music

NOTAS
(Continued from preceding page)

throng earned its sobriquet with an emerging display of disapproving whispers during the performance by Mercedes Ferrer and Mecano’s Nacho Cano, who was invited as a junior for the competition.

GRAMMY HITS ... AND MISSES: For one of the few times in the history of the Grammy Awards, the Latino portion of the awards ceremony made sense. Few would argue that the quartet of Latino Grammy winners—Fonsi’s Enrique Iglesias, Sony’s Rubén Blades and La Mafía, and Cheky’s Paquito D’Rivera—did not deserve their trophies. Each act was collecting its first Grammy, save Blades, who won his third honor.

Unfortunately, the invisibility of Latino music on the Grammys program remained a painful constant during the Feb. 26 telecast. Since 1958, when Latin Grammy categories were introduced, only two Grammy broadcasts have featured live performances in Spanish.

And in 1994, when Gloria Estefan sang the titular track from her Grammy-winning “Mi Tierra” (Epix/Sony), the disoriented camerawork did little but churn the image of Latino grooves for a TV audience largely unaccustomed to such sounds.

While Michael Greene, president/CEO of Grammy organizer the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), often points out that there is insufficient time to acknowledge every musical genre on TV, there surely must be enough broadcast room to show Latina acts more than just two times in 16 years.

The lack of TV exposure merely supports the perception among many in the U.S. Latino music community that NARAS is an Anglo-only club that could further marginalize Latino music via the Latin Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (LARAS), the proposed Latino counterpart to NARAS whose creation is being spearheaded by Greene.

LARAS might be a good idea for Latin America, but most U.S. Latino no music folks would prefer to be a part of NARAS, if only NARAS could come up with a viable plan to attract more Latinos. In the meantime, the least that NARAS could do is demonstrate that it wants state-side Latino members to be featured in a performance by a top shelf Latino artist during the Grammys telecast.

Since the Grammys are broadcast from New York or Los Angeles—two cities with large Latino populations—the ratings risk of televising a Latina act in one of the two largest U.S. TV markets should be minimal. Indeed, if the Grammys broadcast

Latin Tracks A-Z

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http://www.billboard-online.com
Chart Beat’s home on the Internet
New trivia question posted weekly

From the Billboard Latin 50
Complied from a reported sample of sales, radio play, and airplay
reports submitted, compiled, and provided by

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THE BILLBOARD LATIN 50

MARCH 15, 1997

Www.americanradiohistory.com
King's 'Stories' Something Special:
There's nothing more powerful than emotional honesty—the moments when an artist becomes totally vulnerable and creates a work so raw and poignant that it can't help but strike a nerve. And that's exactly what happens on Wes King's wonderful Sparrow debut album, "A Room Full Of Stories." This is simply one of the best albums I've heard in a long, long time; the kind of record that resonates with passion and integrity and leaves a lasting impression on the listener.

But then King is an artist who has long been known for quality work. Formerly with Reunion Records, King carved a niche as one of the Christian industry's most successful singer/songwriters with tunes like "The Robe," "The Love Of Christ," and "Common Creed." On "A Room Full Of Stories," his fifth album, listeners are treated to King's coverage of a vast amount of emotional territory, from the pent-up frustration of the opening cut, "Simplify," to the peaceful acceptance of "Grace," to the beautifully poignant "Thought You'd Be Here," a song King wrote to the child he and his wife, Fran, were trying to have.

"I really hope people will embrace it," King says of the new album. "I had to make a decision if I was going to go to write songs that maybe would get played on the radio and sell records, or was I going to do something that had lasting meaning and depth from my own heart. And I decided to do (the latter)."

Consequently, King crafted an album that rings with truth, and in an industry where there's often the temptation to serve up answer songs about sin, "All We Are." Featuring a guest vocal by Sherilyn Jones, the house-driven track is winning praise from both mainstream and underground club DJs, as well as from crossover radio mix show programmers. In addition to promoting this song, Sanger is forming his own licensing company, independent of WEA, which will handle all licensing for Sanger's catalog. The label is offering "Tripping Among The Stars," a tune from that collection that wriggles with insinuating beats and crafty keyboard loops. There are new vocals by Chez & Heather, as well as a brilliant remix by Atlanta's Wstatt. Do not let this gem pass you by... and use it as an excuse to visit "Sweetened, No Lemon."

If you're in the mood for a twist back in time, do it with one of Next Plateau's fun new sets, "Sybil's Disco Sugar. Alongside yammers like "One More Shot" (beautifully sung by the fab Jenny Burton) are two freshly minted potential hits, a cover of Carol Douglas' "Midnight Love Affair" and "Tonight," both featuring intriguing new singer Whisper. God Is With Me is the message the money if only for the rare Rabbit In The Moon interpretation of Sarah McLachlan's "Possession." Get it.

DANCE TRAX
(Continued from page 38)

lines of the genre. There must be a way to safeguard against that happening. Perhaps a descriptive clause that calls for nominations of music made specifically by and for the dance market? Even that has enough loopholes for a Mack truck to drive through. Guess we'll all fall off that bridge when we get there.

IN THE MIX: One of the better albums to eruse our desk in 1996 was Derrick Carter's deliciously atmospheric "Sweetened, No Lemon." Unfortunately, it went sorely unnoticed by the club masses for the most part, perhaps because the eminent producer/musician filled the set with free-flowing jams that was at least two or so years ahead of their time.

Well, now that the world appears to have caught up with Carter's breakthrough record, we're offering "Tripping Among The Stars," a tune from that collection that wriggles with insinuating beats and crafty keyboard loops. There are new vocals by Chez & Heather, as well as a brilliant remix by Atlanta's Wstatt. Do not let this gem pass you by... and use it as an excuse to visit "Sweetened, No Lemon."

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All They Are. Max Music artist Noel W. Sanger, left, recently visited the label's Miami office to celebrate the release of his new album, "All We Are." Featuring a guest vocal by Sherilyn Jones, the house-driven track is winning praise from both mainstream and underground club DJs, as well as from crossover radio mix show programmers. In addition to promoting this song, Sanger is forming his own licensing company, independent of WEA, which will handle all licensing for Sanger's catalog. The label is offering "Tripping Among The Stars," a tune from that collection that wriggles with insinuating beats and crafty keyboard loops. There are new vocals by Chez & Heather, as well as a brilliant remix by Atlanta's Wstatt. Do not let this gem pass you by... and use it as an excuse to visit "Sweetened, No Lemon."

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**Artists & Music**

### Top Gospel Albums

**MARCH 15, 1997**

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<td><em>Stevie Wonder (1997)</em></td>
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**New*| Various Artists | *New Entry 4/019* | Verity Records Live At The Apollo |
| 39  | Donald Lawrence & The Tri-City Singers | *New Entry 4/019* | Bible Stories |
| 40  | The Florida A&M University Gospel Choir | *New Entry 4/019* | Live In New York By Any Means |
| 41  | The Florida A&M University Gospel Choir | *New Entry 4/019* | Live In New York By Any Means |

**Re-Entry**| Various Artists | *Re-Entry 4/019* | Verity Records Live At The Apollo |
| 42  | Donald Lawrence & The Tri-City Singers | *Re-Entry 4/019* | Bible Stories |
| 43  | The Florida A&M University Gospel Choir | *Re-Entry 4/019* | Live In New York By Any Means |
| 44  | The Florida A&M University Gospel Choir | *Re-Entry 4/019* | Live In New York By Any Means |

**Special Note**

- The numbers in the chart represent the position of each album in the Top Gospel Albums chart for the week ending March 15, 1997.
- The chart includes gospel albums that have been released since the previous chart.
- The chart reflects the sales performance of gospel albums in the United States, as reported by Billboard's data collection vendors.

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Artists & Music

Jazz
BLUE NOTES

by Jim Macnie

R E A D Y  F O R  H I S  C L O S E - U P :  L a l o  S c h i f r i n  w o r k s  o n  h i s  e v e r - i n c r e a s i n g  b o d y  o f  w o r k  i n  a  s t u d i o  b e h i n d  h i s  B e v e r l y  H i l l s ,  C a l i f . ,  h o m e ,  w h i c h  w a s  o n c e  o w n e d  b y  G r o u c h o  M a r x .  I t ' s  a n  o f f i c e  o f f i c e s ,  b u t  a l s o  h a v e n ,  a f t e r  b e c o m e  f o u r  d e c a d e s  o f  c o m p o s i n g ,  t h e  p r o c e s s  o f  c r e a t i n g  m u s i c  i s  s t i l l  S c h i f r i n ' s  b i g g e s t  t h r i l l .

"I  l o v e  t o  c o m e  o u t  h e r e  a n d  b e g i n  a  n e w  p r o j e c t , "  s a y s  t h e  6 8 - y e a r - o l d  n a t i v e  o f  A r g e n t i n a .  M a k e  t h a t  p r o j e c t s .  1 9 9 6  w a s  b o u n t i f u l  f o r  S c h i f r i n ,  w h o  s c o r e s  H o l l y w o o d  f i l m s  a n d  w r i t e s  e x t e n d e d  p r e s e n c e s  t h a t  b r a d  e l e m e n t s  o f  j a z z  w i t h  t h e  s y n c h r o n i c  l a n g u a g e .  H i s  h i g h l y  r e s p e c t e d  "  G i l l e s p i a n a "  f r o m  1 9 6 1  w a s  b r i n g e d  u p  t o  d a t e  w i t h  p e r f o r m a n c e s  a t  t h e  H o l l y w o o d  B o w l  a n d  t h e  M o n t e r e y  J a z z  F e s t i v a l .  H e  a l s o  d e b u t e d  a  n e w  e x c i t a t i o n ,  "A  R h a p s o d y  P a r  B i x , "  i n  I o w a ,  j a z z  t r u m p e t e r  B i x  B i d e r c h e c k e ' s  h o m e  s t a t e .

A n d  t w o  o f  h i s  p i e c e s  r e c e i v e d  G r a m m y  n o m i n a t i o n s :  "C h a r l i e  P a r k e r :  T h e  F i r e h e a d  (M e d i c y n ) , "  w h i c h  b l e n d s  b i t s  o f  S t r a v i n s k y ' s  b a l l e t  w i t h  B i r d ' s  m e l o d i e s ,  a n d  A d a m  C l a y t o n  a n d  L a r r y  M a l l e r n ' s  u p d a t e s  o f  h i s  s i g n a t u r e  t u t e .

"M i s s i o n :  I m p o s s i b l e , "  w h i c h  a c c o m p a n i e d  l a s t  s u m m e r ' s  f i l m  v i s i o n  o f  t h e  c l a s s i c  t e l e v i s i o n  s h o w .  B o t h  a r e  p a r t  o f  h i s  "  J a z z  M e e t s  T h e  S y m p h o n y ,  N o .  3 "  d i s c ,  w h i c h  i s  o n  A t l a n t i c .

"I  f e e l  v e r y  y o u n g , "  s a y s  S c h i f r i n .  "I  t h i n k  t h i s  k i n d  o f  a c t i v i t y  k e e p s  y o u  f i t . "  S c h i f r i n  n e e d s  s o m e  c r e a t i v e  i n c e n t i v e s  t o  s u p p o r t  t h e  e n s e m b l e ' s  h e r o i c  e n d e a v o r .

C H E S K Y  R E C O R D S

C o n g r a t u l a t e s  P a q u i t o  D ' R i v e r a ,  C a r l o s  F r a n z z e t t i  A n d  A l l  T h e  W o n d e r f u l  M u s i c i a n s  I n v o l v e d  F o r  C r e a t i n g  O n e  O f  T h e  B e s t  J a z z  R e c o r d i n g s  O f  T h e  Y e a r !

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You can hear the difference T o  O R D E R  C A L L :  1 - 8 0 0 - 3 3 1 - 1 4 3 7  o r  1 2 1 - 3 8 6 - 7 5 3 7  L i s t e n  a n d  l o a d  h t t p : / / w w w . c h e s k y . c o m

Want to get one of the best Latin Jazz albums of the year? Look no further than Paquito D’Rivera’s newest release, "Portraits of Cuba: Portraits of the Carlos Franzetti Ensemble." This album features some of the greatest jazz musicians of today, including Benny Green, John Patitucci, and Brian Blade. It’s a must-have for any jazz lover! Order yours now and enjoy the best Latin Jazz available today.
Artists & Music

KEEPING SCORE (Continued from preceding page)

The boxed set will include the radio CD as a bonus.

DG’s Wende Persons reports that 56 stations have already committed to airing the complete quarter cycle beginning in April. The quarter is also touring the U.S. intensively, with 20-plus dates this month and April, and will do five in-store performances (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C.) at Borders bookstores during April. The quarter will also open the fall season of NPR’s “St. Paul Sunday Morning” with three programs dedicated to the early, middle, and late quartets.

GRAMMYS: I guess we know where we stand when classical music gets under five minutes on the Grammy Awards. Do they figure it by market share? And to have the British-accented Jesse Norm-

Keroman as the presenter of the one award announced on the air probably isn’t the way to get across the idea that the music just isn’t for snobs. Isn’t there some way to do an all-classical awards show, or maybe a classical and jazz show, that could better show off the wondrous variety of the classical world?

MORE ON MARIAN: In addition to other tributes, Marian Anderson’s 100th birthday has sparked the creation of a World Wide Web site devoted to her life and work, created by the library of the University of Pennsylvania. The site (http://www.library.upenn.edu/special/gallery/andersen/index.html) includes video coverage of her 1950 concert at the Lincoln Memorial, as well as her perfor-

medomance of the Sibelius “Son de’dron” (Was It A Dream?), recorded in Paris in 1936 but never commercially released. The Penn Library also plans to construct the Marian Anderson Music Study Center and Exhibition Gallery to catalog and make available the singer’s personal papers and more than 240 test recordings.

FRIENDS OF CRC: Composer Lou Harrison and choreographer Mark Morris, artists decades apart in age but matched in exuberance, will be lending their talents to a benefit for the nonprofit label Composers Recordings Inc. (CRC) March 29 at City Center’s fifth-floor studio in New York. The evening will feature live music by Harrison, who is 80, a solo danced by Morris; and a discus-

sion moderated by Joseph Dal-

ton, CRC’s managing director. Morris has choreographed numerous dances to music by Harrison, and the composer has just written his first score expressly for Morris. The collaboration premieres in Berkeley, Calif., in March, and will be seen in New York at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in April. Tickets to the benefit are $125. Call CRC at 212-941-9673.

BLUE NOTES (Continued from preceding page)

percussionist Bobby Previte, pianist Irene Schweizer, the Rova sax quartet, Belgian prokocermes Universe Zero, and several others. The fest runs May 15-20. Call 819-732-7912.

Another annual setting in a rural setting, with a wholly different aesthetic, has also announced its schedule. With the Berk’s Jazz Fest ‘97, March 18-23, contemporary jazz fans in the rural environs of Reading, Pa., will have it all. Lee Rite-

nour, Spyro Gyra, Bob James, Kirk Whalum, Buddy Guy, Bela Fleck & the Flecktones, Dianne Reeves, Pati Austin, and the Heads Up Super Band (featuring Joe McBride, Benny Blake, and Gerald Vasseley) will perform at various venues.

Congratulations to Michael Breck-

er for picking up a pair of Grammys. His Impulse! disc “Tales From The Hudson” was deemed best jazz instrumental performance by an individual or group, and the record’s “Cabin Fever” took the award for best jazz instrumental solo. A recent weeklong stint of SRO gigs at New York’s Birdland club found Brecker offering some of the most potent jazz sax solo yet to be heard in 1997.

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CLANNAD

5 22

LEGENDS

JAMES GALWAY & PHIL COULTER

6 22

ISLANDS

VARIOUS ARTISTS

7 22

NEW

CELTO CROSSROADS NARADA

8 22

GUITAR

JOHN HENKEL & FRIENDS

9 22

ISLANDS

KODD

10 22

RE-ENTRY

CINQDU SOLEIL

11 22

RE-ENTRY

THE BEST OF ALAN LAZIER LEWIS

12 22

TIERRA GITANA NORMA-LENNING

13 22

SPIRIT e/ASHER AAS 7303 KUNER BROS

14 22

LAMOUR DU LA FOULIE RHODES

15 22

A CELTIC TALES HEARTS OF SPACE

MIKHAYL DANNY & JEFF DANN

(Continued from preceding page)

Produced by Van Morrison except * "Eagerly" produced by Los Lobos with Mark Caster Jr. Executive Producer/ Addtional Production: Mike Kopuss

JOHN LEE HOOKER

DON'T LOOK BACK

THE new album from the legendary two-time Grammy-winner

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Peop.
Grammies Grow In Garden

Crew Goes All Digital With Capricorn Board

BY PAUL Verna

NEW YORK—In the moments preceding the kick-off of the Feb. 26 Grammy telecast, the atmosphere inside the EFannel truck was filled with scenes from “Apollo 13” of the NASA Command Center in Houston. “I miss you,” a voice in a wire behind the glass window of the booth where the engineers were headquartered, coaxed me. The speaker was Radar Engineer Ezratty, John Harris, and Mark Hutchins. The man on the board was a cluster of other engineers and technicians looking attentively.

It wasn’t that the EFannel Recording Co. (CRC) veteran Neuberger and the EFannel with the Capricorn’s analog sound would be injected onto the air. The CRC had been involved in mixing sound for the Grammies and other top shows for over 20 years. The Efannel board was unlike any in the past. For one thing, it was held at Madison Square Garden—a larger and more difficult venue than Radio City Music Hall in New York and the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, the sites of several recent Grammy Awards. And, for another, the control room in the Capricorn, the crew decided this year to use an all-digital board—the AMS/Neve Capricorn.

“This is clearly the most complex audio show in television broadcasting,” said Neuberger, who worked with CRC owner John Harris on the Grammy’s analog sound design. Murray Allen, veteran producer and Grammy music mix producer Phil Ramone, and the Efannel staff on the mixing area for the show, “You’ve got something like 6000 miles inputs scrolling by in three hours live, and we’re 1500 feet from the stage.”

One was for the broadcast sound crew to circumvent the distance problem is to place microphones on the stage side and convert to line level there, according to Neuberger. “But the problem with that is then you’re dependant on an assistant with a walkie-talkie in front of the sound control room because no one has remote control of the microphone’s at the quality we need.”

So we started thinking about a Capricorn, because it actually does have microphone’s we could put on the stage that are remote-controllable from the desk here in the truck. We realized if we did this, we could convert the capacitive microphone system to an analog-to-digital converters on the stage instead of carrying massive amounts of copper wire 600 feet.

A digital system would allow engineers to instantly recall all mix settings, enabling multiple rehearsals of individual segments during the rehearsal period and the establishment of all performance mixes into one track.

Trivially, the Grammies, the (MTV) Video Music Awards, and most of the big music television shows are done with not only a video truck that combines all the audio elements—the audience, things like that—but specialty audio trucks for artist performances,” said Ezratty. “And we’ve always used two trucks to stagger between the performances so there’d be time to do recall. While one artist is on you’re doing the recall for a new one, going back and forth, which has actually been a little bit, but it seemed like the writing on the wall for this technology.

Another advantage of one-truck systems is having a single control environment, which afforded the crew unprecedented consistency.

We were able to do our rehearsal mixes in the same environment,” said Neuberger. “So the Capricorn so far seems like the ultimate solution to the problem we had coming to this new arena.”

Although the remote recording community knew the “writing was on the wall” for any mixing of large scale shows, it wasn’t until last year’s MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) at Radio City Music Hall that the Grammies crew got a firsthand look at a Capricorn. It was there that Clair Bros.—which also did the live show for the Grammies—used the board as a P.A. mixer. When Ezratty observed how well the board worked for that purpose, he figured it would work for the broadcast world.

After the VMAs, Ezratty approached AMS/Neve management about getting a board for Efannel, which had used Solid State Logic consoles for years. Impressed with Efannel’s expanding truck (track, March 1990), said Neuberger, “and an eager venture into the mobile recording market, AMS/Neve made Ezratty a proposal for a Capricorn customized for the road.

Ezratty said, “They put together a proposal that was by design a Capricorn system for a truck, i.e., redundant power supplies, roadworthy mile lines, etc. All of the audio elements of that system were reassessed for their roadworthiness.

With the system in place, Ezratty, Harris, and Hutchins went to work using a key technological process was engineer Mark Repp, who had used the Capricorn to mix several shows, including last year’s VMAs.

“Part of the reason AMS/Neve brought me in is they have lots of people who know lots about the console—very smart people—but they don’t have in their stable anyone who has experience mixing this kind of TV show on this equipment,” said Repp. “So if [the sound engineers] have a problem, they can help them through it, and 1 know what they’re trying to do because of the kind of show it is.”

Repp added that moving “from a regular in-line console over to this format is fairly fast. Some of the buttons change around, and you’ve got to learn where things are. Making the move is fairly quick, but to really get to depth in the software takes a little more time.”

But Ezratty’s avuncular presence did not guarantee smooth sailing at the Grammies. “We’re on a tightrope here,” said Ezratty. “I’m a nervous guy today.”

All The King’s Men And Women. Blues titan B.B. King has been working on a star-studded duets album at Ocean Way Recording Studios in Hollywood, Calif. Standing at the sessions, from left, are drummer Jim Keltner, keyboardist Bill Payne, guitarist/vocalist Marty Stuart, project assistant Joette Phillips, producer John Porter, project coordinator Tisha Fein, harmonica player Mickey Raphael, and Stuart’s manager, Bonnie Garner. Shown seated, from left, are keyboardist Tommy Eyre, guitarist Randy Jacobs, and King. Among the participants not shown are Dr. John and Willie Nelson. (Photo: David Goggin)
NEW YORK—Warner Bros. Publications, the division that wholesales newsgroups integrating foreign and domestic operations,” according to CEO Jay Morganstein.

Pointing to advanced technologies, including satellite communications, Morganstein says the giant music print companies “are far more efficient at selling worldwide inventory and building on the successes of the various divisions” regional marketing efforts.

The company has a major international structure, including wholly owned units in the U.K., Canada, Italy, Australia, and South Africa. Also, it is represented with secondary affiliates in Austria and Japan, which operate in those territories through parent companies Latin Percussion.

According to Sandy Feldstein, president of Warner Bros. Publications, the company’s annual revenues are “a reflection of the company’s world market demands. We will continue to translate both pop and educational publications, including lyrics, to the local language.

Says Morganstein, who is based in Los Angeles, home of Warner/Chappell, “One of the most important aspects of this global network is that we can ensure our clients worldwide exposure. A good example of that is two new Wynonna Murrells books, ‘Ballads’ and ‘Standards,’ which are being released simultaneously worldwide. We are giving the books major exposure in the ‘Latin Music’ world-wide trade show,” which both Morganstein and Feldstein plan to attend.

Morganstein also reports that Warner has just "implemented a process of tagging all of our international books with the logos of the Legal Music Companies, which ensures that all international distribution agreements with Ritter Music, the major Japanese video line, and with LP for its Latin Percussion video sales. He also signed distribution agreements with three major software/CD-ROM companies: Elan Systems-Unix/Soft, and Hohner New MIDIA.

Feldstein, based at Warner Bros. Publications headquarters in Miami, points out that growing application of new business technologies in the U.S.; Warner’s relationships with jobbers and retailer networks; and the expanded offerings in our Ultimate Rack Program, which we established late in 1996. We’ve selected our top 100 titles for the Ultimate Rack and [created] a drum-and-guitar pro shop rack and a keyboard specialty rack. The jobber supplies the rack and a computerized inventory rotation service to clients; we provide marketing support on all product.”

By embracing new technology for the music consumer, Morganstein says Warner is adapting to “major changes” in the print industry itself.

“The most important is the diminishing number of printable new songs available to the industry. Large segments of the popular music charts are becoming dominated by hit-crop and dance tracks. And while both rap and dance are incredibly vital forms of music—some of the most exciting and progressive sounds to be created in the past 20 years—they just don’t translate well to print. A person who plays piano just can’t recreate the sound of a dozen rhythm samples.

With an eye to a more controversial nature of many of today’s pop, Morganstein adds, “A lot of our business is through educational products. To those, the content and lyrics of pop music must be appropriate for schoolchildren.

The way to get there, the answer is in taking ‘advantage of niche markets with a loyal consumer base, such as acoustic guitarists. We’ve also been targeting the over-40 consumer—the individuals who started learning an instrument when they were younger and now really want to go back and learn.’

With PolyGram, Kennedy Scores The Hit That Changes His World

**By DEBORAH EVANS PRICE**

NASHVILLE—Gordon Kennedy, a newly crowned Grammy winner, is undoubtedly one of Nashville’s busiest entertainers. As an artist, he’s half of the Sparrow Records duo Dogs Of Peace. As a gui- tarist, he’s worked with Amy Grant, Wynonna, Steven Curtis Chapman, Michael McDonald, and Garth Brooks. As a songwriter, he’s had cuts by Trisha Yearwood, Englebert Humperdinck, Patty Loveless, and the Masters Brothers Band with Dan Aveyrou. His recent Grammy was for a song of the year, “Change The World,” which he co-wrote for Eric Clapton.

The song is also associated with two other Grammys—best male pop performance and record of the year.

Born in Shreveport, La., Kennedy moved to Nashville with his family when he was 2 years old. His father, Jerry Kennedy, became a Music City legend, re- cording his first album for RCA, which Chess Atkins produced, when Kennedy was just 10 years old. He went on to work as a session player for Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, Bob Dylan, and many others. After Roger Miller, the Statler Brothers, Reba McEntire, and Johnny Rodriguez.

Kennedy’s sons followed him into the music business. Shelby Kennedy is an executive in the Nashville ASCAP office; Bryan is a session drummer; and Scott, famed, is a songwriter. After Rože Bryan’s recent tour; and Gor- don, of course, is a singer/songwriter/producer who exposed the pop country, and contemporary Christian markets.

Gordon says his father is mostly recognized for his varied musical tastes. “My dad was the kind of guy who brought everything home,” he recalls. “We heard all the Roger Miller stuff, Johnny Rodriguez, and the first several Reba records. He would always bring home the Statler Brothers and things he was involved in. So I was hearing all that when I was growing up.

‘Then I remember specifically, when I was probably in the first grade, I brought home ‘Meet The Beatles’ and gave me that album. That was probably the first time I really paid attention to something outside of country music. That was a really pivotal point for me, as far as being diverse today, because I had these roots in one area and then this desire to pursue these other things.”

Gordon began writing songs in his teens. By the time he was out of college, he signed a publishing deal with the Welk Music Group. “I wrote for them and that first deal ended in 1990 when I changed hands to PolyGram,” he says. “I left them at that point to pursue other things and ended up signing a one-year deal with Brown Ban- nister, because I modeled a place to put four songs that were going on an album. Then, in 1991, I signed a deal that lasted a year to MCA Music.

From 1984 to 1990, during the time he was signed to Welk for publishing, Kennedy was also performing as a member of the popular Christian band Yellow 105. He also co-wrote several songs for Randy Travis and signed a publishing deal with Orlando’s Celestial Music. In 1992, he signed with PolyGram and has been with them ever since.

Then, in 1993, Doug Howard (Poly- Gram Nashville VP/Finance & Administration) came back to Nashville as President of PolyGram Nashville and signed Kennedy to PolyGram and have been there since. The first song I turned in to PolyGram was ‘Twas The Night Before Christmas. Kennedy demoed the song in the spring of 1992 and introduced it to PolyGram in April 1993. In the spring of 1993, he co-wrote two songs he and co- writers Wayne Kirkpatrick and Tommy Sims weren’t actually writing together but due to changes in the music industry materialized. “I’ve known Tommy for about 11 years. We were in a group together in the late ’80s and Wayne (Continued on page 66)
Italian Singles Chart Disputed
AFI Says Indies Are Underrepresented

BY MARK DEZZANI

MIAN—The accuracy of Italy's new singles chart has been challenged by the country's independent-labels association, AFI. The organization claims that the chart is not a fair representation of the indie sector's success and is not "valid" as a measure of the Italian market.

The new listing, launched at the end of January, is sponsored by Italy's major-labels body, FIMI, and is compiled by the local affiliate of the international market-research company Nielsen.

The FIMI/Nielsen singles chart was introduced one year after the two parties launched an "official" album chart. Both listings use electronically gathered sales data from 150 retail outlets.

FIMI/Nielsen claims that the sample for the new chart, which lists the 10 best-selling singles, has been adjusted to include specialist stores, which account for a majority of singles sales in Italy, and to monitor sales of CD singles and 12-inch singles. AFI sponsors the long-standing top 25 singles chart, compiled by Italian trade magazine Musica E Dischi using call-out research and faced declarations from 150 retailers.

AFI president Franco Donato says in a statement, "After a period of observation, unfortunately we do not consider the new chart to be a valid instrument for the record industry."

He adds, "The presence of independent releases in the new chart is around 30%, which is a complete inversion of our real market share of 70%, which is reflected in the Musica E Dischi chart."

Donato tells Billboard that while he believes Nielsen to be a serious market-research company, he complains that its sample is not sufficiently vetted to include specialist shops responsible for selling the majority of 12-inch singles, which still outsell CD singles 4-to-1. The majority of 12-inch discs are produced and distributed by Italian independents, which also often produce and distribute 12-inch dance mixes of the major labels' international releases. According to FIMI, its members shipped 1.3 million CD singles and 12-inch singles in 1996, worth a total of $4.5 million. CD singles accounted for 1.9 million units, worth $2.45 million, while 255,000 vinylers were shipped, worth $1.05 million.

Figures released by Musica E Dischi covering both FIMI and AFI members in January, 1996, showed that 3.5 million singles were shipped, worth $9.2 million, were shipped in 1996. FIMI president Gerolamo Caccia Dominioni, who is also president of Warner Music Italy, points out that chart methodology and the practices record companies use to promote their product are the subject of discussion throughout the global music industry.

(Continued on page 62)

Wanted: Japanese Artists
Hinata, EMI To Bring Talent To U.S.

BY STEVE MCCULLE

TOKYO—Santa Monica-based producer Daikusu Hinata is on the lookout for Japanese acts he thinks can make it in the U.S. Hinata, part of the team that set up independent label Hyperdisc last year (Billboard, Nov. 2, 1996), recently signed a deal with EMI Records, which will promote and market Japanese acts that Hinata signs to the label. The deal is separate from EMI Records' recently announced campaign to promote Asian music licensed from its affiliates in the region (Billboard, Feb. 22).

"Realistically, I think I can only sign three or four acts a year," says the soft-spoken Hinata. "And I think I'll record them in the U.S.—all my machines are there."

Hinata thinks that because American interest in Japanese animation and video games has taken off, the timing may be right for Japanese pop music in the U.S.

"It's still not a big market, but it's kind of shifting," he says. "It seems like the American taste in female vocals is changing. I don't think the American audience is conservative— the marketing is conservative."

Born in Japan, Hinata is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston and a longtime U.S. resident. Formerly with Windham Hill act Interiors and one of Japan's most respected producers, Hinata says he is looking for all kinds of music to introduce to the U.S.

"I want to do straight pop vocals as well as other, weird stuff—anything that's weird and looks interesting," he says.

Toshiba-EMI label suite supuesto! is Hyperdisc's licensee in Japan. Hyperdisc's first release, the soundtrack album for the hit Japanese TV series "The Long Vacation," has sold more than 1 million copies here. A suite supuesto! spokesman says the label will consider Japanese artists produced by Hinata for Japanese release if the artist does not have a record deal here.

Russian Authors' Complaints Detailed

MOSCOW—The Russian Authors' Society (RAO) dealt with about 170 complaints about infringement of members' musical copyright rights in 1996, according to the organization.

Of the total, 98 were complaints by writers about record companies using their works without permission, and 21 were over alleged unlicensed public performances on radio and TV.

About one-fourth of the complaints received by RAO resulted in court cases, all of which were won by the authors' body, RAO claims.

Russian copyright law provides penalties of up to $750,000 for copyright infringement, although in practice judges tend to award around $15,000.

RAO acknowledges, though, that it has to overcome significant judicial ignorance. Noting that most courts and judges in Russia are overburdened with work, an RAO spokesman says, "Many judges have only vague notions about the authors' and neighboring rights law, and sometimes we have to give them long lectures on copyrights. The judges have neither the time nor the interest to get involved in the details of the cases."

ERRIK TOUZMOHAMED

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International U.K.'s PRS, MCPS Strengthen Ties

BY NIGEL HUNTER

LONDON—Further steps in cementing the alliance of the U.K.'s Performing Right Society (PRS), the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society (MCPS) were outlined by John Hutchinson, PRS chief executive and acting head of MCPS, at an extraordinary general meeting held Feb. 23 here. "Successful collaboration is bound to bring us negotiating power with users of music and with suppliers of equipment software," Hutchinson said in his address. "Furthermore, government and opposition have been consistent in their desire to see the part of the music industry to get our act together and establish a common front. British Music Rights and the PRS/ MCPS alliance are already proving successful in this regard."

To simplify the relationship between PRS and MCPS, a jointly owned subsidiary, Music Copyright Operational Services (MCOS), is being revised to provide the framework for an administration board that will function "as a sort of joint executive committee" for the board of the two societies. MCOS is a direct descendant of ServiceCo, formed in 1983 at the time of the first abortive attempt to harmonize the activities of the PRS and MCPS.

"It will also be a base for the staff of the two organizations," explained Hutchinson, "and hopefully provide them with both an attractive common space to benefit staff and improved training and career progression opportunities across the work of the two societies. MCOS will be the vehicle for joint ownership assets needed for their continuing operations."

He said that combining the seven divisional directors of the PRS and the six members of the MCPS executive board for the alliance's top team is already paying dividends.

In the revenue divisions, there is little change in the areas of mechanical and performance-right licensing controlled by Graham Churchill (MCPS) and John Aven (PRS), who are both true believers in the proposition of cooperatives working to combat copyright abuse, said Hutchinson. The new combined international division, headed by Diana Derrick (PRS), will make technical visits to foreign societies administering both performance and mechanical rights and will "not be fobbed off with a refusal for her team to see all the books," he said.

Hutchinson declared that the alliance will ensure that pressure to reduce costs associated with one right does not result in increased costs for the other right.

As director of broadcasting for both societies, Mark Iskerwood (MCPS) will benefit from a combined entity dealing with the same number of organizations. Hutchinson predicted that plans for the alliance should be ready in June for PRS board approval, with "final commitment to a long-term operational relationship between the MCPS and the PRS" by September. Budgets for 1998 should be finalized by December.

"In January we should be in business as a unified operational force," he added, "but with two clearly separate separate organizations."

The extraordinary general meeting was convened primarily to enable PRS to announce its intention to vote on various rule changes affecting the PRS constitution. The meeting approved 13 resolutions, including the appointment of Jeremy Lever as chairman of the PRS appeals panel. This has been set up in response to a recommendation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as a final answer to members' complaints.

Also approved was the appointment of Peter Knight Jr., U.K. managing director of the Global Music and composer Davis Stoll as the other appeals panel members.

German Publishing Slows But Global Prospects Up, Assn. Says

HAMBURG—The 490 music publishers represented by the Assn. of German Music Publishers had total revenues of $830 million in 1996, a 2% fall compared with 1995's $850 million. According to figures released by the association, while the sheet music business last year matched 1995's $180 million revenues, there was a dramatic fall in mechanical royalty income.

However, the good news is that German publishers are now more successful abroad, says association VP Wilfred Sikorski. He says this is a result of the impact of the association's stand at MIDEM, PopKomm, and other trade fairs around the world.

"The international nature of business contacts lies at the very heart of all music publishing business," says Sikorski. "Multimedia has also begun to make an impact on music publishers here, says Sikorski. He notes that stores now stock such titles as "Music For Magdalena Bach," Beethoven's "Für Elise," and Schubert's "German Dances" on CD-ROM, which means that the music is available in all its forms. Consumers can hear it, see it, edit it, and print out the music as well.

The entire catalog of German publishers is now also available on the Internet, Sikorski says, and publishers will accept orders for sheet music by E-mail.

Sikorski adds, "For anyone actually playing an instrument, as well as for the passive listener, multimedia offers entire new possibilities of enjoying music in all its variations. Downloading music from the Internet into the home PC gives the music user the chance of enjoying a worldwide repertoire."

WOLFGANG SPANK

Music-On-Demand Coming To France

BY REMI BOUTON

CANNES—French company Eurolit is planning to launch what is claimed to be the first experiment with music-on-demand for the high-end market. If the project, Paris Music, was unveiled by Eurolit president Francois-Xavier Netallat at Milia 97, the multimedia market held Feb. 10-13 here.

Paris Music is a joint venture with cable operator Lyonbanis Cable and of course the companies, including French bank Paribas. The test service is due to start March 15 in 400 cable households in the cities of Paris, Le Mans, and Annecy (Billboard Bulletin, Feb. 20). To use the system, the household must be equipped with computers and a cable box. Before the experiment service produces positive results, it will be expanded in September to an additional 5,000 households.

The project is tailored to test consumers' interest in music-on-demand services. "It is usually assumed that electronic distribution of music will represent some 15% of the worldwide music industry's total turnover within in the next five years," says Netallat. "But there are still many legal, financial, and commercial obstacles for this kind of service."

Netallat says that this first real-time experiment will help to identify problems and hopefully better understand the attitude of consumers when faced with new systems of delivery and consumption of music. He adds, "It will also allow us to come up with the right price, a marketing frame, and we will be able to see if this new system is fully adapted to this type of service."

In this first phase, Paris Music will allow consumers to link to a database of some 600 titles and listen to selected songs in hi-fi sound quality. If customers are interested in acquiring the title, they can order the track, download it onto the hard-disc of their computer, and listen to it in digital hi-fi quality.

Downloading a song will take close to a minute, according to Netallat, which is faster than similar services already on the Internet. The call adds that the system uses the ASFS technology developed by Eurolit, which prevents any digital duplication from the hard disc.

Consumers will pay for what they use via an electronic cash system currently being developed by one of the partner companies, Kléline. Consumer rates have not yet been set.

Netallat estimates that the total cost will come to approximately 900,000 French francs ($150,000). Music Paris is backed by the main French rights societies SACEM/SDRM, SCDP, SPPP, Adamat, and SPPP, as well as the U.K.'s Mechanical Copyright Protection Society.

So far, several independent labels and one major company, Sony Music, have agreed to supply songs from their catalogs.
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Sanremo Fetes Foreign Acts Who Sing In Italian

SANREMO, Italy—This country’s authors’ rights society SIAE has initiated an award at the annual Sanremo Song Festival with the presentation of an honor for international artists who choose to perform a song in Italian. The first Italia in Musica Award was presented Feb. 19 by SIAE president Luciano Villeneuve-Bideri to U.S. performer Lionel Richie for his rendition in Italian of his hit “Still in Love” (Billboard, March 8).

Italian singer/songwriter Luciano Villeneuve Bideri to perform in the Popkomm. Sanremo singer/ songwriter Tony Renis, who won the festival in 1982 with “Quando, Quando, Quando,” which became a worldwide hit for Engelbert Humperdinck, co-wrote the lyrics for the Italian version with Alberto Testa and says that the prize revives a tradition in which guests are often sung in Italian at the festival.

In the past, the Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, Dwayne Warwick, and others have performed here in Italian. Renis says of the thinking behind the prize, “First, it can only help raise awareness of the Italian language and culture for great international stars to perform in our language, and secondly, with 50% of our national radio networks playing only Italian-language music, it can bring international stars wider awareness in this country.”

MARK DEZZANI

Spain’s Sánchez Teams Up With Slash
GN’R Guitarist Links With Singer Via Nile Rodgers

BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN

Madrid—Guns N’ Roses guitarist Slash has a new partner, who is set to lavish her charms on Spain, Latin America, and the U.S., as well as Asia and other markets in Europe. And two people to get credit for this most unlikely event are moviemaker Quentin Tarantino and music producer Nile Rodgers.

The partner is Spanish blonde Marta Sánchez, who has been making a name for herself in Latin American and U.S. Latin markets since leaving pop outfit Olé Olé in the early ’90s to go solo.

With the future of Guns N’ Roses uncertain, Slash has contributed guitar work to her new Mercury single, “Moja Mi Corazón” (Moisten My Heart), and it seems their future could be closely linked. As they floated into a late-afternoon Madrid press conference, still buzzing after an appearance in a gypsy flamenco bar with such domestic stars as flamenco/salsa band Ketama, the singing Fiorela, sisters Rosario and Loaiisa, and crooner Alejandro Sanz, it was clear the two had developed a special camaraderie.

They were in town to make a video for the single, the first release from Sánchez’s third solo album, “Azabache” (Jet, as in the hard black stone). The single and album were issued Feb. 24 in Spain by Mercury and are scheduled for U.S. and Latin American release in April and Asia and the rest of Europe in May.

How did two people from musically opposite worlds get together like this? Slash explains that he had written a song called “Obsession” for the Tarantino-produced film “Curdled” and sent it to Rodgers, the veteran founding member of Chic who has also produced David Bowie, Bob Dylan, and Madonna, among others.

“It was different from my usual work, but Nile liked it and rang me up, saying, ‘I know just the person to sing on this, a Spaniard called Marta Sánchez,’” recalls Slash. “I didn’t have a clue who she was and didn’t know anything about the Spanish music scene. But we recorded the song together, and that was it,” he beams. “Then she asked me to play on her single, and I didn’t think twice.”

Slash says there is a Spanish link to the idea for “Obsession.” On the guitarist’s Snakepit tour, he and his band watched Tarantino’s “Pulp Fiction” “zillion” times and were fascinated by actress Angela Jones, who played the taxi driver. “She’s great, and I thought she was really Spanish,” says Slash, laughing. “Although she’s from Pittsburgh, she inspired the new song that Marta sings on.”

Before the flamenco party, the two had spent three days making the “Moja Mi Corazón” clip in a medieval castle in Guadalajara, northeast of Madrid. “I had more fun making the video with Marta than I had making last Guns N’ Roses video,” says Slash.

“My life now is all very fast, and Guns is a very slow process,” reflects Slash. “We’re not clicking, and rather than sit around for three years with all that bullshit, I’d prefer to play with people I like. Hopefully, I’ll make another Guns record at some point, but I don’t know where that’s going right now.”

Rodgers produced two songs on the album and co-wrote one of them, while the rest of the album was produced by Christian De Walden, who produced Sánchez’s two previous albums, “Mujer” (the English-language version was “Woman”) and “Mi Mundo” (My World).

In late February, Sánchez was scheduled to record “about half” the album in English for non-Latino markets, and after doing TV, radio, and press promotion in several territories, she plans to tour in Mexico (where her sales are more than in Spain), Argentina, Chile, Puerto Rico, and Miami.

Simone Bosé, director of Mercury in Spain, says that the participation of Slash and Rodgers was a “guarantee of success,” adding that “this is the first collaboration at this level between a Spaniard and an American musician. Many people who until now have been critical of Marta will have to eat their words.”

Bosé notes that “Azabache” will have a two-pronged marketing attack, based on Slash’s interest and Sánchez’s maturity since her Olé Olé days. “Her first 1995 solo album, ‘Mujer’ sold 650,000 units worldwide, so she has an important base already,” he says.

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**Singles**

1. "True" by Gojo You & Friends vs. Shiwada Pure Energy
2. "Tell Me You're Mine" by Tamura & The Melting Pot
3. "Heartbreak Hotel" by Kurosaki & The Blues Brothers
4. "Scream" by Fujioka & The Rockers
5. "Promised Land" by Nakamura & The Vampires
6. "Don't Stop Believin'" by Jyotsuba & The Rolling Stones
7. "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Vans & The Red Hot Chili Peppers
8. "Black Hole Sun" by Nirvana & The Soundgarden
9. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Goo Goo Dolls & Nirvana
10. "Lose Yourself" by Eminem & The Notorious B.I.G.

**Alarms**

1. "I Feel Love" by Giorgio Moroder & Giorgio Moroder
2. "Like a Virgin" by Madonna & The Breakfast Club
3. "Like a Prayer" by Madonna & The Breakfast Club
4. "Vogue" by Madonna & The Breakfast Club
5. "Express" by The Pointer Sisters & The Pointer Sisters
6. "2002" by Christina Aguilera & The Black Eyed Peas
7. "How Do You Sleep?" by Aaliyah & The Notorious B.I.G.
8. "Crazy in Love" by Beyoncé & Jay-Z
9. "U illegally" by Missy Elliot & The Prodigy
10. "I Gave It All" by Eve & Dr. Dre

### Germany

**Singles**

1. "Burnin' Up" by Britney Spears & The Black Eyed Peas
2. "This Is How We Do It" by Jennifer Lopez & The Pussycat Dolls
3. "Don't Stop" by The Human League & The Human League
4. "I Want To Be" by Whitney Houston & The Bodyguard
5. "I Love You" by Celine Dion & The Bodyguard
6. "I'm Your Baby Tonight" by Beyoncé & Jay-Z
7. "Can't Help Falling In Love" by Elvis Presley & The King's Band
8. "Lady Marmalade" by Christina Aguilera & Latin Grammy Nominees
9. "Dreams" by The Cranberries & The Cranberries
10. "What's Love Got To Do With It" by Tina Turner & The Bodyguard

**Alarms**

1. "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Guns N' Roses & The Eagles
2. "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey & The Eagles
3. "Girls Just Want To Have Fun" by Cyndi Lauper & The Dead Kennedys
4. "Girls Aloud" by Girls Aloud & The Spice Girls
5. "Girls Aloud" by Girls Aloud & The Spice Girls
6. "Girls Aloud" by Girls Aloud & The Spice Girls
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9. "Girls Aloud" by Girls Aloud & The Spice Girls
10. "Girls Aloud" by Girls Aloud & The Spice Girls

### U.K.

**Singles**

1. "Crazy" by Gnarls Barkley & The Black Eyed Peas
2. "Hot Chick" by Mary J. Blige & Puff Daddy
3. "Kiss You" by Dua Lipa & The Weeknd
4. "No One" by Alicia Keys & No One
5. "Thinking Out Loud" by Ed Sheeran & The Weeknd
6. "Can't Feel My Face" by The Weeknd & The Weeknd
7. "Hello" by Adele & Adele
8. "Roar" by Katy Perry & Katy Perry
9. "Lose Yourself" by Eminem & The Weeknd
10. "Love Me Again" by John Legend & John Legend

**Alarms**

1. "Crying in the Rain" by Taylor Swift & Taylor Swift
2. "I'm Not The Only One" by Sam Smith & Sam Smith
3. "Hello" by Adele & Adele
4. "Stay With Me" by Sam Smith & Sam Smith
5. "Counting Stars" by OneRepublic & OneRepublic
6. "The A Team" by Ed Sheeran & Ed Sheeran
7. "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran & Ed Sheeran
8. "This Is Acting" by Adele & Adele
9. "We Are Young" by fun. & fun.
10. "Let Me Love You" by DJ Snake & Dua Lipa

### France

**Singles**

1. "La Danse Macabre" by Camille & Camille
2. "La Danse Macabre" by Camille & Camille
3. "La Danse Macabre" by Camille & Camille
4. "La Danse Macabre" by Camille & Camille
5. "La Danse Macabre" by Camille & Camille

**Alarms**

1. "Sous Les Palmiers" by Serge Gainsbourg & Serge Gainsbourg
2. "Sous Les Palmiers" by Serge Gainsbourg & Serge Gainsbourg
3. "Sous Les Palmiers" by Serge Gainsbourg & Serge Gainsbourg
4. "Sous Les Palmiers" by Serge Gainsbourg & Serge Gainsbourg
5. "Sous Les Palmiers" by Serge Gainsbourg & Serge Gainsbourg

### Canada

**Singles**

1. "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz & Jason Mraz
2. "Open Road" by Tim McGraw & Tim McGraw
3. "New York State of Mind" by Billy Joel & Billy Joel
4. "Life is a Highway" by Tom Cochrane & Tom Cochrane
5. "Can't Stop the Feeling!" by Justin Timberlake & Justin Timberlake
6. "Shape of You" by Ed Sheeran & Ed Sheeran
7. "Love Yourself" by Justin Bieber & Justin Bieber
8. "Uptown Funk" by Mark Ronson & Bruno Mars
9. "Bad Romance" by Lady Gaga & Lady Gaga
10. "We Found Love" by Rihanna & Calvin Harris

**Alarms**

1. "Hey Jude" by The Beatles & The Beatles
2. "Let It Be" by The Beatles & The Beatles
3. "Yesterday" by The Beatles & The Beatles
4. "Help!" by The Beatles & The Beatles
5. "Eight Days a Week" by The Beatles & The Beatles

### Netherlands

**Singles**

1. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
2. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
3. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
4. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
5. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen

**Alarms**

1. "We Will Rock You" by Queen & Queen
2. "We Will Rock You" by Queen & Queen
3. "We Will Rock You" by Queen & Queen
4. "We Will Rock You" by Queen & Queen
5. "We Will Rock You" by Queen & Queen

### Australia

**Singles**

1. "Hey Jude" by The Beatles & The Beatles
2. "Let It Be" by The Beatles & The Beatles
3. "Yesterday" by The Beatles & The Beatles
4. "Help!" by The Beatles & The Beatles
5. "Eight Days a Week" by The Beatles & The Beatles

**Alarms**

1. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
2. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
3. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
4. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen
5. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen & Queen

### Italy

**Singles**

1. "Dancing in the Moonlight (What a Night!"
2. "Dancing in the Moonlight (What a Night!"
3. "Dancing in the Moonlight (What a Night!"
4. "Dancing in the Moonlight (What a Night!"
5. "Dancing in the Moonlight (What a Night!"

**Alarms**

1. "Strawberry Fields Forever" by The Beatles & The Beatles
2. "A Hard Day's Night" by The Beatles & The Beatles
3. "Help!" by The Beatles & The Beatles
4. "Yesterday" by The Beatles & The Beatles
5. "Please Please Me" by The Beatles & The Beatles
## HITS OF THE WORLD

### EUROCHART (03/04/97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEW SINGLES</th>
<th>SPAIN (MTV/APEX) 02/22/97</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. DISCOthèque U2 ISLAND</td>
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<td>2. DON'T SPEAK - NO DOUBT INTERCONTINENTAL</td>
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<td>3. DON'T CRY FOR ME ARGENTINA MADONNA</td>
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<td>4. BREATHE PRODIGY COLDPLAY</td>
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<td>6. SIMPLE AND WICKED BILLY JOEL</td>
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<td>7. THE OFFSPRING (ON THE HOMEBREW)</td>
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## MALAYSIA

### Week Ending 03/04/97

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<tr>
<th>NEW SINGLES</th>
<th>PORTUGAL (Whirlwind Marketing Research) 02/27/97</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. COLORADO'S ON THE MOVIE SET</td>
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## SWEDEN

### Week Ending 02/26/97

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<th>NEW SINGLES</th>
<th>DENMARK (GFK) 02/26/97</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. BREATHE PRODIGY COLDPLAY</td>
<td>1. BREATHE PRODIGY COLDPLAY</td>
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<td>2. BARTER - A GUN DECEPHE MODE</td>
<td>2. BARTER - A GUN DECEPHE MODE</td>
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<td>3. DON'T LET GO LOVE EN VOGUE WARNER</td>
<td>3. DON'T LET GO LOVE EN VOGUE WARNER</td>
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<td>4. DISCOthèque U2 ISLAND</td>
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<td>5. I'M A MAN KARMA</td>
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## BELGIUM

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## FINLAND

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## IRELAND

### Week Ending 02/27/97

**ITALY:** Jazz/blues singer Mary Coughlan releases her eighth and, arguably, best album, *My Last Big Thing.* March 17 on U.K. indie Big Cat. Its theme is that of women since the Garden of Eden. Explored here are various women and their role in society. Indecisively produced by Dutch classical guitarist Erik Visser, the album is a compelling collection of songs exploring the issues of love, marriage, and domestic violence, and reflecting the spiral of a woman's love, and her unfulfilled expectations. Nobody wants to know anything to do with me, included myself. And I don't blame them. Given carte blanche to choose the songs for "After The Fall," Coughlan has included numbers by such Irish writers as Jimmy MacCarthy, Antoinette Hensley, Paul Doran, and Johnny Mulhern, some of whom she has collaborated with. Among the other tracks are Henry Purcell's "When I'm Laid In Earth," Trevor Knight's setting of the Dorothy Parker poem "Dilemma," and Marc Almond's "Saint Judy." With Visser, Coughlan wrote "John Fell Off The Work-Around," a song about the loss of self-esteem caused by unemployment.

## BELGIUM

France has Alliance Ethnik, the Netherlands has Osdpse Posse, and Germany has Die Fantastischen Vier. Now Belgium has its own radical rap group, KIA (Kraapoe In A, Sax In Aktion). Comprising three Flemish youths with attitudes, KIA has taken the charts here by storm with sales of its single "Zaterdag" (Saturday) already past the 20,000-unit mark, a further better result than usual for a Belgian act. The trio, which existed for some years in the rehearsal room before taking to the stage, offers a danceable mix of hip-hop tunes and sometimes-seductive lyrics, which are rapped out in a Flemish dialect known as Brussels. The group has been picked up by Ars Productions (distributed by Sony), and follow-up singles and an album are in the pipeline.

### Week Ending 02/27/97

**PORTUGAL:** Young multitalented artist Basia Romanowska has released her highly promising debut album, "To Coo" (That Something), on the Starling S.A. label. An accomplished singer/songwriter, she also plays violin, viola, piano, and guitar, she developed while studying at the Musical Academy in Katowice. Having toured France, Germany, and Italy as part of the group known as Big Band, she is now concentrating on her own music, a sophisticated mixture of pop, soul, rap, and funk that stands out as something special in a dance market otherwise dominated by Europop and dance acts. Her no-nonsense rap style has drawn particular attention, since in Poland rapping is still considered to be an exclusively masculine activity. Lending the album a touch of musical class are various session musicians, including saxophonist Adam Wendt of popular jazz band Walk Away. The result is a mixture of dynamic dance songs like "Do Mi Sol La" and soul-oriented ballads like "Nami Pammie Znam" (I Know By Heart), which prove that modern dance music can be fun without being banal.

### Week Ending 02/27/97

**NETHERLANDS:** When singer/songwriter Joan Ter Matsen, better known as Sleepy Joe Tomaso, asked American sound wizard and multi-instrumentalist Scott Matthews to produce his new album, Tomato was hoping that Matthews would recapture the magic of the latter's finest hour as co-producer of John Hiatt's 1985 album "Riding With The King." Matthews took up the challenge, and the result is the utterly pleasing roots-pop album "A Bumpy Ride" (Snork/Music & Words). Matthews plays practically every instrument, while Tomato sings his heart out on a selection of self-written songs and chips in with a bit of rhythm and bass guitar. Matthews, whose recent collaborative work with Steak, choir, and orchestra leader Nick Dallago has been particularly promising, has come up with an album somewhat harder edge than the Hiatt classic. And with his distinct, slightly unsteady vocal style, reminiscent of Alex Chilton, Tomato's latest batch of songs includes some great candidates for singles, ranging from the soft AC "Bumps To Time" to the alternative "Love On The Side" and such points in between as "Bedroom Fights."
Australia's You Am I Takes Global Stance With Warner

AUSTRALIAN ALTERNATIVE rock sensation You Am I is making new inroads into Europe this month with the international commercial debut of their latest album, which can market the band in every territory worldwide—except in its home base in Australia.

The four-piece trio of guitarists Tim Rogers, bassist Andy Kent, and drummer Russell Hopkinson has achieved spectacular success in Australia over the last three years, with two albums on the independent rooArt label, "Hi Fi Way" and "Hourly Daily," both of which have debuted at No. 1 on the Australian Record Industry Asea (ARIA) album chart. Then last October, the band took its first step overseas, switched its sampler to a new international label, "Hourly Daily," and embarked on a six-week tour of Europe for a set of 12 ARIA Awards, including best album for "Hourly Daily," which has since given the band unlimited exposure in the market.

While the band's early fast-and-hard style drew comparisons to the likes of the Who, "Hourly Daily" wraps keenly sketched slice-of-life lyrics in rich arrangements of acoustic gui-

Ad Visser, who has sold more than 200,000 units of its "Brainsessions" album in the Dutch market. "Head Over Heels" also opens the aptly titled "Vantastic Music" sampler distributed at MDEM by the Dutch independent label, whose other varied offerings include Halen Van "Papaya" and "Good Mornin, the first single from "Hourly Daily," March 17.

"We're confidently expecting You Am I to be another successful story," says Margo.

AN AMBIENT, OP-ERATIC rap called "Head Over Heels" is an ear-grabbing track from the Van Records album "Brain Culture," by Dutch producer/performer Thom Duffy.

The new project of the Amsterdam-based label, named to the top of ARIA Australia earlier this month. All this corporate maneuvering might have left You Am I lop-sided in the international market. However, the band was signed for the world outside Australia and New Zealand by Warner Bros. in the U.S., which released "Hi Fi Way" last year. The band also nabbed a high-profile slot on last summer's Lollapalooza tour. On its way back to Australia, You Am I touched down for a gig at the Kooks London, which generated interest in the U.K. WEAR Records U.K. even made a last-minute change on a name change the band, The New Musical Express to feature the band.

"They've really captured people's imagination," says Steve Margo, international VP for Warner Bros. Records in Burbank, Calif., who reports that Warner's plan is to push the reissued

New Japanese Imprint Lines Up Top Talent

Sly And Robbie Among Those Signed By iNOKS Label

by STEVE MCCLEURE

TOKYO—Launching a new record label with topflight business partner Recently established iNOKS has lined up some heavyweight support as it tries to carve out a niche for itself in the increasingly tough music industry.

The label is 30%-owned by independent record company Post Records, which distributes product licensed from iNOKS. The fledgling label has signed such acts as Japan's hitmakers, producers Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare to produce two compilation albums featuring various versions of hits being performed now.

The deal with Dunbar and Shakespeare is for the label's parent, Sorcetti, which is an international division of six ARIA awards show with a cover of the Everly Brothers' 1960 hit "I'll Make You Happy.

Meanwhile, a business drama was unfolding offshore, as rooArt switched its marketing and distribution in 1995 from Warner Music Australia to the indie Shocks Music Group. On the eve of last year's ARIA triumph came word that BMG Australia had purchased rooArt for a sum of millions. (The $3.5 million Tim Prescott, who had responsibility for rooArt as divisional managing director and international label group, was named to the top post at BMG Australia earlier this month.

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Each title has more than one hit, according to the chart analyst, and the bar code is the same for all titles. (The actual ratio is 0.3 to 1.2.)

Le Gucci acknowledges that few 12-inch titles have bar codes on their sleeves and says that despite a drastic downturn in 12-inch sales last year, the singles market has now stabilized.

Singles reaching the top positions in the chart are selling between 3,000-5,000 copies a week, with around 10-12 titles selling between 100,000 copies each year, he argues.

Jennifer Hubber, the executive responsible for the chart compila-

"Home & Abroad is a bimonthly col-

... the project to roll out CD singles has been delayed, but says that the new chart, which is being made available to all media outlets, will help promote the CD format as it becomes more widely available.

There is a great anticipation of the expansion of the CD single format (especially in the retail stores) and [there are] perhaps ahead of the record labels in this respect," Senardi

ITALIAN SINGLES CHART DISAPPEARS

(Continued from page 55)

"We have a very small singles market here in Italy, and the electronic pen/bar-code method is the most effective means of making sure product is sold," says Cacecia Dominiom, who runs the label, whose singles sales.

The Nielsen sample in Japan, the U.S., and Europe. A single from the album will be released at the end of May outside Japan.

The new imprint also has the worldwide rights to an album titled "The Bridge," set for release this summer. It features such luminaries as Japanese rockers Sakata, who has recently inked an agreement with iNOKS, producer Takehito Kimura, to release a Japanese R&B singer Toshi Kudota. The album will be co-produced by Sembello and Richard Branson.

Meanwhile, iNOKS has put together a stable of domestic acts, including female vocalist Yoko, former a dancer in Michael Jackson's show, who performs under the name Luv 2 Shay in Japan. The label expects big sales for this track, "What's Your Name? (X X X)," set for release April 16. The song is being used in a TV commercial for perfume.

Ken Suzuki, iNOKS' president, was until July 1996 president of dance label Avid D.D., which he founded. He was president of Avid concert promotion subsidiary Advanced Promotion International until February 1997.

Suzuki, Ken, and three other iNOKS board members hold

TO OUR READERS

The Canada section will return next week.

THE EXCHANGE RATE USED IN THIS STORY IS $1.61 TO THE DOLLAR.
10 YEARS IN AMERICA

INTERNATIONAL

THE MAJOR ALTERNATIVE

A BILLBOARD ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT
MICHAEL,
CONGRATULATIONS ON 10 GREAT YEARS FOR KOCH INTERNATIONAL, L.P.
WE'RE PROUD TO BE PART OF YOUR SUCCESS.

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NEW YORK, NY 10019
PHONE: 212-2210600
FAX: 212-9436616
MICHAEL KOCH, PRESIDENT OF PORT WASHINGTON, N.Y.-based Koch International USA, emphasizes that his company has gone through some radical changes in the 10 brief years of its existence. "We went from being a CD custom broker to becoming a classical import distributor," says Koch. "Then we transformed an import company into a domestic label distributorship, by adding American roots music, later rock and finally urban music. We also went from being a catalog distributor to becoming a frontline distributor of his product."

Along with all the changes came explosive growth: In 1991, just four years after Koch had established itself in the U.S., the magazine listed it among the 300 fastest-growing privately held companies in the country. As a classical distributor in 1990, Koch employed fewer than 30 people, and reported net sales of between $4 million and $5 million. Today, Koch International North America employs 130—130 in the U.S., 20 in Canada, its net sales for 1996 were $50 million, according to Michael Koch.

A pioneer in independent national distribution in the U.S. (a rarity in 1990, but now the industry standard), Koch has flourished with a relatively small but elite list of labels. In 1999, it established its own classical line; in 1995, the company bowed its pop line, Koch Records USA, which today sports an inspired blend of bright contemporary talent and catalog classics.

Koch's European affiliate, headquartered in Hohen, Austria, is a diversified music and media giant with interests in labels, recording, manufacturing and publishing. But Koch International USA had humble beginnings, according to its president.

"In 1987, when I came here, we were just a specialist record company in the German-speaking market, and starting to spread our wings," Michael Koch says. "We had a CD plant in operation since 1985. We felt courageous enough at that point to make yet another jump and start a company in America. Basically, there was no big plan, I hate to admit it. There couldn't have been, because the music that we had in Europe is not and was not saleable in the U.S. Our national product, German country music, schlager and ethnic music.

"For starters, we were ready to get American record labels to press CDs with us in Austria, because we had spare capacity. That's why I came here."

A PRESSING ISSUE

During the first three years of its existence, Koch International USA operated primarily as a CDpressing broker. Koch says that he considered starting up his own distribution operation after meeting Fred Hoeder and Jim Welsh, who were working for a New York-based importer of European product.

"I thought, 'Hey, what they're doing kind of makes sense, and it's something easy—we could do that,'" Koch recalls. "I asked them if they wanted to work for me, and they were willing to do it, because the owner of the company they worked for was not interested in making the transition from the LP to the CD, and the business was closing down slowly but surely. They took that offer and they started to work with me, and that was the birth of Koch as a distribution company."

"We didn't own any classical lines. What we started with was a handful of classical labels from Europe, small labels, and also some American classical labels. That was the start of the distribution company.

"But Koch got an immediate lift when it picked up Teldec, one of the leading classical lines, for distribution; after Teldec's acquisition by Warner Bros., the distributor lined up Chandon, another top import classical label. "From there, we added a lot of classical labels," says Koch. "By the end of 1990, we were one of the two leading independent classical distributors in the country."

"However, it wasn't long before Koch began to feel that the company's activities in the classical realm had plateaued, and its experience distributing the New Jerseybased jazz and classical label MusicMasters led the firm to begin exploring other genres as potential areas for distribution. One of Koch's highvolume pressing clients at the time was Shanachie Records, a wellknown roots and world-music imprint that acquired an interest in Shanachie, and we took on exclusive national distribution on Jan. 1, 1992.

"At the time, regional distribution was still the predominant system in force. But Koch—which had always handled its classical lines on a basis of national exclusivity—had unwittingly struck on a system that would soon prove effective.

"It was not a stroke of genius or anything," Koch confesses. "The regionals had learned how to live side by side and never thought about anything else, and they were fine with it. They shared the same labels, and they were all friends. We were national from the start and only had to expand on that concept."

Rosenberg notes, "This was kind of a grand experiment for us and for Shanachie. The reason we were able to get the labels that we got subsequently is because it was a successful experiment."

Koch adds. "The first year Shanachie came with us, we were able to increase their sales by 50%. They were very happy, and we were very happy."

LABEL ACQUISITIONS

Koch International USA quickly began to accumulate a list of quality nonclassical labels for national distribution: Silva America (soundtracks, pop vocals); the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings (scholarly compilations), Smithsonian Folkways (folkworld), Redhouse (fols), Enya (jazz), Highnote (rootscountry); Sound of Bluegrass and country) and PR (contemporary jazz). In 1994, Koch acquired a 50% interest in the distribution of DRG Records, America's leading independent theatermusic label, covering Broadway, soundtracks, cabaret/songs, pop and jazz (issued on Ensign Swing).

All but one of these labels remain with Koch to this day.

The same year, Koch made another major leap by almost simultaneously acquiring the respected reissue rock-catalog imprint Razor & Tie Records and the highprofile alternative-rock label Bar/None for distribution. Koch says, "Up until then, we had world music, we had classical, we had roots, we had soundtracks, we had shows, but those were the first rock labels. A Bar/None album would be responsible for a landmark in Koch's short history as a pop distributor: In October 1995, Edwyn Collins' Grouser George became the first Koch-distributed album to reach The Billboard 200.

Distribution alliances with other noteworthy labels followed in 1995 and 1996: Imago (veteran executive Terry Ellis label), Knitting Factory Works (the record arm of the noted New York club), Righteous Babe (acclaimed singerAri Difranco's company), Daemien (operated by Amy Ray of Indigo Girls), Minty Fresh (original home of Veruca Salt and the Cardigans), Acoustic Disc (run by mandolinist Dan Grueman) and Revolution (a new company founded by guitarist John Fahey)

One hit-producing label was Elektra: America's bestselling "Hackers" soundtrack helped introduce Prodigy and Underworld to America, and the WWF's "Full Metal" entered The Billboard Top 200. Simultaneously, Cledus T. Judd's "I Stole This Record" was on Billboard's Top 200 several weeks and on its Top Country Albums Chart for almost a year.

Koch Goes Urban

When it took over exclusive distribution of Ichi, one of America's largest independent record companies, in September 1996, Koch finally rounded out its musical spectrum with a premiere urban R&B/rap label group. The deal produced an immediate R&B album chart entry in Ashford & Simpson's new CD with Mava Angelou. "Been Found."

Koch Goes Pop

Koch International Classics has collected a quartet of Grammy awards since its inception. Koch explains, "That showed us that we could start our own label and not just be a distribution company. So, of

Continued on page K 9

The U.S. "Major Alternative" Marks A Decade Of Big Changes And Steady Growth

"We're not looking to be the biggest independent distributor," says president Michael Koch. "Our focus will continue to be on being the best."

BY CHRIS MORRIS

"This was our first CD pressing facility, built in 1995.

Distribution alliances with other noteworthy labels followed in 1995 and 1996: Imago (veteran executive Terry Ellis label), Knitting Factory Works (the record arm of the noted New York club), Righteous Babe (acclaimed singerAri Difranco's company), Daemien (operated by Amy Ray of Indigo Girls), Minty Fresh (original home of Veruca Salt and the Cardigans), Acoustic Disc (run by mandolinist Dan Grueman) and Revolution (a new company founded by guitarist John Fahey). One hit-producing label was Elektra: America's bestselling "Hackers" soundtrack helped introduce Prodigy and Underworld to America, and the WWF's "Full Metal" entered The Billboard Top 200. Simultaneously, Cledus T. Judd's "I Stole This Record" was on Billboard's Top 200 several weeks and on its Top Country Albums Chart for almost a year.

Koch Goes Urban

When it took over exclusive distribution of Ichi, one of America's largest independent record companies, in September 1996, Koch finally rounded out its musical spectrum with a premiere urban R&B/rap label group. The deal produced an immediate R&B album chart entry in Ashford & Simpson's new CD with Mava Angelou. "Been Found."

Koch Goes Pop

Koch International Classics has collected a quartet of Grammy awards since its inception. Koch explains, "That showed us that we could start our own label and not just be a distribution company. So,

Continued on page K 9

The U.S. "Major Alternative" Marks A Decade Of Big Changes And Steady Growth

"We're not looking to be the biggest independent distributor," says president Michael Koch. "Our focus will continue to be on being the best."

BY CHRIS MORRIS

"This was our first CD pressing facility, built in 1995.

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Here in the U.S., Koch International is best-known as a distribution company. But in Europe, where the company originated more than 20 years ago, Koch remains primarily a record company, with its own label accounting for 90% of its sales.

This label, notes company president Michael Koch, mainly involves releases of European interest. Hence, when it opened its U.S. operation, Koch’s emphasis was on the distribution end. But even so, Koch in America has always focused, too, on building its own label, and while its success in this arena may not be as visible as that of its distribution side, Koch-owned or controlled domestic labels still bring in a third of its total income.

“That’s a significant part of our revenue,” says Koch, “and significant to our business philosophy in that it makes us a stable distributor. Independent distribution is a very fickle game, and the labels that we own give us a strong foundation—because we’re not just at the mercy of third-party labels.”

Koch’s U.S. labels further serve to buttress the company’s identity, adds Michael Rosenberg, Koch International’s VP of sales and marketing. “As a distribution company, we work hard to get our name out to our retail and wholesale customers,” explains Rosenberg. “But our own labels are how we get our name out to the general public and to consumers, and we’re very proud of the music we’ve put out on them because it’s high-quality music—in all genres.”

Koch’s main U.S. labels are Koch International Classics, Koch Records and Koch Jazz, with Koch International, Koch Schwann and Koch Discover International filling out its wholly owned label roster. In addition, Koch owns a substantial stake in its distributed labels Shanachie, Yazoo, DRG, Cooking Vinyl America, TJ.S.B. and, most recently, Ichiban.

**CLASSICAL GRASP**

Koch International Classics launched in 1989, and, as its VP of A&R and general manager Michael Fine notes, “has always been one of the most visible of the Koch labels” in terms of Grammy winners, Billboard-charting best-sellers, international awards and press attention. As such, Fine adds, Koch International Classics has played a big part in attracting other labels to Koch’s growing distribution business.

“Leonard Bernstein’s ‘Arias And Barcarolles’ was our first record, and it won a Grammy,” says Fine, “and our first major classics soundtrack. Elmer Bernstein’s ‘Magnificent Seven’ score, beat out ‘The Lion King’ for a NAIRD award. But the greatest kudos for the label is to hear colleagues from around the world say that they see our product everywhere. That’s testament to our quality and distribution.”

Koch Jazz started up last June under the stewardship of Koch International’s jazz director, Donald Elfman, whose charge, as he saw it, was to “celebrate jazz in places that weren’t in the spotlight.” Rather than bring in big names, Elfman sought “local heroes” like Ernie Krivda, a Cleveland tenorman and the label’s inspiration.

“I lived in Cleveland for a while, and there were no major jazz clubs or musicians coming in there,” says Elfman. “So I went out and heard Krivda, who’s a real original and fit in with what I wanted to do with the label. Koch had a slogan in Austria about thinking globally but acting locally—which fits into our jazz philosophy.”

Elfman also wanted to keep Koch Jazz small and somewhat personal. “I wanted smaller things from musicians who I think are making important music,” he says. “So, in addition to recordings by people like Krivda, we’ve licensed material by [jazzophonist] Bonnie Franklin and other artists.”

**A Stable Full Of Labels**

While the company is best known as a distributor, Koch-owned or controlled domestic imprints bring in a third of its total income. And the number of joint ventures is growing, to bring a wide number of labels to market.

**BY JIM BESSMAN**
John Handy, who was a very important artist and whose very rare Columbia title `Live At The Monterey Jazz Festival'—a legendary performance from 1963—is now back in print through us. We also have licensed titles from Johnny Coles, Carol Sloane, Dave McKenna, Tim Berne and Jane Ira Bloom—and are looking for other rare things to license that aren't coming out from the major labels.

**Koch Pop, Bigby and Reissues**

The Koch Records line was begun two years ago by Barry Feldman, its VP of A&R and general manager. Feldman had a strong industry background from previous stints at Verve and PolyGram, as well as his own Upside label. He quickly achieved critical acclaim for the new imprint with a series of Charlie Rich and Merle Haggard reissues, as well as the Beau Hunns recordings of the original music from “The Little Rascals.”

In 1995, Feldman brought in Nicholas Hill, founder of the Singles Only Label, who in turn brought in Amy Rigby's critically praised "Diary Of A Mod Housewife" album. The label has since released product by David Wilcox and critics' darling Jane Siberry.

"The reissue side of the label is increasing because it makes so much sense from an accounting standpoint," says Feldman, who's just put out a pair of Marty Robbins titles. "The higher-risk areas—like Amy Rigby—have worked out great, too. There's a lot of communication with the distribution company—and they know how to handle the product."

The Koch International label, meanwhile, is Koch's original Austria-based label, and while it accounts for 90% of the company's European sales, it offers only a few titles as appropriate imports for the North American market. Koch Schwann is also Europe-based and derives from the classical Schwann catalog, which Koch acquired in 1988. It remains a leader in exposing unjustly neglected works and composers in all areas of classical music, as well as expanding the catalog of even the best-known composers.

Koch Discover International, which Koch acquired an ownership share in last year, is already a leader in the budget-classical field. Under the direction of conductor Alexander Rahbari, the label is being aggressively marketed this year with the release of 20 new titles each month.

Continued on page K-8
SINGERS, SONGWRITERS AND SHANACHIE

But besides the Koch name labels, Koch International owns significant interest in some of its prized distributed clients, starting with Shanachie Entertainment Group, which it acquired in 1990. The Shanachie Group's labels include Shanachie, Yazoo and Shanachie Video. Besides being traditionally strong in Celtic, reggae, world music, blues and contemporary jazz—the umbrella company has recently branched into the contemporary singer-songwriter realm with such esteemed artists as Christine Lavin and Richard Shindell and has expanded into NAC, rock and other genres.

DBG, in which Koch acquired a 50% interest three years ago, is America's leading independent theater-music label, covering the best of Broadway soundtracks, cabaret, vocals and jazz. Among its catalog highlights are recordings by Barbara Cook and Eartha Kitt, the "Forbidden Broadway" cast albums and the soundtrack to "Cinema Paradiso."

With distribution facilities in nine countries and far-flung interests in music production and publishing, Koch International has more than justified the second part of its name, having developed a significant presence beyond its home market of Austria, Germany and Switzerland and the highly successful operation in the U.S. For instance, the two-year-old Koch International Canada is poised to become one of the country's biggest independent distributors, and burgeoning markets like Poland and such new ventures as multimedia offer potential for further gains.

Founded more than 20 years ago in Austria by Franz Koch, Koch International is among the three largest independent music companies in the world, with consolidated sales of over $200 million.

Koch Around the World

Outside the U.S., Koch has been a potent force in recording, production and distribution for two decades. And the beat goes on, with automated warehouses, German CD-ROMs and a gold strike in Canada.

BY BRADLEY BAMBARGER

Initially a classical distributor of such well-regarded European labels as Chandos, Supraphon, ASV, Perl and Ondine, Koch broadened its offerings to include more pop, folk, jazz, rock and world music. Koch experienced a 931% increase in U.S. sales in its first five years. Such growth earned the company a slot on Inc. magazine's 500 fastest-growing private companies list and Michael Koch an Entrepreneur Of The Year award in New York in 1993.

GOLD-PLATED WRESTLING

The relatively new Canadian company has been a special bright spot for Koch, with a startling performance in second-half '96 and a key new label deal on tap for this year. According to Koch Canada GM Dominique Zgarka, the first six months of last year had the distributor saddled with returns at 42% of sales. But, he says, a remarkable turnaround saw the company end the year with negligible returns and a 46% net sales increase over the previous year. One of the best-sellers for the period was the World Wrestling Federation's "Full Metal" album (Edel America), which turned out to be Koch Canada's first gold record, at more than 50,000 copies sold.

"Sometimes, it takes a rude awakening to get you on the right track, Zgarka says. Since the middle of last year, we've become much more aggressive with marketing and promotion, hooking up with clothing stores, airlines and restaurants for cross-promotions—we even hired a full-time cross-promotions manager.

"Promotions with clothing stores and restaurants help generate excitement," Zgarka adds. "And this market had really been lacking that kind of excitement. People in the industry had been complacent over the past few years. So our efforts were well-received at retail.

Some of Koch Canada's most-heralded new offerings for '97 involve its deal with the pioneering U.K. label, Beggars Banquet. Koch is now the exclusive distributor of the indie's new releases in Canada Feb. 24 saw the first batch, including the Prodigy single "Firestarter" (a recent No. 1 hit in the U.K. on the Beggars-associated XL Recordings), two catalog albums from the Prodigy and a solo album from Buffalo Tom frontman Bill Janovitz, "Lonesome Billy."

Based in Toronto, Koch Canada's label roster includes such imprints as Shanachie, Knitting Factory Works, Razor & Tie, Smithsonian Folkways, Bar/None and Music Club International, as well as the usual draw of top-notch classical labels. Michael Koch, president of Koch International North America, says he expects Koch Canada to double sales to about $10 million in '97.
A DECADE OF CHANGES
Continued from page K3

Koch International USA moved into its present 70,000-square-foot distribution facility in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. The company now works in tandem with U.S. operations as part of Koch International’s North America. While the company has turned into a large and profitable one, Michael Koch points not to his label list or the efficiency of his operations as the key to his firm’s success, but rather to his dedicated long-term employees. He notes that both Michael Rosenberg and executive VP Liz Jones came to Koch when they were still in their early 20s (Michael Koch was only 24 when he started the company).

He adds, “We have done it with young people who had no prior experience, no background, no preconceived notions, who started fresh with the company. We’ve all learned as we’ve gone along, but maybe we’ve done it a little more enthusiastically and dynamically—and obviously differently, because we didn’t know any better. We didn’t hire people with 10 years’ experience who knew everything about the record business. Had we done that, we wouldn’t be around anymore. Instead, we took a more entrepreneurial and innovative approach.”

Koch also says that his company will continue to concentrate on the bedrock of its business, music.

“My staff was asking me just today, ‘Aren’t we going into multimedia? Aren’t we going into video?’ And my answer was ‘No.’ There is still a lot more work that can be done in music. We want to stay focused. We want to continue just with music. We feel we already are America’s best independent distributor. That’s what we want to prove to everybody. Until everybody knows we are the best, we’re not going to give up. We want to do everything better, grow in a healthy and organic way, not bite off more than we can chew or take on a big debt load. We’re not looking to be the biggest, that’s not our focus. Our focus will continue to be on being the best.”

PUBLISHING
In the nascent Polish market, Koch International has worked to establish a foothold despite such challenges as rampant piracy and exceedingly low retail CD prices ($4 or $5). Koch was the first independent music publisher in Poland, and the company seeks to develop both international and national repertoire there. “There have been problems in Poland as the country has made its way,” Koch explains. “But we will thrive there as the economy thrives.”

When Koch International’s distribution company in the Netherlands did not prove successful, Koch acquired leading Dutch independent label TiPTOP/MM Studios (now KOCH MM) in 1996. The company quickly enjoyed a double-platinum-selling album by Dutch artist Frans Balse, which remained No. 1 on the Dutch album charts for weeks.

Koch International has operated recording studios since its inception, yet the company is increasingly concerned with developing artists “from scratch,” says founder and chairman Franz Koch. For years, Koch International has been one of the leading producers of German-language repertoire, particularly in the schlager (German country music, or polka) and schlager (middle-of-the-road singer/songwriter pop) genres. With recent investments in A&R personnel and recording studios in mainland Europe and the U.K., Koch plans for pop artist-development and promotion to be an ever-expanding area. (One of Koch International’s first signings in the U.K. is the rock band Picture House.)

MULTIMEDIA VENTURES
The latest and greatest expansion for Koch International has been in the multimedia arena. The company’s CD-ROM publishing and distribution business experienced exponential growth last year, particularly in the German market (a 500% sales increase), according to Franz Koch. Such success is an example of being “with the right people in the right place at the right time,” he says.

An innovator in CD-testing technology—the company has 34% of the worldwide market, with most major CD manufacturers relying on its quality-control equipment—Koch International has recently outfitted its European plant with CD-R (recordable CD) production capabilities. This work, the efforts in multimedia, the company’s recording facilities and its automated warehouses demonstrate Koch’s aim for the cutting edge in all aspects of international production and distribution.

“We’ve always invested in new technologies—often ahead of the market, as with DAT and DCC,” Franz Koch says. “But we have been right on time also, such as with the compact disc and multimedia. And that has been the secret to Koch’s success from the start, combining music and technology with an entrepreneurial spirit.”

To all the folks at Koch, congratulations for letting your roots show!
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General enquiries: Contact Jeff Tamarkin on T 201 656 3106 F 201 656 3602 E-Mail JeffTamar@aol.com

Koch International

A STABLE FULL OF LABELS
Continued from page K-8

OTHER VENTURES

The Cooking Vinyl America label launched last year as a joint venture between Koch and the U.K. indie-label home of such estimable artists as the Oyster Band, June Tabor, Goats Don’t Shave and the Tom Robinson Band. The folk/roots supplier originally sprang to life in 1986 with Michelle Shocked’s “Texas Campfire Tapes” and the Oyster Band’s “Step Outside”, its U.S. label is run by indie-distribution veteran Dave Nives, who this year looks to issue product from Green On Red guitarist Chuck Prophet, Carter USM, Wired To The Moon, Jackie Levin and Andy White.

Koch also partially owns the Canadian dance-compilation label U.S.B. (an acronym for Two Jews, a Scot and a Black; their ranks now joined by an Austrian). The label’s general manager, Rawle James, expects the imprint to break out into the techno/rave, hip-hop and R&B genres during the new year.

Koch has just acquired a 50% stake in Ichiban, the Atlanta-based indie powerhouse for urban music. Ichiban has a rich heritage of black music, ranging from some of the finest modern-day R&B and blues to street rap and bass. Ichiban CEO and founder John Abbey says, "Since day one virtually, Ichiban has successfully straddled all formats of black (American) music. Now, linking with such a forward-looking, innovative company as Koch International, I feel Ichiban is well-poised to succeed and break new ground well into the next millennium. Speaking personally, I am very excited about our prospects for the future and I look forward to coming to the office every morning."

According to Michael Koch, additional label acquisitions can be expected in the future. "We'll continue to acquire stakes in key indie American labels as the opportunities arise," he says, "provided the fit is right on a business and personal level."
The Decade At A Glance

1987
- Koch International expands to America and initially functions as a CD-pressing broker for American clients of its CD plant in Austria
- Koch International becomes a leading independent classical distributor and markets more than 50 labels, including Chandos, Koch Schwann and Supraphon

1990
- Koch International becomes a leading independent classical distributor and markets more than 50 labels, including Chandos, Koch Schwann and Supraphon

1991
- Koch International enters into a joint venture with the Wall Street Journal to publish Billboard's international trade magazine
- Koch International becomes the first independent national distributor for American labels, revolutionizing the traditional system of regional distribution
- Koch International wins its first two Grammy awards, for “Best Contemporary Classical Recording” and “Best Reggae Recording”

1992
- With a 1619% increase in sales from 1987 to 1991, Koch International is named No. 315 on Inc.'s magazine’s "Inc. 500" list, the ranking of America's 500 fastest-growing private companies
- Silva America, the Smithsonian Collection Of Recordings, Redhouse, ASV and Enja join Koch International's distribution fold
- Koch International wins two Indie awards and holds five simultaneous Billboard chart positions for classical, crossover, jazz and world music

1993
- Smithsonian Folkways, the prestigious library of American and world music, joins forces with Koch
- Sugar Hill, one of America's leading folk, bluegrass and country labels, signs with Koch International for exclusive national distribution
- Koch International classics win the Indie award and two Grammy awards, for "Classical Producer Of The Year" and "Best Contemporary Classical Recording"

1994
- Koch International acquires a 50% interest in and distribution of DRG Records, America's leading theater-music label
- Koch Records USA is launched
- Baxer & Tie, the burgeoning N.Y. reissue and rock label, and Bar None, the cutting-edge alternative-rock imprint, join Koch International's growing label roster, along with Dreyfus, FEA, Silverwave and John Zorn's Tzadik
- Koch International Classics wins its fourth Grammy, for "Best Classical Vocal Performance," and Koch International receives another three Indie awards

1995
- Koch International moves into its new state-of-the-art 70,000-sq.-ft. facility in Port Washington, N.Y., housing one of America's most advanced distribution systems, with Amadeus, the order-picking robot, as its centerpiece
- Koch International expands its North American operation and starts a subsidiary in Canada
- Michael Koch is named Entrepreneur Of The Year in New York
- Koch Jazz issues its first recordings
- Koch International wins five Indie awards
- Ani DiFranco's Righteous Babe Records and Amy Ray's Daikon Records sign with Koch International
- First album to reach The Billboard 200: Edwyn Collins' "Glorious George"

1996
- Cooking Vinyl America is launched as a joint venture between Koch International and Cooking Vinyl U.K.
- Terry Ellis' Image, Edsel America, Minty Fresh and Knitting Factory team up with Koch International
- Urban music powerhouse Ichiban switches to Koch International for exclusive distribution
- Koch International attains steady chart presence: four Billboard 200 albums, including the top 100 debut of Ani DiFranco's "Dilate"
- First album to reach Billboard Top Country Albums chart: Celia T. Juárez's "I Question This Truth"
- First entry on Billboard Top R&B Albums chart: Ashford & Simpson with Maya Angelou, "Been Found"
- Koch Canada registers five top chart positions in Canada
- WWF's "Full Metal" becomes Koch Canada's first certified gold record
- Koch Recruits' Amy Rigby is named Songwriter Of The Year by Spin magazine

1997
- Hot U.K. indie Beggar's Banquet signs with Koch Canada for exclusive distribution
- David Grisman's Acoustic Disc and John Fahey's Revnment, join Koch International
- Koch International acquires 66% interest in Ichiban, one of America's largest indie labels
- Koch International USA is one of America's two largest independent music distributors, with over $60 million in sales and 300 employees
**REVIEWS PREVIEWS**

**POP**

**DRAIN S.T.H.**
**Horror Wrestling**
**PRODUCERS:** Adam Kranum, Drain

The Enclave 54971

Swedish all-female heavy metal band comes on with enough force to rate among the headliners of this sort and with enough melodic acumen to stick in the rock roll halls of worldwide.

Although Drain relies a bit heavily on early grunge moves, it shows glimpsers of their work with well-crafted tunes as in “Don’t Mind,” “Someone,” “Cradled,” and the acoustic-accented “Crack The Liars Smiles.” An opening slot on the Type O Negative tour will ensure wide visibility among metal fans and a chance for the band to refine its sound. A promising act.

**ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION featuring Stu Woo**
**PRODUCERS:** Alison Krauss, Union Station

Rounder 0365

The group’s follow-up to 1990’s double-platinum, award-laden “Now That I’ve Found You: A Collection” demonstrates that Krauss and Union Station are more interested in music than superstardom. A magnificent singer, Krauss takes lead vocals on only three of the 14 cuts here, preferring to share the spotlight, as bluegrass groups often do. She has rejected other record company offers and is staying with the label that originally believed in her. The music here is by and large straightforward, albeit slightly lyrical bluegrass with a public-domain song like “Little Liza Jane” sharing the stage with current Nashville tunes by such writers as Koats and Harry Allen and even pop star Michael McDonald.

**PRAIRIE OYSTER**
**Suite Special**
**PRODUCERS:** Mike Proctor, Prairie Oyster

Virgin 97001

How can one not like a country band that kicks off an album with an energetic, time-less, grooving tribute to Canada? The Prairie Oyster keeps improving on its modern refinement of traditional country. Only the title track hasn’t been a hit, and even that new Oyster is Roger Miller’s classic “In The Summertime.” The rest is smooth country, shifting from Texas-Mex to an Orbsoneque ballad. A surprising choice for New York independent label Vel Vel, which can be by former CBS Records powerhouse Walter Yetnikoff.

**JAZZ**

**Giovanni Hidalgo**
**Hands Of Rhythm**
**PRODUCERS:** Mirtel Canty, Giovanni Hidalgo

Prestige 20053

Giovanni Hidalgo takes his hot Latin conga (and assorted percussion instruments) and faces up with the similarly incendiary Latin jazz piano of Michel Camilo (whose fine new solo album was released simultaneously on TropiJazz). These rhythm-intensive duets prove to be a brilliant showcase for both players, especially on such aggressively funky grooves as Pablo Milanes’ “Amo Esta Isla” and Cano’s “And Sammy Walked In” and “Hello And Goodbye.” Aside from an enjoyable version of “Blue Monk,” standard his repertoire includes the amiable ambience of Wayne Shorter’s “Footprints” and a ravenous bluesy “Softly As I Leave You” on Billy Strayhorn’s Latin rhythms divest themselves of even pinao solo compositions “My Soul Seat” and “Hands In Motion.”

**BILLIE HOLIDAY**
**The Complete Commodore Recordings**
**COMPILATION PRODUCER:** Dene Keppeler and Joel Oren

GRP/Commodore 401

After reviving the Decca, Chess, and Impulse! catalogues, GRP increases its archival endowment with Milk Gable’s Commodore label. Among the first reissues from the imprint are these long-out-of-print 1959 and 1944 Billie Holiday sessions. The 1959 tracks include the dirge-like “Strange Fruit,” a stark, bitter depiction of a lynching that was one of Holiday’s most powerful compositions. Her label at the time, Columbia, refused to release the song, leading to a one-off deal with Commodore. Most of the tracks are from 1944 (and with alternate takes aplenty) help focus the listener on her intimate improvisatory approach to a melody line. Session repertoire includes standards “My Old Flame,” “I’ll Be Seeing You,” “Embraceable You,” and “As Time Goes By,” as well as her signature tune “Blues’s Blues.” The two-disc set includes thoughtful and well-informed biographical liner notes by Stuart Nicholson. Among other initial releases from Commodore are sets by Lester Young, Long John Roll Morton, Pee Wee Russell and Bill Wild Davidson, plus an excellent two-disc Commodore compilation that features Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Art Tatum, Sidney Bechet, Pat Pat Walls, Eddie Condon, Benny Goodman, and many other jazz greats.

**DUKE ELLINGTON**
**Concert University Second Set**
**PRODUCER:** Mercer Ellington

MusicMasters 65102

This fifth live Ellington recording from MusicMasters Travelog series features the rest of the 1948 college concert that was begun on a previous release. Ellington’s casual genius is evident on kick-off kickoff “Manhattan Murmurs,” which works monumental passages of Billy Strayhorn’s “Take The Train.” Other highlights include Harry Carney’s dreamily bass clarinet on the sad, wistful “Fantazm,” Johnny Hodges’ effortless lyricism on the pastel-toned “Brown Betty,” a hard up-tempo swing of “Tutin Through The Roof,” and a crowd-pleasing nine-minute moody modal version that includes part-time violinist Ray Nance on a duet version of “Dvakin’s.” “Harlemness” is guest star Ben Webster’s unmistakable phrasing on “High How The Moon,” Tiger’s playful play on the timeless “Limehouse Blues,” and Al Hibbler’s soul-deep vocals on “Don’t Be So Mean To Baby” and “Lover Come Back To Me.”

**LATIN**

**RAY SEPULVEDA**
**De Todo Un Poco**
**PRODUCER:** Roni Gozalis

MAM 82064

With proper label attention, this underappreciated, sweet-singing salsero with the feathers on standa a good chance of nailing down his first hit record with an inviting set of quick-step, romantic parables. Virtually any track from an instant hit, including “Al Mirarte A Ti,” “No Te Esta Hablando Mal De Mi,” and “Un Poco.”

**ALEJANDRINO AVILAIS**
**Mi Corazon Se Regala**
**PRODUCER:** Armendarez, Daniel Ulibarri

Sony 82112

This fine debut by the fetching Mexican songstress expertly meshes her robust mezzo with smart mariachi-driven arrangements that sound at once traditional and contemporary. Lovelylavish entries “Quererte A Ti” and “Un Hotel En Vez Del Corazon” are deftly complemented by the exotic, Caribbean-influenced “Si Tu Cierres.”

**NEW AGE**

**PIERRE WERTHER**
**Eco-Challenge**
**PRODUCER:** Peter-Kate

Carlton 1910

“Eco-Challenge” is a documentary of the hyper-athletic race in British Columbia, but Peter-Kate’s cross-cultural approach to the pitfalls of steroid-laced sports scores on the piano. The pianist brings together the tribal percussion of the Flamenco group, Los Nativos, with her chamber settings for Native flute. He evokes bluegrass harmonies with violinist Creighton and his chamber setting for Native flautist R. Carlos Natin, sentimental melodies from saxophonist Bob Read, and orchestration with avant-garde singer Chris White. Weaving it all together with key musical themes and lyrics, Pierre-Kate’s project is as evocative and thrillingly arranged, Kate makes “Eco-Challenge” more than just a soundtrack.

Contact: 300-652-1121.

**CLASSICAL**

**GARRICK OHLSSON**
**The Complete Piano Works Of Frederic Chopin, Volume Eight, Masterpieces & Miniatures**
**PRODUCER:** Alan Ableson

Harmonia 6068

There are plenty of excellent Chopin albums out there: individual discs and complete cycles from such prodigies and present masters as Artur Rubinstein and Vladimir Horowitz. Murray Perahia and Vladimir Ashkenazy, Levin, Dic, and Tyrtren Katsaris, among others. So is another full (and full-length) traversal of the works by the now-recognizable Garrick Oehlsson. For the Chopin Competition does it have all its ambience, featuring a mix of choices and curiosities, but it’s a Boack to black recording of one of his extended extended piece “At Home (Sweet Home).”

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LUTHER VANROSS - Don't Love You Anymore

Some programs may be initially cold on the single. However, a second spin affirms a notable grower, and you're left wishing for more often.

For added programming incentive, there’s a soaring disco-ribbed version of the classic ‘80s tale told anew, with a song that combines the staccato rhythms of the drum’n’bass genre with the relaxed vibe of last season’s message. There’s no novelty appeal here, but the formidable musical quality is the key. For added programming incentive, there’s an accessible uptempo dance/disco/dance sound that should serve as a perfect fit for dance/disco/dance sounds.

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Martinexxon/Epic/Emi/Arista

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CHILDREN'S

SESAME STREET: QUIET TIME, SING YOURSELF SILLY

Sony Video

30 minutes, $12.98 each

Children who have been tickled pink by Elmo and company will rej形态 at the double feature of 14 more songs and stories about Sesame Street and its characters: the famous blue monster, Big Bird, and Sebastian the crab. The fun never stops as the kids sing along, laugh, and learn about the life cycle of a butterfly.

BARNEY'S LAUGHS & SADNESS

Lyrick Studio

60 minutes, $16.95

This is a must-have Barney video for parents who want to help their children deal with the range of emotions they experience from day to day. The video contains scenes of Barney and friends laughing, crying, and everything in between. It's a great way to introduce children to the idea that it's okay to feel sad and that it's important to express their feelings.

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HEALTH & FITNESS

THE FIRM: THE TORSO WORKOUT

Bett Viso

60 minutes, $19.98

Sloppy movements and heavier weights characterize this workout, which is designed to harden the classic children's tale proved

PREMIATE PARTS

Said Stern, Robin Quivers, Maureen McCormack

Dale Stern - Paramount Pictures

Howard Stern may have an eye on the size of the Grand Canyon, but deep down he knows a lot of people don't like him. In "Private Parts," he'll most likely sway the cross-section audience he desperately wants to impress.

Based on his 1993 best-selling autobiography of the same name, "Private Parts" features Stern playing himself, starting at age 15. He even admits in voice-over that you have to suspend belief for him to play an 18-year-old. The film chronicles his earliest days, around the Eastern seaboard from one radio station to another. By 1985 he was the top shock jock at WNBC in New York.

Throughout the film, Stern exposes his insecurities, effectively waging a war of wits against those who know him as a vulgur DJ. When this untractable beanpole can't get a date from a blind woman, you can understand why. It's no wonder the Federal Communications Commission's seven dirty words and an "actress" swallowing a 12-inch kielbasa, as a "decent" NBC tour group looks on in disbelief.

The sexy subject matter grates, but Stern and his radio team prove that they're also clever, original, and hilarious comedians.

Stern's wife, Alison—played by Mary McCormack—complains that there's very little in their life that Stern keeps private. He goes over the edge with her when he jokes on-air about her miscarriage. It's not Stern's best moment, but, like Alison, the audience can forgive him.

Stern also reveals his unstoppable, against-all-odds drive to succeed, his loyalty to and love of his family and friends, and his refusal to be a clone of fellow WNBC DJ Don Imus, who comes off as an empty man old who could scare children.

It's hard to imagine anyone could dislike Stern better than he does. No one needs to be appealing and he is. Even with all his faults, you can see the way this average Joe has achieved the American dream.

The only time Stern isn't believable is when he asks Norriess, an actresses' hotel room and is dumbstruck when she tries to seduce him. Stern isn't good at playacting the naive, driven snow character.

Alison is no doormat. When she discovers his tryst, she refuses to move with him to his next job. It's behavior that she won't tolerate, and a guilt-ridden Stern knows he won't be taken back if he ever strays again. How they got together to begin with is a mystery until she, a mental health care professional, says, "I work with schizophrenics. I'm used to dealing with abnormal people." Then it all makes sense.

Screenwriters Len Blum and Michael Kalesniko provide an objective view of the material and together, they pull off another and yet another near-tallet in his pocket.

EILEEN FITZPATRICK

SCREEN WRITERS' PLAYBOOK

BETTY WARD

3 hours (digitized), $14.95

Effie Wilder was an 86-year-old resident of a retirement home when she wrote her first novel. Her literary agent has described her as "an elderly but vibrant voice is perfect as the voice of fictional protagonist Hattie McCloskey." The novel is a collection of her experiences at Fair Acres Home. At times, Hattie and her friends seem to remember themselves as young kids. When a resident loses a brooch and accuses a young housemate of stealing it, Hattie and her friends convince the police that the young housemate has left the keys to their apartment.

Then they hold a "storytelling night" to raise money to fix the place. The youthful energy and enthusiasm of the elderly residents illustrate that character's lifelong age isn't as important as one's mental and emotional age. Hattie's memories are full of funny and poignant moments about the place they turned into a great place, and they solve the mystery and clear her name. When an impoverished young couple, Hattie and her friend, convince the owner of the apartment owner to let the keys to the apartment. They then hold a "storytelling night" to raise money to fix the place. The youthful energy and enthusiasm of the elderly residents illustrate that character's lifelong age isn't as important as one's mental and emotional age. Hattie's memories are full of funny and poignant moments about the place they turned into a great place, and they solve the mystery and clear her name.

OUT TO PASTURE

By Effie Leland Wilder

Read by Tanya Plagakis

3 hours (digitized), $14.95

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**GOOD WORKS**

686-9225.

**ON THE LINKS:** Hosts Hootie & the Blowfish and R.E.M.'s Mike Mills and Bill Berry are among the musicians who will perform at the third annual Monday After the Masters Pro-Am Golf Tournament, to be held April 14 in Hootie & the Blowfish's hometown of Columbia, S.C. The event, which follows the final round of the Masters tournament, will benefit the Masters Youth Golf Scholarship, and the local Junior Golffand Foundation. The group will perform at the event for the first time, a special concert in conjunction with the tournament. Last year's event raised $100,000 for charity. Concert ticket information will be available after April 15 via Capital Tickets outlets or by calling 803-251-2222. Ticket information is available through Ticketmaster. Contact Mark Zenov at 803-254-6977.

**NEW COMPANIES**

Rosenzweig & Maffia LLP is a new firm specializing in accounting services for the entertainment, sports, and theater industries. Principals are David Rosenzweig, Al Maffia, and Joseph A. Maffia, who were both formerly with Rosenbarg Selman Rosenzweig & Co. Maffia is the former president of Martin Eisenstein, formerly of N.B. Bienstock, and Anne Stewart-FitzRoy, a theatrical production accountant. Contact: 945 Third Ave, New York, N.Y. 10002. Phone: 212-980-2470; fax: 212-980-2117.

**FOR THE RECORD**

The audio book review for Tangled Web Audio's "An Expensive Bottle of Poison," in the Feb. 22 issue should have listed the price as $4.95.
SURVIVAL GUIDE
NARM'97
FOR RETAILERS
THE BILLBOARD SUPERSECTION
FROM THE STRENGTH OF MANY COMES THE POWER OF ONE
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* Heart Of Glass (Blondie)

60's

* Duke of Earl (Gene Chandler)
* Oh, Pretty Woman (Roy Orbison)
* Hang On Sloopy (The McCoys)
* Wild Thing (The Troggs)
* Venus (Shocking Blue)

70's

* The Great Pretender (The Platters)
* Wake Up, Little Susie (Everly Brothers)
* The Wayward Wind (Gogi Grant)
* Sea Of Love (Phil Phillips)
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CIMS Makes Sense

Coalition Of Independent Music Stores Works With Indie Labels To Expose And Sell New Music

BY CHRIS MORRIS

For independent labels, the challenge of exposing new music to consumers is increasingly beginning and ending on the retail floor. In 1996, that challenge was more problematic than it has ever been.

A veritable glut of musical product—some 27,000 new domestic albums in 1995 and likely more in 1996—flooded the marketplace and fought for attention among chain purchasing executives and listeners alike. In this superheated environment, indie labels of all stripes jostled for shelf space, and, more than ever, coveted endcap displays and in-store listening stations came at a high price. At the 1996 National Assn. of Independent Record Distributors & Manufacturers (NAIRD) convention in Baltimore, the most frequently heard complaint among indie-label personnel revolved around the nearly prohibitive cost of so-called "slotting fees." In the eyes of many, this kind of exposure can be a high-risk gamble that often pays off in returned product.

The major chain's fees for positioning are "astronomical," according to Terry Currier, who operates both the indie label Burnside Records and two Music Millennium stores in Portland, Ore. "Unless [the chains] have something out there that's proven, it's not selling through. I haven't bought any of the listening programs out there. I haven't wanted to see my product get loaded up at the major chains. You're just warehousing that product out there. You're going to see a lot of that stuff come back as returns down the road."

POWER IN NUMBERS

However, Currier's retail operation is one of 49 mom-and-pop outlets and small chains that are now participating in a new in-store listening-post program that focuses on exposing new music in cutting-edge retail outlets. Music Millennium is a charter member of the Coalition Of Independent Music Stores (CIMS), the trade organization formed at the 1995 NAIRD convention in San Francisco. CIMS was created to supply a vehicle for the promotion of developing artists, and its recently established listening-booth campaign, while it also encompasses major-label acts, is being directed largely at indie labels seeking retail lift-off for their acts at a reasonable price.

The CIMS program kicked off last December in the coalition's participating stores. (CIMS currently has 63 member stores and 29 member accounts, but not all of them are part of the program.) The campaign is administered by EvaluTion Entertainment Marketing, a Miami Beach, Fla.-based marketing and promotion company started up in May by former Capitol marketing staffers Luann Sullivan Myers and Eva Dickenson-Poole.

Member stores participating in the program to date include Music Millennium; Ear X-tacy (two stores, based in Louisville, Ky.); Manifest Disc & Tapes (six stores, Columbia, S.C.); Record & Tape Traders (nine stores, Owings Mill, Md.); Record Archive (two stores, Rochester, N.Y.); Record Exchange (two stores, Boise, Idaho); Record Revolution (two stores, King of Prussia, Pa.); Repeat The Beat (four stores, Dearborn, Mich.); Schoolkids' Records (five stores, Cary, N.C.); Uncle Sam's (three stores, Pompano Beach, Fla.); and 10 single-outlet operations around the country.

CIMS president Don VanCleave, who operates the Magic Platter in Birmingham, Ala., says that the sums required to get a record—especially an indie-label record—displayed prominetly at the major chains have spiraled out of control. "For quality releases you're going to hope to push, [the labels] have to play the game. Certain large retailers created the game, and the labels went along with it, and somebody's going to have to say, 'No mas.' You see a lot of these guys having to spend $5 to $10 a unit to get something launched."

HOW IT WORKS

The CIMS listing program involves 10 slots in each post, a poster displays the month's featured titles. Seven positions have been earmarked for indie labels. VanCleave says that, initially, some of those positions were thrown open to the majors, but "now the independents are coming back strong, and we give them deference. We want it to be a majority of independent labels.

"We've tried to structure this so that it fits into the marketing plan of the independent labels," says Dickenson-Poole. The program costs $2,450 per month per album, with a guaranteed 50-piece buy-in each store. That cost boils down to about $50 per store.

"You have to buy all 49 stores," she says. "We haven't broken this down into regional programs so far. But to set up promotions at 49 [individual] stores is a huge effort. With this (Continued on page 8.)"
The music business will continue to experience a downturn throughout the year, but many music retail and label sales and distribution executives expect 1998 to bring an upturn in the industry’s fortunes.

After seeing the major music-specialty chains close more than 500 stores during the year, sales and distribution executives are bracing themselves for a continued flow of product returns, as music merchants try to bring the supply of record store space back into equilibrium.

In light of that, distribution executives say they are preparing to bolster the business through more effective consumer marketing and interaction with the account base.

**AS THE DUST SETTLES**

Music merchants and other retailers expanded music space at an explosive pace during the first half of the 1990s. But in the last two years, the overbuilt sector and the price war driven by the consumer-electronic chains have combined to force a number of music chains into Chapter 11 and others on the brink. In 1995, Wherehouse Entertainment, Peaches Entertainment and Kemp Mill Music filed for Chapter 11 protection. Last year, Camerot Music, Peppermint and the Record Giant chain joined them. The latter was liquidated, and the Peppermint chain was sold. Coming into this year, Strawberries has filed for Chapter 11, and the Musicland Group is on a tightrope.

Looking ahead to how 1997 may play out, Russ Solomon, president of West Sacramento, Calif.-based Tower Records, says, “Hope springs eternal. I hope this year will be better than last, but I can’t think why that will happen. Maybe record companies are finally feeling the pinch themselves, and maybe that will force them to take some action to bolster the business.”

Solomon says that, while the retailers have been feeling pain since 1994, the labels have been enjoying themselves by raising prices every chance they get. Labels profit from price increases, but music-specialty merchants generally haven’t benefited by such increases because of the price war. Instead, music chains have seen profit margins shrink, going from 1992’s 40% to 42% to about 35% to 37% currently.

**LOOKING TO THE SOURCE**

But on the label side, during 1996, returns to manufacturers rose significantly. Furthermore, other than in rap music, only two developing artists broke through last year: LeAnn Rimes and No Doubt.

A senior executive at one major distribution company predicts that 1997 “will be our toughest year since 1980.” He feels that there will be further consolidation among accounts, with more experiencing credit problems.

A senior executive at another major distributor agrees with that assessment. But he adds that “at some point this year, the weakness in the financial health of the account base will bottom out, setting the stage for a turnaround in 1998.”

**ON THE BRIGHT SIDE**

John Marmaduke, president of the 111-unit Hastings Book, Music & Video chain, echoes that outlook. “I think 1997 will be a replay of ’96: there will be more bankruptcy, more store closings and more consolidation,” he states. Despite that, he thinks that “by 1998, the industry will be healthy again.”

Russ Solomon, Tower Records

John Marmaduke, Hastings

Joe McAluf, Allegro

**NARM ’97**

**Attendance May Be Down, But NARM Members Are Upbeat About Facing The Issues**

**BY DON JEFFREY**

The recently restructured National Association of Record Merchants expects its annual convention to provide forums, both formal and informal, for discussion of concerns at a time of crisis in the business. But NARM officers do not see divisive issues of the past taking the spotlight at this year’s event.

The most important aspect of the group’s reorganization, its executives say, is the change in the way members communicate.

**IMPROVED COMMUNICATION**

Pamela Horovitz, president of NARM, says, “We now have populations talking to one another that hadn’t been before.” Wholesalers’ meetings, for example, now include video distributors, branch distributors, rackjobbers, independent distributors and one-stops.

And, for the first time, NARM has on its board both a major video distributor (Paul Culberg, executive vp of Columbia TriStar Home Video) and a branch music distributor (David Mount, president of WEA).

“It is a tremendous improvement of the dialogue on the board,” says Barney Cohen, chairman of NARM and CEO of Valley Record Distributors.

Another element of the overhaul was a restructuring of dues. For some of the largest supplier or account members (those doing at least $1 billion annual business), there was a significant increase in dues, to $7,000 a year. Some had been paying as little as $2,500 previously. The dues are now on a sliding scale according to a member’s size.

“The feedback from members has been overwhelmingly positive,” says Horovitz of the dues increase.

She declines to specify what further changes might be made to NARM’s structure. “It’s so soon after the launching,” she says. “We want to get through the convention. We certainly welcome members who have views on how the reorganization is going so far.”

NARM continues to reach out to the international music community, but so far the greatest participation is among the English-speaking countries—Canada, Australia and the U.K. Horovitz says she is “surprised at the the level of international attendance and exhibitions.”

Most observers believe single issues that often dominated the news in past conventions are less likely to be raised this year.

**TOPIC UPDATE**

At last year’s convention, one of the hottest topics was record clubs. NARM was meeting behind closed doors to discuss the findings of a commissioned report and to consider whether to take legal action against the clubs.

Horovitz says, “In our opinion, while litigation is certainly one of the options being explored by NARM retailers and wholesalers, at this time it’s fair to say that the door on the action is closed. But the issues are still very much part of the discussion.”

(Continued on page 84)
NARM '97

Getting The Best Out Of NARM; Wrap-Up On Troubled Chains

As THE MUSIC retail and label sales and distribution sectors converge on Orlando, Fla., for yet another National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) convention, let Retail Track be the first to urge you to have a productive time. The seminars on this year’s schedule appear to be particularly timely, including the ones on how to beef up deep-catalog sales, micro-marketing efforts, and World Wide Web marketing. And while NARM conventions no longer feature product presentations, there will be plenty of artist showcases, as well as the return of the PGD Zone. It should be quite a convention.

Lately, however, the NARM conventions have been getting a mixed reaction from attendees. While most find the convention a tremendous aid in running their businesses, there are always some naysayers who repeatedly ask the question, What are we doing here?

Those who find themselves asking that question would do well to listen to an admonishment offered frequently by my good friend Ed Franke, East Coast regional marketing director at Universal Records, who is always quick to recite what he calls “the six Ps.” Proper planning prevents poor performance.” NARM is one of those conventions where you get out of it what you put into it. In other words, if NARM doesn’t live up to your expectations, you have nobody to blame but yourself!

As WE HEAD off to NARM, the industry appears to be unsettled on a number of key points. Source-tagging is up in the air until the lawsuits are resolved; cassette sales continue to decline, with the industry undecided on where to go from there; what to do about it; and the fate of some key retail accounts has yet to be determined.

In particular, ask Strawberries to that last list, which currently includes the Musicland Group and Camelot Music.

Strawberries, which filed for Chapter 11 Feb. 18, is still in the early stages of its predicament. While it puts together a reorganization plan, don’t be surprised to see the creditors urging the chain to be picked up for sale. They did so in both the Wherehouse and Camelot reorganizations. But if Strawberries comes up for sale, Retail Track won’t be surprised if a financial player comes to the fore.

Last fall, Strawberries hired Chain & Co. to shop the chain among financial entities. Its goal was to find a buyer to replace Carl Heilman, which owns 65% of the chain. At that time, a couple of financial firms expressed interest in the chain, but not in taking on its liabilities. They urged the chain to file for Chapter 11, and now that it has done so, they might be lured back to the table. Strawberries executives didn’t return calls.

(Continued on next page)
Commenting on the clubs, Cohen says, "First, the playing field's not level. There are two different distribution channels with two different prices. There's a feeling among everyone in the industry that it's just not fair. And second, it's the perception of the value of the CD. The largest advertiser in the record business is the clubs, and they're selling 11 for a penny. This message is drummed into consumers at large over and over again."

Another issue that has caused controversy in the past is source tagging—the application of anti-theft tags on music product at the point of packaging or manufacturing rather than at retail. But this is not expected to be a big topic of discussion, because record companies have said they will not proceed with source tagging until legal issues are resolved. NARM, after recommending that manufacturers use tags developed by Sensoric Electronics, was sued by Checkpoint Systems, which markets a competing anti-theft technology. At press time, the suit against NARM remained unresolved, as NARM executives are hopeful that this year's convention will restore some of the excitement many attendees felt last year's gathering lacked. The selection of Pittman and Barry Gibbons, chairman of Spec's Music, as the main speakers is viewed positively. And the popular PGD Zone, an ad hoc night club set up to showcase live music, is back after a one-year hiatus.

At press time, though, NARM was expecting attendance to be soft compared to last year's count of 5,000. Most agree that sluggish business is the reason for registrations being off. But Cohen says, "You're better off going in a bad year, where you're going to find the information you need."

No matter what the issues, attendance or music, the sine qua non of the NARM convention will be what it always has been: to provide a place for industry people to get together and do business.

Cohen says, "The main thing people say when you ask, 'What do you want?' is that they want to go some place where they can see everybody else and have meetings."

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**RETAIL TRACK**

(Continued from preceding page)

On the other hand, the fate of Camelot will likely lie with a strategic player, not a financial one. Although Retail Track has been unable to determine who has visited Camelot, sources say that the five suitors who have made the trek to its North Canton, Ohio, headquarters, only one is said to be a financial firm.

All five are now said to be in the follow-up stage, asking for more financial data. The bidding process has yet to begin, but it is not too far off, sources say.

Surprisingly, Bill Teitelbaum, chairman/CEO of National Record Mart (NRM), has not been among the visitors to Camelot, sources say. Many anticipated that NRM would be in the hunt for Camelot, since Teitelbaum has long made known his admiration for the Camelot organization. In addition, Teitelbaum has quietly building his company's infrastructure in anticipation of an acquisition, and eventually he is going to have to do something to justify the increases in overhead expenditures. Teitelbaum, who is said to have lined up yet another financial partner, was unavailable for comment.

As for Musicland, Retail Track is once again completely in the dark. A white back, I reported—I believe accurately—that GE Capital and Apollo Advisers were separately involved in negotiations about making an investment in the troubled Minneapolis-based chain. At that time, someone in the know told Retail Track that GE Capital would be the more likely one to focus on. A couple of weeks later, when Musicland first announced it was in discussions with an investor about an equity investment in the company, I repeated the names of the two financial entities in a story. But sources subsequently told me that GE Capital had withdrawn from the table, with another insider hinting that GE Capital and Apollo Advisers are no longer in the picture.

Although the trail has been muddled, it is likely that the fate of Musicland will be decided shortly. It has waivers on the covenants of its revolver until the end of this month. It seems likely that either Musicland will have an investor on board by then, or it will have successfully renegotiated its revolving credit facility, or it will have to announce another solution to its problems. Stay tuned.
MAPping Out A Price-War Truce

Tougher Minimum-Advertised-Price Policies Are Leveling The Playing Field But Eliminating Competition

BY DON JEFFREY

The price wars at music retail have abated this year, and many retailers and suppliers are attributing the truce to tougher minimum-advertised-price policies of the major music distributors.

Robert Higginson, president of Truma World Entertainment, says, “I think MAP is good for the business because it does protect the value of an artist. We think the policies of the manufacturers have proved effective. On advertised titles, the majority are following the guidelines of manufacturers.”

The major distributors all modified their MAP policies in the past year to eliminate loopholes. Now they are fairly uniform in stating that advertising funds will be cut off for 90 days to any supplier that advertises the distributors’ products below the stated price. The tighter policies also cover in-store promotions and displays as well as media advertising.

Henry Droz, president of Universal Music & Video Distribution, says, “MAP appears to be working. The only violations we have determined have been accidental. They weren’t aware of the list price. It was peripheral product, clearly a misunderstanding.” Some of Universal’s MAP prices are $11.61 for CDs at $16.98 list and $12.94 for $17.98 list.

Jim Caparro, president of PolyGram Group Distribution, says, “No question, we see the overall craziness last year abating quite a bit.” For PGD, albums with a $16.98 list have a MAP of $11.88; for $17.78 list it is $12.98.

DULLING THE COMPETITIVE EDGE

Although most retailers are abiding by the tougher MAP guidelines, some are not happy about them. Those merchants believe that MAP policies amount to pressure from suppliers to price product at the same level or a lack of understanding about the individual economics of chains.

Best Buy, the consumer-electronics and home-entertainment retailer, has been cited as one of the principal aggressors in the retail price wars and a main reason for tougher MAP policies.

“[Our MAP policy] was never intended to be a pricing strategy. It’s an advertising-reimbursement policy.”

—David Mount, WEA

Gary Arnold, VP of marketing for Best Buy, says, “We get blamed for the price wars in the industry based on our aggressive pricing.” But he adds, “Our position is that MAP has not done what they said it would—address the health of the industry. You can’t point to any retailer who is healthier [because of it]. What MAP has done is homogenize the offers retailers make to consumers. The consumer is more complacent in response.”

Arnold also agrees that the problems with MAP is that it is more or less sets a price point for all merchants, “regardless of what a retailer’s cost of business is.” He says some music retailers’ source tagging deserves a lot of industry attention and action. We watch our shrink figures closely and it affects us tremendously. There doesn’t appear to be any solution on the horizon.”

Jim Caparro says, “We’re waiting for NARM to resolve this issue. Once that is done, we remain committed to moving forward. We’re very disappointed we had to move back.”

David Mount, president of distributor WEA, says, “We’re philosophically committed to the concept, but I think it is prudent to wait until everything settles out. We think the resulting position after the lawsuit settles will make it very difficult to have a single standard.”

“We’re not going to enter an arena and subject ourselves to enormous legal problems,” says Henry Droz, president of Universal Music & Video Distribution. “We’re prepared, but we have not implemented it.”

Joe Ryan, VP of global sourcing for Sensormatic, says, “It’s unfortunate that a small group of retailers and a technology not chosen can hold back progress.” He says Sensormatic has 65% of the music retail market, including such specialty chains as Musicland, Blockbuster and Camelot, and discount merchandisers like Kmart. Before source tagging was halted last summer, more than 500,000 CDs had been tagged, estimates Ryan.

In addition to cutting down on theft at retail, source tagging will “reduce our labor expenses and move product out.”

NARM ’97

EXPANDED MERCHANTS & MARKETING SUPERSECTION

Everyone Agrees: Source Tagging Is Necessary

But The Four-Year Debate Continues, As Major Players Discuss Technology, Costs And Conditions

BY DON JEFFREY

“Source tagging can’t come soon enough,” says David Lang, president of the music retailer Compact Disc World. “I think it’s going to be a tremendous help to retailers fighting external theft.”

During the past holiday season, Lang says, “we got hit a lot harder than we thought possible. It’s going to turn out to be the worst shrink we’ve ever seen on our company.”

Many retailers say that shrinkage accounts for 2% of sales; for some accounts, it can run as high as 6% to 8%. Jim Caparro, president of PolyGram Group Distribution, says, “Ultimately, shrink is an incalculable amount. If the entire industry reduced it in half, it would still be a ter- rific windfall. Two percent of total sales volume is significant.”

But source tagging—placing electronic anti-theft tags on CDs during the packaging or manufacturing stages—is no closer to reality than it was four years ago, when the National Assn. Of Recording Merchandisers met in Orlando and recommended the EAS (electronic article surveillance) technology developed by Sensormatic Electronics.

At last year’s NARM convention in Washington, D.C., most of the major music distributors made a commitment to begin source tagging by the summer. PolyGram was the first—and only—record company to start doing it. But its effort was cut short after it was sued by Checkpoint Systems, a security company that competes with Sensormatic, and Target Stores, a retailer that uses Checkpoint’s technology. The legal action against PolyGram was dropped after an agreement was reached to stop source tagging, but Checkpoint and Target’s suit against NARM remains in effect.

At press time, the parties were talking, but even if the suit were to be settled out of court, many questions about the future of source tagging remain. (Continued on page 76)
Recognized Around the World
be a contributor to [a retailer's] profit situation," Droz says. "It's a stimulus to creating interest and demand." Caparro says, "The whole game of pricing and positioning has gotten out of hand. When you look at the entire process and zoom about why the industry's not growing, there are far too many dollars spent today in price and positioning campaigns at the expense of talking to the ultimate consumers, driving them into retail stores."

Recently, the PolyGram label Island Records informed accounts that it would not provide price and positioning funds for the new 'U2 album, 'Pop.' An Island executive says the money would be spent on advertising to get consumers into stores. "Once they are in the store, it is retail's job to get them to buy," he says. Suppliers do not believe they need to modify their MAPs anymore this year, but they all indicate there may be changes in pricing of various categories, an ongoing process for distributors.

"We look at pricing all the time," says Droz, "taking product from one price category to another." The challenge always is pricing product in step with consumer demand," adds Caparro. "Variable pricing remains important. With a new artist, all incentives must be there. Once response starts to trigger, we need to be flexible in pricing. Once consumers acknowledge it's a runaway hit, we need to be as aggressive in pricing as we can. That's wrong with the notion of pricing product according to demand?"

NARM contends that it was an anti-theft (acousto-magnetic) technology, not a company, that approved for source tagging, and that one of its criteria is that the technology can be cross-licensed by Sensormatic to other companies.

"The reason we chose one technology," says Barry Cohen, chairman of NARM and CEO of Valley Record Distributors, "is that, with more than one system, the processing of returns by manufacturers would be very difficult."

Neil Austin, VP and general counsel of Checkpoint Systems, points out that, in the drugstore business, "a relatively large number of vendors' products are source-tagged with either Sensormatic or Checkpoint product. If a large number of manufacturers of health and beauty aids to groceries have figured out how to source tag products at the request of customers, it seems that record manufacturers should also be able to satisfy customers' needs." Checkpoint's two biggest accounts in music retail are Target and Circuit City Stores.

But Russ Bash, president of the distributor EMD, says, "You can't do it separately. There's too much inventory that has to be shipped."

Mount concurs. "I think multiple source tagging becomes very difficult logistically when spread out over our product. We have 7,500 active titles with two configurations."

Distribution executives say that if a decision is made to go with two anti-theft systems, a retailer using a third company's system might demand that his product be tagged differently.

"A few retail chains such as Compact Disc World and Trans World, use Sensormatic in some stores, Checkpoint in others. "We're committed to going with one system," says Lang. "We'll invest the money to prevent shoplifting. Outside [the CD] tagging can only go so far."

Higgins says, "If it goes to one or the other, we have to change. We think it's worthwhile. It's important enough."
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HBO HOME VIDEO INC.
Feuding Sub Pop Partners Call A Truce; Schneider’s Marbles Make A Comeback

Trouble In Paradise: Heavy rumors were flying in the Pacific Northwest the week of "Paradise," word spread that Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt, partners in Sub Pop, perhaps the most successful indie label of recent years, were at loggerheads and on the verge of splitting.

Poneman acknowledges to Declarations of Independence that rumors spread over the operation of the label nearly led to Pavitt’s departure during that week. However, after discussions between the partners about their second thoughts, and he will stay on, with a new Sub Pop imprint at his disposal.

Poneman actually was the founder of Sub Pop. In Olympia, Wash., in 1979, he started a fanzine, Subterranean Pop, that went on to release several cassette anthologies of indie-rock bands. Sub Pop was established as a full-fledged label in 1986, and Pavitt was joined at the company a year later by Poneman, who had been enthusiastic about the Seattle bands on the University of Washington’s campus radio station.

Sub Pop ended up cornering the market on Seattle rock, releasing superb records by Green River, Mudhoney, Tad, and Soundgarden, and the label hit the jackpot after Nirvana took the world by storm in 1991.

By 1995, Sub Pop had become a linchpin of Warner Music Group’s indie distribution arm Alternative Distribution Alliance, in which it holds a 10% interest, and in late 1994 Pavitt and Poneman sold a minority stake in the label to Warner in a deal reported at the time to be worth $20 million. This is the kind of scenario every ambitious indie-label operator dreams of, but trouble lay ahead.

As the Seattle scene waned, Sub Pop began signing acts in other locales and heavily scouted Canada’s Maritime provinces for a while. While the label has released some excellent records in recent years by acts as varied as Red Red Meat, the SUPERSUCKERS, and the Supercats, and Poneman and Pavitt apparently were brought to a confrontation over the way Sub Pop has been doing business. Things came to a boil two weeks ago.

"Bruce thought we were spending ridiculous amounts of money for little return," Poneman says. "I can’t agree with him... He laid down an ultimatum, and I said, ‘Well, of course I want you to work at the company, but how do we work this out?’"

Poneman says Pavitt threatened to leave Sub Pop because "he wanted to be heard about what he wants with the company." The label’s founder will now return to the fold with what Poneman describes as "his own dance-oriented imprint."

Poneman adds, "Bruce Pavitt has got special ears and a special talent to find things that are really outstanding." Sub Pop, which has recently staffers some personnel (longtime head of publicity Nils Bernstein was appointed director of A&R) and laid off some promotion staff, may be facing more changes in the near future, Poneman says. He suggests that the alterations may not take the form of reducing the label’s staff or purging the release schedule, but instead may include a different approach to signings and marketing.

"I would like to do old-fashioned punk rock, record deals"—that is, lower-cost, shorter-term deals with smaller upfront expenditures and a grass-roots approach to the marketplace.

"The company’s been very ambitious the last couple of years," he adds. "I feel we have to take a couple of steps back."

Of the confrontation with Pavitt, Poneman says, "As the active partner, I take complete responsibility for decisions that have been made. Some of them have been goofy at best... It was just one of those things where a series of unfortunate events had to take place for us to get it together."

With this set-to behind them, Poneman now says, "I’m feeling totally jazzed."

Flag Waving: At the age of 15, Robert Schneider took up the guitar and decided he wanted to do some recording.

"I wanted a boombox and a little radio Shack voice recorder, and my mom got them for me for my birthday," Schneider recalls. "I recorded like that for a few years."

The logical extension of that youthful experimentation can be heard on his delightful new album, "Paradise," which comprises solo 4-track recordings Schneider made in 1992-96 under the moniker Marbles.

Schneider is better known as the singleThus, the spin-AKG group Apples In Stereo, which released the first-time album, "Fun Trick NoiseMaker" in 1995 and the singles/EPs collection "Science Faire" earlier. He is also a guiding intelligence behind the Denver-based collective the Elephant Six Recording Co. and has worked as a musician and producer with such E6 groups as Neutral Milk Hotel, which records for Merge Records, and Olivia Tremor Control, part of Flytripp’s roster.

The full-fledged bands he has worked with, Marbles reflects Schneider’s longstanding interest in a certain strain of psychedelic pop.

"The Louisville-bred musician says, "I’ve been really into the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Syd Barrett, and the Velvet Underground since I was a kid."

Schneider bought his first 4-track machine when he was 16 (after breaking up with his wife). He met a number of like-minded musicians when he moved to Denver to attend the University of Colorado.

"My dad, when I turned 21, bought me a 4-track that worked," Schneider says. "I had a lot of ideas, so I started to record a lot."

Those ideas found their way onto tape in the Marbles recordings, which he made before Apples In Stereo started resuming in earnest. (Schneider drew the project name from the expression "I’m losing my marbles.") He says of (Continued on page 90)
THE WORLD HAS WAITED LONG ENOUGH.

COMING SOON FROM

HBO HOME VIDEO
and Circuit Cities, the main predators forcing the consolidation. While other music-specialty merchants have been in a contraction mode, Hastings has been occupied with getting the company up to speed on a stand-alone basis, since it ceased using the Anderson Merchandisers infrastructure back in 1995. But now that it has strengthened its own infrastructure, the chain is ready to rock 'n roll.

Marmaduke states, "1997 will be our company's most aggressive year since 1994." The company will open 12 stores and expand eight others. The new stores and expanded ones will average about 20,000 square feet, he reports. Moreover, in existing stores, he says the chain will expand its catalog presentation and promotional goods.

Other bright spots include Virgin Retail Group, HMV and Borders, distribution executives say. In 1996, Virgin opened three stores, and the company plans to open seven more this year, according to chain president Ian Duffell.

But for those accounts still in the dark, John Manes, president of the six-unit, Dayton, Ohio-based CD Connection, says there is light at the end of the tunnel. He suggests that the rash of store closures already is producing pockets of upturn. For the first time in a while, he reports that his company is seeing profits, thanks to the closure of two Media Plays and three Sun Appliances in the Dayton marketplace.

SURVIVAL TIPS

Meanwhile, as the industry waits for a rebound, suppliers have suggestions on how to deal with 1997.

In trouble some times, distribution companies must become more effective in working with accounts, says one senior distribution executive. When there are credit problems in the account base, it not only impacts the sales for both the merchant and the supplier, it makes a distribution company become "more involved with troubled accounts," he explains. "You spend more time item to item, trying to manage what has the best potential for sales so they can survive."

The record labels themselves have to be a problem this business, he adds. "In a bad market, potential losses on breaking records versus potential wins go up. Since risk of a loss is higher, you want to be turning down artist roster and releases and more closely scrutinizing expenses."

Joe McIlv, president of Portland, Ore.-based, independent distributor Allegro, says the key ingredient in helping the account base profitability and to put the winds back into the sales of music manufacturers is "inventorv turns."

But Danny Yarbrough, president of Sony Music Distribution, has a different answer to sluggish sales and profits. "The biggest thing that we will look at is how to market more effectively to the consumer," he states. "That will be our priority this year."

Music chains have seen profit margins shrink, going from 1992's 40% to 42% to about 35% to 37% currently.

With Tuesday being the universal streetdate in the U.S., most major suppliers ship product as much as two weeks in advance in an attempt to avoid one week early to major chains so they will have time to prepare product for re-distribution to their stores. One-stops generally get product on the Friday before streetdate so that they have time to turn around and ship product to accounts for receipt on Tuesday.

In theory, all the majors say that accounts caught violating streetdate will lose their early-shipment privileges. But the reality of the situation, according to most merchants interviewed for this story, is that major suppliers appear to selectively enforce their policies, mainly in situations where an account doesn't have enough power to inflict a painful retaliation.

WATCHING HELPLESSLY

In late January, the president of one major chain said that since 1997 had yet to see any big releases, it is still too early to tell if streetdate violations will be a problem this time around. Last year, "a lot of discount stores in our trade area were breaking streetdate frequently and repeatedly, without any action being taken by the majors," says that executive. "Every time it would be the same location, and I would complain to the vendor of whatever title was being sold early. The vendor would respond by telling me they would look into it, and I would never hear back from them. It is one thing to have a strong policy; it is another to enforce it."

In Chicago, Delrey Jones, owner of første time, says that the major distribution system seems to strenuously police independent merchants while downsplaying violations against majors. "If an independent violates streetdate, it becomes a big deal, but if you complain about a major that they pooh-poo you away, and I don't understand why that is," he states.

He says that, on one particular big release in fall, one of the majors was watching independent merchants "like a hawk, going from store to store to make sure that the product wasn't sold. Musicland sold it early, and I reported it and was curious to see if anything would happen." As far as he could tell, nothing happened to Musicland because he never heard back from the vendor.

Roman Kotrys, owner of Repeat The Beat, says that his one-stop business was severely impaired by a competing one-stop, which repeatedly disregarded streetdate and sold big titles early. "It got to the point where we saw one-stop stores, they thought we were playing by the rules," he says. "You know you have a problem when the [defecting] accounts called us on it on Saturday before the streetdate, to tell us that our competitor was already sold-out of the title."

MAJOR INACTION

But most of the majors seemed to be ignoring the problem until recently, when Uni Distribution caught several one-stops in violation and withheld early-delivery privileges on its next big release until the Monday before streetdate. Kotrys reports, "Its nice to see somebody do something finally," he says.

An executive at Universal Music has said that last fall his company saw repeated flagrant violations of streetdate, particularly on rap titles. "And I am not talking about discount department stores, because they weren't even carrying the titles; I am talking about independent shops," he states.

Consequently, he says his company has had some "very serious conversations" with a number of one-stop accounts and, as a result, re-examined its shipping schedule with an eye toward moving it closer to streetdate.

While Uni's effort leveled the playing field somewhat for Repeat The Beat, that effort wasn't totally successful, because one of the major out-of-town chains was just too far away to market the title early. That account appears to have gotten away with it, Kotrys says.

Uni is not alone in taking action against streetdate violations. Recently, BMG has been the most aggressive in chasing transgressions, at least when it comes to those done by one-stops. The company takes the trouble to invisibly mark, unit-by-unit, product being shipped to one-stops suspected of streetdate violations. PGD and Sony also have been known to under-take that task as well.

In addition to streetdate violations by independents, Kotrys says discount department stores frequently sell big releases prior to streetdate. "That is a standard," he says. But in those instances, he adds, "I don't even bother to report it. No action is ever taken.

SPECIAL TREATMENT

Chain executives agree that there is a double standard, saying that the majors look the other way when the (Continued on page 85)
Goliaths, meet David.

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program, a label can have something going on a national level." CIMS program attracted the immediate attention of independent labels. The listening posts kicked off in December with titles from Caroline (Wipeout XL, Future Sound Of London), Alligator (Son Seals), Grand Royal (the Most Boys, the Josephine Wiggs Experience), Passport (Gov't Mule), Rawkus (Future Shock) and 6

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS MAY BE PART OF THE CIMS PROGRAM:

Degrees (the seasonal title "Festival Of Lights"). Such companies as 1-800-PRIMECD, In-Phane, Roadrunner, Moonshine, Emperor Norton, Island Independent, Sub Pop, Mammoth and Buy Or Die signed on in succeeding months.

Eva Weiss, national director of retail marketing at Caroline, expresses satisfaction with this initial mating of independent retailers and independent record companies. She says that when she was approached to keep the "Wipeout XL" title (the soundtrack for a popular Sony PlayStation game) in the program for a second month, she did so without hesitation: "It looked like it was selling through, and many of the accounts were reordering." Weiss says she may turn to the CIMS program to promote Caroline's high-profile Chemical Brothers release "Dig Your Own Hole" in April and adds, "The reason I like the Coalition and their stores is that they do represent a cross-section of independent retail, and they're the best stores in their markets." She also points out that, if she tried to work a similar program out on a store-by-store basis with the indie outlets, it would be much more expensive. "I'm basically getting a $12,000 program for $2,400," she says.

Besides featured status in stores that have traditionally built sales for new artists, the labels will receive some valuable intelligence as well: Dickenson-Post says that Evaluation is currently putting together a questionnaire on titles in the program and will supply information on ordering patterns and other data culled from the stores to program participants.

Var-Cleave has no illusions about one of the principal reasons behind the CIMS program. He says, "The indie stores are having to wise up and do their real-estate deal." However, on the coalition's small parcel, indie labels have an opportunity to build records from the ground up, without breaking the bank.
Wal-Marts and Kmart of the world jump streetdates. "It's just common sense on their part," says one specialty store merchant. "What are they going to do, piss them off and lose business?"

Another chain executive suggests that the big chains are integral to how high a new release debuts on The Billboard 200, saying, "They are not going to penalize a Handelman or Wal-Mart and lose their No. 1 position."

The rackjobbers often have a hard time getting big releases to the stores of accounts on time. In order to compensate for that and to get as much of a boost as they can from discount department-store sales, the majors often ship the racks first.

But distribution executives strongly disagree that they look the other way when racked accounts violate streetdate. Danny Yarbrough, president of Sony Music Distribution, says, "Our streetdate policy has more teeth in it than most of the other majors", and we are very serious about it. We have gone back and enforced it, including to third-party accounts."

Over the last six months, the discount department stores have been a bigger problem than independents because when it comes to streetdate violations, he says. With one account, "we've held back on the time when we shipped it to them," he states. In other instances, "we've held a supplier [a rackjobber] responsible to control the individual stores." In those instances, the rackjobber has made sure that the stores within the chain that are a problem do not get early shipment, he explains.

In the past, Sony Music has been aggressive in policing streetdate violations by urban-located independents as well. In the early 1990s, Sony threatened to stop giving the entire one-stop community early shipment privileges and instead was going to ship them product on streetdate.

But after a commitment from the major one-stops to play by the rules, Sony relented and continued early shipment privileges.

Russ Bach, president at EMI Music Distribution, says there are sometimes mitigating circumstances when it comes to violations by stores supplied by racks. The staff at most discount department stores "aren't cognizant" about the music industry's streetdate concept, he says. Consequently, his company tends to notify the rack when there is a violation and let the rack handle the problem.

Another distribution executive points out that most rackjobbers often have more than one discount department store account. "It would be an unfair solution to give that rackjobber late delivery because of a one-off situation where one store in one chain is guilty," he says.

A sales executive with an East Coast-based label offers that sometimes distribution companies do chase the big boys when they violate streetdate, even though those merchants are likely to retaliate. "It's bad enough the distribution companies are likely to be retaliated against, can you imagine what the account would do if the distribution company publicized the name of the guilty party in the trades?" he asks.
Lyric Inks Flesh’n’Blood Joe Scruggs; Raffi Joins TV-Turnoff Week

JOLTIN’ JOE: Hold on to your hats—a real live children’s artist has been signed by a high-profile company. He is veteran singer-songwriter Joe Scruggs, one of the finest the kids’ field has to offer, and Lyric Studios began releasing his catalog March 4.

No, Lyric isn’t Disney, Sony, or any other major—it’s only the independent Richardson, Texas-based label that created and launched a certain purple dinosaur named Barney. Scruggs’ albums “Anns” and “Deep In The Jungle” were issued on CD and cassette; also re-released a week later were his two longform music videos, “Joe TV (formerly “Joe Scruggs First Video”)” and “Live From Deep In The Jungle.”

Lyric is so sure the public will take to Scruggs that the audio titles come with a 100% satisfaction guarantee. If customers don’t find the music to their liking, they can return the product post-paid to Lyric and receive a refund.

As anyone who’s followed the children’s audio industry for the last few years knows, a certain string of artists signed a passel of kids’ artists in the early ’90s and then dropped them when it became apparent that, without the tools (such as radio) and infrastructure of the pop music world, the cost of breaking unknown artists outstripped labels’ investments.

The record companies then delved into the licensed-character and brand-name market, leaving the overwhelming majority of kids’ artists back where they started: on their own independent labels. For many acts, it’s been a tough row to hoe, with hardly enough income to scrape together the occasional album, much less sufficient funds to tour and promote their releases.

Which is why the Scruggs/Lyric partnership is so morale-raising. It’s truly encouraging to see a multimillion-dollar company pact with a live artist for a change. And if anyone has a chance to break a mostly unknown singer-songwriter, it would be Lyric, which built Barney gross-roots-fashion into the phenomenon he is today—all while the remaining independent labels’ major labels are simply not set up to break a kids’ artist, says Debbie Ries, director of sales for Lyric, “but we are.”

We wish Scruggs well in the children’s market. In Scruggs, Lyric has selected a richly deserving talent. A 13-year veteran of the children’s music industry, whose eight albums were originally released by the Austin, Texas-based ShadowPlay Records and Videos, Scruggs is a songwriter who thoroughly understands the preschool mind. He articulates subjects dear to little hearts, from the importance of night lights to the unfairness of having to clean your room, with humor, affection, and contiguity. (We’re especially fond of his classic bit of screwball exotica, “Bahamian Pajamas,” and “In The Matthew,” a touching account of trying to preserve a snowman.)

“His talent attracted us,” says Ries, who notes that her kids remembered Scruggs long after they were no longer preschoolers. “In fact, we’d want to work with him since the early days of Barney, but at that time we were able to focus on Barney.” When the company expanded in 1996, “we called him and said, ‘Are you still interested?’”

Ries says that in addition to the 100% satisfaction guarantee—a first in the kids’ audio business, as it would be Lyric’s Play knows a number of promotional plans are in Action. Each audio release features a free finger puppet: a crocodile for “Jungle,” and a turtle for “Anns.”

Ries says that various on-pack items will be included in four additional Scruggs releases due later this year. The packaging, she says, has been revamped and includes a Scruggs logo, as well as a bold, identifying two-color background. “We’ve left enough of the original cover art so that it’s still recognizable,” she notes.

Detailed children’s radio promotions are being considered, Ries notes, adding that Lyric is looking into providing kids’ radio outlets with music and interview samples. Scruggs’ product is being trailered on the new Barney video, “Barney’s Sensational Day.” Ries adds: “A Barney trailer also appears on the Scruggs videos. Lyric is working toward a gradual build. Ries stresses, ‘We like to take valuable time and attention on them.’ At the same time, the company is seeking more artists to sign. ‘We see a real opportunity to expand the children’s audio market,’ says Ries. Brand awareness for Lyric is a major goal. ‘We want parents to be able to say ‘If it’s Lyric Studios, it must be good’.”

Ries says, “We don’t think we’ve latched on to something that’s old—like the bat—but we’ll grow. We’re in it for the long haul, just like with Barney.”

TUNE OUT: The No. 1 kids’ artist, Raffi, lends his conscientious presence to this year’s National TV-Turnoff Week, April 24-30. Performing his only North American concert this year, Raffi kicks off the week with an appearance April 20 at Washington, D.C.’s Lerner Auditorium. All proceeds from the show, the TV-Free America’s (the national organizer of National TV-Turnoff Week), among whose sobering statistics is that the average North American family watches some 30 hours of the tube a week. “That’s time that could be spent playing with our kids, getting the kids involved in some kind of program, talking with kids,” says Ries. “If you talk about kids in the right way, there are a lot of kids out there who’ll listen.”

Independent artists who have been signed by large labels for the last few years include: Raffi, who was signed by Birch/Wea (clearly the label with a focus on the children’s market); Barney, who was signed by Disney's Buena Vista Records; and the Chipmunks, who were signed by Mercury/EMI. Each of these artists has a distinctive likeness to their label, and is promoted to kids in a way that is exclusive to that label. For example, the Chipmunks are promoted exclusively on Disney's Chipmunks-themed channel, and are seen in commercials during Disney shows. Barney is promoted exclusively on Disney's Channel, and is seen in commercials during Disney shows.

Independent artists who have been signed by independent labels for the last few years include: Joe Scruggs, who was signed by Richardson, Texas-based label Lyric. Scruggs is a songwriter who understands the preschool mind, and his music often deals with subjects dear to little hearts, such as the importance of night lights and the unfairness of having to clean your room. Scruggs' music is often accompanied by a finger puppet, a crocodile for "Jungle," and a turtle for "Anns." Scruggs' product is being trailered on the new Barney video, "Barney's Sensational Day.

In conclusion, this article discusses the current state of the children's audio industry, with a focus on the signing of Joe Scruggs by Lyric Studios and the upcoming National TV-Turnoff Week. The article highlights the challenges faced by independent artists in the children's music market, and the strategies used by large labels to promote their artists. It also discusses the role of the label in promoting the artist's music and image to children.
Backin Out Of The Big-Box

**Closures And Downsizing Show That The Superstore Concept May Be Easier Said Than Done**

**BY EILEEN FITZPATRICK**

When Tandy Corp. announced late last year that it was abandoning its Incredible Universe superstore, the Dallas-based electronics dealer concluded the big-box retail concept just wasn’t working for them.

Among the earliest to jump on the format, Tandy opened its first Incredible Universe store in 1992, which was quickly followed by Musicland’s Media Play, Trans World Entertainment’s For Your Entertainment (F.Y.E.), the Virgin Megastore and the Tower/Good Guys joint-venture WOW!.

Hailed as the new concept in “entertainment retailing,” the stores featured thousands of square feet of music, videos, computer software, books, coffee bars and, in some cases, consumer electronics and appliances.

Tandy’s stores spanned over 100,000 square feet of retail space, and others measure between 40,000 and 50,000 square feet. Prices for the entertainment software ranged from 20% off list to below-cost. The idea was one-stop entertainment shopping at mass-merchant prices. (Six of Tandy’s 17 Incredible Universe stores have been sold to Palo Alto, Calif.-based Fry’s Electronics.)

But five years later, Tandy isn’t the only retailer having trouble with the big-box concept.

**A SENSE OF CLOSURE**

Disappointing results from Media Play have forced Musicland to regroup, downsize and close 30 stores in the division which, at its height, was operating 99 stores.

Overall, Musicland has been over-run with financial problems due to the downturn in music sales, which hasn’t helped upstart Media Play.

Although music sales are sliding, the video business is experiencing double-digit growth. It’s not enough, though, to carry an entire superstore.

Basically, the problem with Media Play is that the stores were too large, the margins were too low, and there wasn’t enough business to cover the overhead,” says Musicland’s superstore president Gary Ross. “Maybe, over a period of time, the stores could have turned a profit. But we didn’t have enough time.”

In general, Ross says retailers are under tremendous pressure from banks and stockholders to turn profits quickly. Unlike Musicland’s 11-year-old video sell-through chain, Suncoast Motion Picture Co., which took four years to turn a profit, Media Play’s clock was ticking from the day it opened in 1993.

Ross adds that the Suncoast start-up was better financed than Media Play because the music business was healthier 10 years ago.

In addition to closing unprofitable Media Play stores, Ross says a significant amount of book titles have been pulled out of the chain’s existing stores to alleviate excess inventory problems.

“There was too much inventory,” says Ross, “and the sales just didn’t justify that amount of product in the stores.”

He says Media Play is also looking into the idea of scaling down the size of each store, from 50,000 square feet to 30,000 or 40,000 square feet.

Other dealers agree that the sheer size of superstores makes the challenge of turning a profit even more difficult.

“You have to have a tremendous sales volume to overcome the overhead of a store that size,” says Tower president Russ Solomon. “Financially, it’s pretty simple: The breakeven point for Incredible Universe was too high.”

A Tandy spokeswoman offered no further comment on the demise of the chain’s superstore concept.

Although high overhead costs brought down Incredible Universe, over-expansion has also plagued many big-box retailers. Incredible Universe opened 14 stores, and Media Play ballooned to 99 within just three years. But others have curtailed overly zealous plans. Trans World has opened two F.Y.E. stores. (On the other hand, it has closed more than 200 of its music stores, trimming the total Trans World store count to 500.)

Although Best Buy hadn’t had to close existing stores, it will open only 14 new stores this year. During Best Buy’s biggest expansion year, in the early ’90s, the chain opened 20 stores in a two-year period.

“In today’s marketplace, we all have to realize, it’s over-stored,” says Best Buy video merchandise manager Joe Pagano.

**SLOW AND STEADY**

Tower cut its overhead costs in half by partnering with the Good Guys! for two WOW! stores operating in Las Vegas and Long Beach, Calif. “Being big doesn’t mean anything; it’s what’s in the box and where it’s at,” says Solomon. WOW! has opened in urban centers, near crowded shopping destinations and in both cases near a close competitor, such as Best Buy or Circuit City.

Both WOW! stores rank among each chain’s top performers in terms of sales per square foot, according to the Tower and Good Guys’ companies.

Despite WOW!’s success, the two companies plan a slow expansion, with just two new openings on the schedule for this year.

Virgin Megastore also has resisted the temptation to expand too quickly, opening just seven stores since its debut in 1992.

**THE SOFTWARE SIDE OF A TOWER/GOOD GUYS WOW STORE**

Against all odds, retailers say developing the superstore concept is essential to compensate for the decline of the mall store. Mass merchants, such as Wal-Mart and Kmart, have become destination stores because of low pricing, while the mall has become a mishmash of brand names.

“The biggest trend in the mall is the lifestyle store,” says International Council Of Shopping Centers spokes- man Mark Schofield. “Retailers like Eddie Bauer, the Warner Bros. Studio store and restaurants like Planet Hollywood and the Rainforest Cafe are what attract customers. The video and music store is not a hot concept anymore.”

According to the ICSC, the growth in sales per square foot in the entertainment category has steadily dropped, from 3.2% in 1994 to 2.6% in 1996.

“There’s no question that overall big-box stores have had an impact on mall traffic,” says Schofield. “They offer more competition to the regional mall by giving consumers more options.”

But big-box entertainment retailers continue to struggle with how to offer mass-merchant prices and balance tremendous overhead costs.

Pagano says Best Buy has made its entertainment software profitable by balancing low prices with higher-priced catalog titles. “The conception that music and video is not profitable is just not true,” he states.

However, Best Buy has the advantage of co-op television and print advertising from both software and hardware suppliers to generate store traffic.

While music and video dealers continue to work on the format, retailers such as KMart’s successful Borders Books & Music prove the concept can work. “The key,” Ross says, “is a marriage of slightly higher prices and good marketing.”

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**Christian Music Group**

**Reaching Consumers, Increasing Sales, and Creating Opportunities...**

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**BILLYBOARD MARCH 15, 1997**

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Rumors Of Catalog's Death Are Greatly Exaggerated

Yes, Vinyl Collectors Have Completed The CD Conversion, But Demand For Catalog Endures

■ BY GEOFF MAYFIELD

When a flood of returns greeted music distributors at the start of 1996, while catalog placed catalog albums on the endangered-species list, Parasite saw the ravages of the mid-'90s music industry. At the end of the year, many music listeners were driven away from slower-turning titles, while chains that were treading on thin financial ice returned catalog items to all too familiar传真, with many con
sumers having already replaced favorite LP and cassette albums with CDs, a funeral rite for catalog—long a stable, even profitable, part of the business.

Although Parasite says what happened? Catalog sales certainly has a future, and in many categories, it's not over; we can see the end from here," he says.

Also, Parasite says, "I think that's to this point.

The SoundScan numbers that shape Billboard's six-year-old Top Pop Catalog Album list support that pers
pective. When the charts debuted in May 29, 1991, issue, each of its 50 titles outsold the last item on that year's poll by more than a third. The same held true for the first eight weeks, and 16 of the first 18 weeks. In 1996, however, there were only two weeks when all 50 Pop Catalog titles outsold the No. 200 current album.

Pop Catalog figures also prove that the category's very best sellers remain mighty. In 1992, the average weekly sum for a No. 1 catalog title was $2,125 units, a figure that in a typical week would place a current album in the 40s on The Billboard 200. In 1996, the average stood at a slightly higher $2,127.

"Taking Stock"

The category's health has been aided by new terms of sale. Not too long ago, distributors would present discount programs for catalog a few times a year. Retailers, rackjobbers and one-stops would replenish stock during those windows, trying to order enough to keep key titles in stock until the next great opportunity. Although the policy allowed distributor customers to realize better mar
ning, it also led to out-of-stock situations.

During the last few years, distribution has loosened those once-rigid frameworks.

BMG's Partnership program carries ongoing discounts throughout the year, while Sony Music Distribution offers a 3% shot once each month. PolyGram Group Distribution (PGD) presents a different catalog program—some crossover with usual 12-week sales and marketing terms. Although the policy allowed distributor customers to realize better margins, it also led to out-of-stock situations.

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"It's pretty hard to not buy deep catalog on a deal," says George Scarlett, manager of the Sacramento, Calif., headquarters of international web Tower Records. "Just-in-time inventory is on every

catalog's title, and it certainly makes sense for titles that you carry in one and two.

"We don't see the blip that a (peri

cular) program would bring, but we get better spread and depth throughout the year," says BMG's Jones of his company's Partnership program. "I'd rather fill fixtures and not the pipeline.

Some buyers, however, are less enamored of year-round catalog dis
counts, as intermittent programs typi

cally yield fatter discounts. And opines Ron Phillips, VP of purchasing for Valley Records Distributors, in

od-out programs give astute buyers a good edge over competitors who don't buy efficiently. Although PolyGram presents assortments of singles throughout the year, president Jim Cipriano disfavors offering an everyday discount on all catalog. "Given today's technology, I'm against that. With that buy in advantage, buyers are likely to not pay as much attention to catalog inventory as they should," he says.

SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE

Aside from rethinking terms of sale, distributors and labels are also devoting more human resources to catalog. Look through the suppliers' employee rosters for several companies and you'll find more executives devoted to the category than ever before—including some, like PGD senior VP of catalog John Esposito, Sony VP of catalog development Dave Curtis and MCA Records director of sales and marketing Jim Dobbe—who previously worked in the account base.

But in the early 1990s, many companies were dismissive of catalog's potential as an asset. Catalog's perceived outlook is much healthier in the early days of 1997 than it was the case a year ago. "Some customers aren't having to pay their bills with returns like they did last year," says Valley's Phillips. "Some of the people who trimmed their inventory too tight have learned from that mistake.

While changes in catalog marketing make it easier to bring in product, Tower's Scarlett thinks the ever

swirling universe of sales—SoundScan estimates that 28,600 different albums were released in 1996— presents challenges, even for a chain known for broad variety. "There's more science to it now than ever before," says Scarlett. "We can only put 60,000 to 70,000 SKUs in our buyers' stores, and that half of what's available in the U.S. So the goal is not to be the full catalog retailer but the correct catalog retailer. "The trick is to be able to tell deep catalog from dead catalog."

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Section: NARM '97 EXPANDED MERCHANTS & MARKETING SUPERSECTION

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Section: Billboard Top Pop, Catalog Albums

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Section: March 15, 1997

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Section: www.americanradiohistory.com
One-On-One With NARM Keynoter Barry Gibbons

New To The Music Industry, He Isn’t Near Hearing The Fat Lady Sing

Barry Gibbons may be the only part-time chairman in the music retail business. The former CEO of Burger King, Gibbons joined Miami-based Spec’s Music with that position in January 1996. Gibbons, 51, spends about 40% of his work week at Spec’s. He is a native of the U.K. and has spent his career working for big corporations there. During the 1970s and 1980s, he held a number of positions in senior management at Shell Oil and Whitbread. In 1984, he was hired by the London conglomerate Brand Metropolitan to run its restaurant and pub operations. By 1988, he was chairman and managing director of the company’s European retail business.

Shortly after Grand Metropolitan bought it, he was named CEO of the company’s Burger King chain. In July 1990, his impact on Burger King was such that he was featured on the front cover of Fortune magazine as part of an article on turnaround specialists.

By 1995, Gibbons was tired of a big corporation and left Burger King in his own inimitable fashion. According to legend, he called the staff together, and, in honor of his vow not to leave the company until the fat lady sang, he turned on an opera aria, handed his keys to his successor and ran out of the building. Since then, he started a company called Festina, which so far has invested in three start-up situations. Gibbons joined the Spec’s board of directors in the summer of 1995 and graduated to the chairman seat in 1996. He has written a book on his observations of the business world entitled, “This Indecision Is Final.”

After quitting Burger King, you turned your back on corporate life and became involved with entrepreneurial businesses. Why did you agree to become chairman at Spec’s, a publicly traded company?

I didn’t turn my back on corporate life. I turned my back on corporate life, with the conglomerates. I had had nearly 30 years of working in major corporations. I wanted to do something different. Also, I wanted to work on a patchwork quilt rather than one made from the same material.

The idea of joining Spec’s wasn’t on my radar at all. I knew [Spec’s president] Ann Lieff from our affiliation at the University of Miami business school. She asked me to join the Spec’s board, and I did. I have always been with multinationals, but always in retail. I love retail]. The more I got to looking at music retail, the more it fascinated me. Music retail is like Boosia. It used to be beautiful; now you wouldn’t go near it in a shark’s cage.

Considering the shape of music retail, you must have debated with yourself about taking on such a challenge.

Spec’s had gotten to the point where it was going down the left side of the road, and on that side it was nice and green and comfortable. And then the chain headed to the other side of the road, which was a 10-lane highway that was deserted. They were doing well there for awhile, and then all hell let loose, and they had traffic coming at them from every direction.

Considering the shakeout at music retail, how will Spec’s Music fare?

Spec’s will survive. The [music retailing] business had an earthquake over the last few years. In the next 18 months, the whole landscape will look different. You will find some consolidation. Also, some chains are closing lots of stores and rationalizing upstream facilities, like warehouses, etc. But that is only part of the solution. If what you have is a problem of the effectiveness of the stores in the high street, then consolidating warehouse facilities and working on the infrastructure will solve that problem. If the problem is the high street, consolidating doesn’t solve that problem.

If music retail is like Boosia, in that it used to be lovely but now it is awful, what does the future hold?

My belief is that there is a solid retail business out there but that we won’t see high organic growth for at least 5 or 10 years. If you accept that, and get the overhead right and get the marketing right, there is a solid business for that retailer.

Getting back to music retail’s problems, some would say they are mainly due to the price war and overstocking. What do you think is a bigger problem?

One thing you cannot do is plan on behavior by value by behavior by store. As a consumer, you can’t get your own ship to port. I will take it as a bonus if the competition crashes into a cliff. The salvation of Spec’s will be our team working out our problems. I am not interested in others having solutions.

What do you think of the way the music industry drives traffic to stores?

I think that discount pricing is the last resort of a bad marketer. But you have to accept that we have a product that is difficult to differentiate. At the top echelon [of retail in general], there is a lot of theater and atmosphere being brought into the mix. There is some very creative marketing going on, and it leaves the rest of the retail industry looking ho-hum.

How is change playing out at Spec’s?

At Spec’s, we are following a two-pronged strategy. We are working on getting the existing business in shape to survive and then broadening its base by moving to other areas. When I first looked at Spec’s, I saw we had a number of strengths. We have a strong balance sheet, and, secondly, we have a very good intangible balance sheet. We have this excellent position in South Florida, which we think is the gateway of real growth in the Latino music and entertainment world.

Let’s look at your core business first. In our retail business, Spec’s has to get the stores running smoothly. We may have to accept a smaller business to be profitable. We will have to market our business differently. We just introduced a loyalty marketing program for the frequent buyer. We already have 20,000 members, without heavily marketing it yet.

Under your tenure, Spec’s has diversified into used CDs. How is that business going?

I read that you are interested in putting an outlet in the Miami airport. Are you working on that?

I would like to move away from the megastore; I want to get into more kiosk-type situations. You can put a kiosk in a place like a Marriott, or somewhere else where people work, shop and play, and if it doesn’t work you pick it up and put it somewhere else.

What’s going on outside Spec’s core business?

I think the salvation for [Spec’s] shareholders will be getting them invested in new businesses. Away from the core business, we identified three areas that I wanted to get into either through acquisition or through alliances. One of those is the Latin music and entertainment world.

The second area is high-margin branded products and services. We want proprietary branded margaritas. So we started Sobee, which is a wonderful and powerful brand name. South Beach [Fla.] will be the next Rivera. We already promoted a rock concert starring Sheryl Crow on the beach. Sobee could next put on a convention and a so forth.

The third area we identified is virtual number. I’m not only getting you a property-based retailer, you have the wherewithal to be a virtual retailer. There was a wonderful Harvard paper, called “Marketing Myopia,” in which Theodore Levitt, in which he argued that the whale-oil industry lost out because it thought itself in the whale-oil industry instead of thinking of itself as being in the illumination industry. It has become a seminal thesis in business. So [Spec’s] is not in the retail business; we are in the business of providing music and other entertainment software and services to the end consumer.

One of your investments outside your involvement with Spec’s could have the same description apply. How is Tutti doing?

Tutti is up and going. It is an anathema to music retail; it is direct marketing. We put together a CD inside a magazine, all revolving around a particular artist or genre and sell them packaged together through an 800 number on cable television. When I first looked at Spec’s, I saw we had a number of strengths. We have a strong balance sheet; and, secondly, we have a series. So far, we have done a Pavarotti double CD and magazine; and magazines with CDs for Louis Armstrong, Rod Stewart, the Monkees and Billie Holiday.

The Internet as a sales vehicle is certainly a hot topic. What’s your view on it?

I know that a lot of people are cynical about the Internet. But even if it takes just 5% or 10% of sales from retail, it is enough. Retail can’t afford to lose that amount. I think that big money will be made on the Internet, and I don’t think it will be made by just sticking your store on a home page.

You will have to market your business. One of the articles I read on Spec’s has chain founder Martin Specter saying about you, “I think about half of what he says is baloney. But I say give him a chance.” Any comments on that statement?

Henry Ford said, “Half my budget is wasted, but I don’t know which half.” I respect Martin Specter enormously. But it must be difficult for him to see an earthquake happening around Spec’s. We have to get moving and have ourselves. I am not happy with the status quo. I am an agent of change of the first order.

Reaching Consumers...

- 30 #1 singles and 75 top 5’s across all Christian radio formats in 1996
- Our Artists performed over 2100 concerts in front of 5,750,000 people in 1996

Increasing Sales...

- mainstream retail sales have increased 1000% over the last 4 years
- 17 billboard top 200 charting titles in 1996
- 11 titles on the Heatseekers chart

Creating Opportunities...

- MARGIN, MARGIN, MARGIN
Our front line cds are only $9.85 versus the standard $10.30 or more... that’s more margin for retail.

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- Spring Hill
- Spring House
- BEC
At NARM '97, The Music Is Back On Center Stage, And The Spotlight Is On A Variety Of Acts And Genres

BY DEBBIE GALANTE BLOCK

This list of the artists performing was accurate at press time.)

BR5-49 (ARISTA/NASHVILLE)

Taking its name from a phone number used on the television series “Hee Haw,” BR5-49 played the Lower Broadway district of Nashville for two years before record labels started coming to Robert’s Western World to check out what was becoming a lower-distinct phenomenon. Finally, BR5-49 was signed by Arista/Nashville, which released “Live From Robert’s” a six-song mini album live E.P. On “BR5-49,” the band’s debut studio album for Arista/Nashville, the group combines classic tunes with its own songs.

CHRIS BOTTI (VERVE FORECAST)

Trumpeter and composer Chris Botti’s debut album, “First Wish,” broke into the top 20 on Billboard’s Contemporary Jazz chart and spent more than five months on the pop instrumental radio charts, holding the No. 1 position for eight weeks in 1996. Prior to the release of “First Wish,” the Oregon-born musician was best-known for his long association with Paul Simon. Botti followed up “First Wish” with his score for

COLLECTIVE SOUL

“Caught,” released by Verve Forecast in 1996. His new album, “Midnight With You,” is described as an instrumental pop record and offers 10 original songs. It will be in stores April 15th.

COLLECTIVE SOUL (ATLANTIC RECORDS)

Since debuting three years ago, this Georgia-based quintet has released the double-platinum “Hints, Allegations And Things Left Unsaid” and the triple-platinum “Collective Soul.” Two years in a row, Collective Soul won Billboard Music Awards for “Album Rock Song Of The Year,” for “Shine” and “December.” With total worldwide sales in excess of 7 million, the group will be releasing a third album, “Disciplined Breakdown,” this month.

NEAL COTY (MERCURY/NASHVILLE)

A native of Appalachian Maryland, singer-songwriter Neal Coty began singing and playing guitar at age 4. After garnering attention from his high school band in Frederick, Md., Coty went to New York to explore the music scene. It was then Coty decided that Nashville was where he needed to be. A publishing deal brought his talents to the ears of Mercury’s VP of A&R, Keith Stogall, who immediately signed him to the label. Neal Coty’s debut album, “Chance And Curiosity,” hit the market April 10, 1994, released the “Chicken” single, nominated for the Billboard Music Awards “Best New Artist,” Warren Zevon’s “Keb’Mo” (OKEH)

Keb’Mo’ was playing in a top 40 club band when he was recruited by ex-Jefferson Starship/Hot Tuna’s Papa John Creach. Keb’Mo’ played with Papa John for three years, during which he entered the Southern California blues scene. Since his Okeh debut in June 1994, Keb’Mo’ has released eight albums, one of which was nominated for Grammy Awards (making a total of six) and made countless national television appearances. This blues-based band—featuring Krauss, Adam Steffan, Dan Tyminski and Barry Bales—is gearing up for the March 25 release of “So Long Wrong.” Their seventh album for Rounder Records is

CHANTAL KREVIAKUZIUS (COLUMBIA)

The 22-year-old Canadian has been a piano-playing prodigy at 2 and a competition-winning classical pianist and vocalist by her early adulthood. She has an international following and is becoming a household word in contemporary music during adolescence. When a near-tragic motorbike accident in Italy left her with a shattered jaw and broken leg in 1994, she began writing songs that explore life in early adulthood. Chantal wrote all but two of the songs on her debut album, “Under These Rocks And Stones.” The first track and single is “God Made Me.”

JOHNNY LANG (A&M RECORDS)

It all started for blues guitarist Johnny Lang in North Dakota, when he went to a concert by the Bad Medicine Blues Band and was floored by lead guitarist Ted Larsen. Larsen became his teacher, and soon Johnny’s sound was the star and leader of Bad Medicine. The group was renamed Kid Johnny Lang & The Big Band, and their independently released album “Smokin’ became a regional smash, selling in excess of 25,000 copies. The kisser is that Johnny Lang is only 15 years old. His album “Lone To Me” is his major-label debut.

KENNY LOGGINS (COLUMBIA RECORDS)

Kenny Loggins has been an acclaimed musician and songwriter for over two decades, first gaining fame as one half of the duo Loggins & Messina. Together, they achieved international success with two platinum albums, five gold albums and such classic hits as “Danny’s Song,” “Your Mama Don’t Dance” and “Valleym.” After going solo in 1976, Loggins recorded a string of platinum and gold albums, reaching the top 10 with singles like “Celebrate Me Home,” “Whenever I Call You Friend,” “This Is It,” “I’m Alright” and the No. 1 “Footloose.” A new album from Loggins is expected in April.

PATTY LOVELESS (EPIC RECORDS NASHVILLE)

Patty Loveless has given us such Grammy, Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music—nominated No. 1 hits as “How Can I Help You Say Goodbye” and “You Don’t Even Know Who I Am.” This Pikeville, Ky.-born songstress “When Flicker’s Angels Fly” was named 1995 Album Of the Year by the Country Music Association. Her most recent album is “The Trouble With The Truth.”

ASHLEY MACISCAST (A&M RECORDS)

Ashley MacIsaac is a native of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, began playing fiddle at the age of 9 and has since become a local legend. His music has been described as “traditional Celtic shaking hands in some very new cir-
Shoplifters love compact discs. They are easy to snatch, slip into purses, and shove into pockets. Ripped off CD's are walking out stores' exits in droves—to the tune of 5,000 music and video titles per $100 million in sales. Source tagging, where tiny electronic security tags are inserted into CD's by the manufacturer, are every music retailer's dream, and every shoplifter's nightmare. NARM, BARD and RMAC, as well as leading retailers, have selected acousto-magnetic anti-shoplifting technology as the standard for CD source tagging. However, legal wrangling over industry-wide programs have temporarily slowed CD source tagging for music retailers.

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1. Recent international survey by One to One magazine, January 1997.
NEW SIERRA CD-ROM A MUSICAL MYSTERY

BY BRETT ATWOOD

LOS ANGELES—Sierra, one of the top computer game development and publishing companies, is readying its first multimedia CD-ROM, *Birds of Paradise: The Shivers II: Harvest Of Souls*, due in early April. The title, which contains a mixture of rock, folk, and jazz, and 10 mini music videos, will be promoted at radio stations in the top 20 markets.

The game, a sequel to Sierra's adventure game *[Cherry: San Francisco*], will again feature players in the mystery-filled town of Cyclone, Ariz., in search of a missing rock band. The act was visiting the desert town to shoot a music video, but disappeared along with most of the town's citizens. As players wander through the empty town, they must watch and listen to the mini music videos to gather visual and audio clues to the mystery.

The CD-ROM is slated for release in April. For the promotion, scheduled to begin at the end of this month, the game company hired Los Angeles-based marketing company Entertainment Marketing Group.

Though the game has a strong music theme, getting it into music retail stores is not a priority, according to Eddie Ranchigoda, brand manager of Sierra.

"This was untested ground for Sierra," says Whitmore, who has since joined Seattle-based software company Monolith. "This is not a typical game soundtrack. Music is just part of the background, it is an integral part of the game. To win, you have to pay attention to what you see and hear in the music videos. This is more than eye and ear candy."

BRETT ATWOOD

AT&T INTERNET PROMO TO BE A BLOCKBUSTER

AT&T DIALS UP BLOCKBUSTER: AT&T is teaming with Blockbuster to distribute more than 2 million WorldNet Internet access CD-ROMs. The software, which will be given free to customers who purchase personal computers or video games at participating stores, will contain a Navigator browser, downloading software to access World Wide Web site. The deal succeeds a similar but recently expired arrangement between Blockbuster and a leading Internet service offered by Sprint (Billboard, Nov. 16, 1996).

SONY PLAYSTATION PRICE DROPS: Sony Computer Entertainment America has announced that it is dropping the suggested retail price of its PlayStation gaming system to $329. A new model, which was also announced, is the PlayStation Graphic (similar to the "Greatest Hits" line of top-selling CD games, which will sell for as low as $19.99 at many retail stores).

"In the next 18 months, the price of the $1,000 PlayStation will be $499. The $499 PlayStation will be the base unit, and then the two add-ons will be $499 each (the second PlayStation Graphic and the PlayStation Soundstation)." The company expects to start shipping the new models in mid-February.

"We were going to hire a lyricist, but we realized that creating the music videos was going to take up that part of the budget," says Eichler. "Instead, we took a chance and did it ourselves." The software, which is scheduled for release at the time of the launch and will be available at $14.99, will allow users to integrate their own music into the game. Each music video will contain a "channel" that will act as an Internet connection service, allowing users to create and send their own mix to a designated music database.

"The crytic lyrics were a Sierra-staff team effort, according to game designer Marcia Bales.

"We were going to hire a lyricist, but we realized that creating the music videos was going to take up that part of the budget," says Eichler. "Instead, we took a chance and did it ourselves." The software, which is scheduled for release at the time of the launch and will be available at $14.99, will allow users to integrate their own music into the game. Each music video will contain a "channel" that will act as an Internet connection service, allowing users to create and send their own mix to a designated music database.

CD-Quality Music Makes Download Debut

Liquid Audio Leads The Way In Web-Direct Commerce

LOS ANGELES—Internet-delivered audio services have recently started to gain some acceptance, but new technology on the horizon promises to make the best of these services. A new technology, Liquid Audio, is set to launch in the coming months, and is expected to take the lead in the emerging market.

In addition, liquid feeds from the World Wide Web studio will soon accompany the service, according to Barbiere. As a result, the new technology, “The J-Bird Music Hour” line of vehicle for the Web site is expected to launch in March.

J-Bird has signed more than 200 artists since its launch last year. Among the better-known artists on the label are singer Ava Cherry, a former backing vocalist for Luther Vandross and David Bowie who released a solo album on MCA in 1990; keyboard player and producer Al St. John, who has worked with Billy Squier and John Entwistle; and rapper Sience, who charted in 1989 with singles “It's My Time” and “The Funk.”

But J-Bird does pay the station a fee to air the show, Barbiere says that

New Web Label J-Bird Uses Radio To Push Acts

WLIR Show Acknowledges Medium's Promotional Potential

LOS ANGELES—Internet record company J-Bird Records is using the promotional power of traditional radio to push music online. The band's CD, "The J-Bird Music Hour," a radio show that aims to expose its artists to radio and Internet audiences. The show's first program began March 2 on WLIR Long Island, N.Y., and on J-Bird's Web site (http://www.jbirdrecords.com).

"Radio is a tried-and-true promotional vehicle for music," says Jay Barbiere, who was VP of creative production services for Angel Records before forming J-Bird. "It works in perfect synergy with what we are trying to do on the Internet." J-Bird is aiming to establish a strong presence on the Internet with the online music retailer and record company (Billboard, Oct. 19, 1996).

The label's radio venture airs Sunday at 11 p.m. and is hosted by Roy Abrams, who also hosts the WLIR new-music program “The Island Zone.” The label's Web site, however, will interact with the Web site during the show, according to Barbiere. For example, Web site visitors can participate in a text chat that allows listeners to submit instant requests from the label's online roster, and a weekly contest awards J-Bird artists.

In addition, live picture feeds from the WLIR studio will soon accompany the program, according to Barbiere. As a result, the new technology, “The J-Bird Music Hour” line of vehicle for the Web site is expected to launch in March.

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Bill Foote The Bill, PolyGram Video hosted a pre-Super Bowl party in New Orleans to celebrate the tape featuring the winning team of a game still to be played. Subsequent events dictated the title: "Green Bay Packers: Super Bowl XXXI Champions." Celebrants included, from left, Jules Haimovitz, CEO of ITC Entertainment; Bill Sondheim, president of PolyGram Video; Michael Kuhn, CEO of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment; and "Evil" director Alan Parker.

**NARM Could Be Setting For DVD Switch, But Don’t Count On It**

**WILL HE? WON'T HE?** For DVD-player manufacturers, Universal Home Video president Louis Foote will be the executive to watch Monday (10) at the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) convention in Orlando, Fla. Foote is one of an eight-man panel discussing DVD that morning. He also happens to be the only one of the participants, including moderator Joe Pagano of Best Buy, who has committed to the new format. Three other studios—20th Century Fox, Disney, and Paramount—are on the sidelines as well, greatly limiting the software available for the rollout later this month. So proponents are hoping that Foote will use NARM to announce a commitment—a change that will help pressure the other fence-sitters to do likewise. If not, argues one trade source, why go to NARM?

But other hardware executives, including Sony DVD marketing VP Mike Fielder, doubt that Foote will announce a move to Warner and Columbia TriStar just now. Indeed, Universal and Paramount are on record that they won't be fully satisfied until there's a DVD-specific copyright law. Legislation isn't the half of it, according to another trade source. He suggests that Seagram, which owns about 80% of Universal, has deployed DVD as one bargaining chip in a grand strategy, the goal of which is the purchase of the remaining 20% from Matsushita.

Matsushita, under several labels, most prominently Panasonic, will be the single biggest vendor of DVD players. It has been waiting, impatiently, for Universal to help close the programming gap. Seagram is willing, provided it can gain full control of Universal at a bargain price, according to the scenario we've heard. "It's very political," says our source. "It has nothing to do with technology."

Manufacturers aren't all on the same wavelength either. Thomson Consumer Electronics, a big tub-shueemaker for DVD a year ago, has been silent during the run-up to the launch. The official reason is the lack of studio support; unofficially, Thomson lost its least-digital voice when top U.S. executive Joe Clayton was forced out in a corporate reorganization last year. French parent Thomson may be selling the U.S. unit, formerly RCA Consumer Electronics, to Korean manufacturer Daewoo, as of several months ago, was a potential buyer.

However, Thomson's DVD urge should reassert itself in May or June. By then, Fox Home Entertainment and Disney will be regaining titles. West Coast Entertainment's executive VP Matt Brown told attendees of the Cultur/White Star Video-sponsored breakfast last month in New York (Picture This, Billboard, March 8).

With the solution to technical roadblocks, such as regional flagging and an anti-copying protocol, agreed upon, Brown figures the studios are ready to hop off the fence. "The wait-and-see period" is almost over, he said. "I think a lot of software will fall into place this spring or summer."

**FOREIGN AID: Revenue sharing took center stage during the second half of a two-part sales meeting 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment held last month in Phoenix. The overseas retailers who made up the audience—domestic was part one—heard from SuperComm, Disney's Dals-branded subsidiary. SuperComm, a relative newcomer in revenue sharing, specializes in supermarkets. Video stores account for none of its U.S. revenue, per se. The part of the business is dominated by the pioneer of pay-per-transac-tion, Rentrak.**

In fact, Fox Home Entertainment several years ago signed Rentrak to a long-term domestic deal. As part of the agreement, the studio optioned warrants of Rentrak stock. But, outside of Japan, Rentrak has flipped overseas, and founder Ron Berger closed his European operations long ago. Though it's only testing foreign venues, SuperComm by default has become the export. What concerns Fox is the chronically flat rental market outside the U.S. A recent study it conducted indicates that customers are unhappy with the service they get. They respond: fewer visits. Copy depth on hit titles averages one per 1,000 video units, according to a spokesperson for Rentrak. It holds in all countries, excluding the U.S. and Australia vs. one for every 200 in those two markets, and Phoenix attendees haven't figured a solution to the problem of building demand to boost purchases.

Revenue sharing, which enables stores to lease several cassettes for the cost of one, might be the answer. Fox isn't saying, but it did give SuperComm prime time during a "most impressive event," in the words of one retailer, to pitch its approach.

**HERE AND GONE:** Chicago-based Questar Video has lost one of its more recent hires. Rosemary Simari, formerly of ABC Video, left a few weeks after joining Quasar's New York office. A source says that Simari had expected programming and acquisition responsibilities, but got sales instead. Steve Furman, a veteran Questar sales and marketing executive with extensive rackjobbing experience, has also departed.

Questar president Jason Nader says the special-interest est supplier is focusing on its core business, dropping interactive, which has gone "nowhere." He's optimistic about the future: Special-interest sales are up, and "I don't see any new players coming in."

**Vendors Ride The Theatrical Wave**

**Volcanoes Latest Topic To Piggyback Film**

**BY TRUDI MILLER ROSENBLUM**

NEW YORK—Increasingly savvy video suppliers are hitching special-interest titles to the release of big-screen movies. The bigger the Hollywood production, the hotter the publicity and the stronger the coincidents on which often similarly titled releases can hitch a profitable ride.

No rocket science is required to participate. All that's needed, in most cases, is access to documentary footage or an older, lesser theatrical title (often packaged with documentary material). Take, for example, "Dante's Peak," starring Pierce Brosnan, which hit theaters Feb. 7. The Universal movie, the first of two studio volcano epics and one network special, has caused an eruption of related videos.


The two-pack is being released on Musicland's Channel 1000 in-house label and will be displayed and promoted at Suncoast stores. It will also be available at other retailers.

"We did the same thing last summer [for] 'Twister' with a two-pack called 'Twisters: Nature's Fury,' which sold 400,000 units," says Goldhil chairman Dwight Hilson. "It was one of the most successful documentary titles that Musicland ever had." Goldhil and GoodTimes will have a second promotional opportunity when 20th Century Fox's "Volcano" destroys Los Angeles this summer.

Even the Olsen twins are getting in on the action, with the newest installment of "The Adventures Of Mary-Kate And Ashley" series, "The Case Of The Volcano Mystery," arriving March 19 from Dualstar and WarnerVision for $12.95. The title is receiving heavy print promotion.

National Geographic is working on its own volcano video, prompted by "Twister," a multimillion seller for Warner Home Video, National Geo-

graphic has sold more than 100,000 units cumulatively of "Cyclone" and "Our Nature's Fury," according to spokesperson Melissa Montofiore.

Sometimes the force of nature is Howard Stern, an all-media whirlwind. Not missing a beat, A&E Home Video has released "Howard Stern Exposed" March 4 for $9.95. The title, from A&E's "Biography" series, is

(Continued on page 99)

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MGM Merges Its Video, Consumer Products Units

COMBINED EFFORTS. Studies have been selling videos as packaged goods for years. MGM is among the first to put its video and consumer products units under one banner.

The newly consolidated division will be headed by Richard Cohen, who was named president of MGM’s license merchandise unit in November 1996 and has been running video operations since 1991. The combined division will be named MGM Home Entertainment/Consumer Products Group.

It will have separate sales and marketing departments but will share accounting, business, and legal affairs functions.

Five of 20 staffers in the consumer products group were laid off as a result of the move, Cohen says. The video unit was not affected.

On the plus side, he expects Entertainment/Consumer Products Group to double its remaining staff in the next five years.

Cohen says the combination will also make it easier for the two divisions to work on joint marketing programs. At other studios, where video and merchandise units are kept separate, synergy “often gets bogged down in the corporate bureaucracy,” he adds. Although Cohen expects to hire a few key executives in the coming months, joint marketing projects probably won’t be announced for a while.

MGM hit a production full last year when it was put up for sale the second time in two years. In July, the studio was purchased by the team of Frank Mancuso, Kirk Kerkorian, and Jerry Stoker, the latter is with Seven Network, an Australian television and cable company. With money in the bank, MGM is ready to start making movies.

“Our videos releases were diminished because production was, but sell-through was driven up by catalog sales,” says Cohen. As an example, MGM managed to sell around 15 million additional units of “The Wizard Of Oz,” which was re-promoted for the umpteenth time in the fourth quarter.

Cohen says the consolidation is part of an overall “strategic presentation” as well as an acknowledgement that video and licensed merchandise are similar products.

“If you take the view that these are consumer products that are retail-driven, it makes sense,” he notes.

NEW NAME: Throughout its history, Vimak Entertainment has reinvented itself more times than a politician. Now it’s morphing again. Beginning with the May 13 release of the Rodney Dangerfield comedy “Meet Wally Sparks,” the company will be known as Trimmack Home Video.

The horror-turned-art-film distributor now wants to be more closely associated with moviemaking. Nine features are going into release this year:

“We want to further align ourselves with our theatrical division and capitalize on the money they are spending on production and marketing,” says sales and marketing senior VP Don Gold.

The Trimmack-produced “Wally Sparks” was a bomb at the box office, taking in about $4 million against a $14 million production budget. But despite the disappointing results, Gold says the movie “puts us on the theatrical map.” He expects the title to sell 150,000 units at retail.

Although Trimmack is no major force in the box office, the company is set on keeping retailers up to date on its new features. In January, Trimmack set up the “Gold Bee” club, which allows retailers to view its films for free.

Members are also sent quarterly updates on Trimmack happenings and exclusive point-of-purchase materials for new video releases. As an added bonus, the company will sell $5 Baskin Robbins gift certificates on each retailer’s membership card.

“We want retailers and distributors to know we’re more than a video company,” says Gold.

In its effort to become more mainstream, Trimmack will release three family titles directly to sell-through for this year. Going that route in July is “Galumphia,” a kids fantasy feature in the tradition of “Peter’s Dragon,” which Trimmack acquired.

Trimmack is putting $12 million into the production of “The Warrior Of Waverly Street,” a live-action fantasy space adventure scheduled for theatrical release in August. It is also producing “A Kid In Aladdin’s Palace,” a $13 million sequel to “A Kid In King Arthur’s Court,” which was released by Walt Disney Pictures last year. The sequel was originally scheduled for direct-to-video, but Gold says Trimmack may release it theatrically later this year.

CLASS ACT: Special interest supplier Kultur Video has acquired North American distribution rights to the RM Associates catalog of more than 100 classical performance-arts videos, previously marketed in the U.S. and Canada by PMI Home Video.

Founded by movie and television producer Reiner Moritz, RM Associates has produced music and dance programs at some of Europe’s most historic venues for more than 15 years. Artists include Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, José Carreras, Maria Callas, and Rudolf Nureyev.

Counting the number of sister label White Star, the number of titles in the Kultur catalog will top 500. The company says the addition of RM Associates titles makes Kultur the largest distributor of classical performance-arts videos in North America.
VENDORS RIDE
(Continued from page 97)
debuts within days of Paramount's eagerly anticipated "Private Parts," starring the shock jock himself.
"I think we'll do some terrific business," says Tom Heymann, A&E new media VE who has also timed "Biography" releases of Eva Peron and Madonna to coincide with "Evita." "For the first time, we created special 24-count and 48-count [point-of-purchase] displays, and we're getting great buy-ins from grocery stores and drugstore chains on those, as well as lots of music and video chains."
The cassette is getting play in Musicland, Tower, Virgin, Trans World, and Nobody Beats the Wiz. HMV is featuring it as title of the month.

It's PolyGram Video's turn next.

PolyGram Video hopes the new Val Kilmer movie, "The Saint," will generate retail interest in its release of the '60s TV series of the same name.

Another Paramount movie, "The Saint," starring Val Kilmer and due in March, has prompted PolyGram to release four tapes of the original '60s TV show, which starred Roger Moore. Each cassette contains two episodes and retails for $14.95. The videos are being marketed with inserts in Us magazine, and information on them can be found on a number of "Saint" World Wide Web sites.

"This gives retailers a chance to capitalize on the awareness of the movie and have product on their shelves at the same time that all the advertising, marketing, and press for the movie is going on," says Charlie Ware, PolyGram's director of theatrical marketing.

LIVE Entertainment is exploiting interest in the Paramount feature with another '60s retread, "The Saint: The Fiction Makers." It arrived Feb. 15, priced at $9.98. "We had it in the vaults, so it seemed like an obvious move to release it now to capitalize on the promotion for the movie," says LIVE marketing director Mark Roche.

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(Continued from page 101)
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Sony Wonder Opening Kid Vid Doors

By Moira McCormick

CHICAGO—The fertile terrain of award-winning children's literature is the basis of a new line of children's videos from Sony Wonder.

Called "Doors Of Wonder," the series features animated, music-enhanced versions of popular, critically acclaimed children's books: "Doors Of Wonder" kicks off with the March 35 release of "The Rainbow Fish: Dazzle The Dinosaur," priced at $12.98 and 30 minutes long. It is Sony Wonder's first foray into filmed children's literature.

Based on the best-selling books by Swiss author Marcus Pfister, "The Rainbow Fish" has sold more than 5 million copies worldwide; the video's most distinguishing feature is the animation and box art. Sony Wonder wanted to capture the shimmering colors of the titular fish's scales.

"Translating the feel effect from printed page to video was crucial," says Becky Mancuso-Wanding, Sony Wonder senior VP of creative affairs. "The glinting scales are what consumers see first, she notes.

Sony Wonder chose MGM Animation to accomplish the task, working directly with writer/animators Mark Young and author Pfister. "Our aim in 'Doors Of Wonder' is to stay as close to the original house as possible," says Mancuso-Wanding.

The process of transferring books into animated video is time consuming and painstaking, she adds, noting, "It took us a year to do 'The Rainbow Fish;'" Sony Wonder chose the title for a number of reasons, among them the book's visual dazzle, its message of sharing, its ability to translate to video, its many awards, and—not least—its popularity.

"We want to continue working with books that are established," says Mancuso-Wanding, especially those "with a built-in audience. However, she continues, "If we thought a brand-new book was won-

VENDORS RIDE THE THEATRICAL WAVE

(Continued from page 99)

But, he cautions, "in some cases it works, in others it doesn't. Animation is hit or miss—we did really well with 'Aladdin' and 'Pocahontas,' but we also had an animated program with a lion in it to coincide with 'The Lion King' that didn't do that well.'"

Sony Wonder's "Enchanted Tales" series has also released fairy-tale carnivals that cover Disney movies—sometimes ahead of the studio. The latest entry, "Hercules," came out Feb. 11. Disney's version arrives this summer.

But Sony Wonder isn't a knock-off specialist, emphasizes senior VP of marketing Wendy Moos. "'Enchanted Tales' is an important line, separate and distinct from anything else that's going on in the marketplace," she says. "Branding is very important to us. We have a full licensing program with 'Enchanted Tales,' and we work with our licensees on promotions that focus on that brand.'"

Anchor Bay Entertainment is on the prowl as well. "There's a Zorro movie coming out, and we have our Zorro titles ready," says VP of marketing Sandy Weisensauer. "There's talk about a Godzilla movie, and we have several Godzillla tapes. We had a version of 'Hunchback' that did very well. The trick is to be early. So we look and see what movies are coming out, and see if we have anything in our catalog that makes sense."

One advantage, Weiensauer says, is that "you don't have to spend much money, because the studios are spending the money. The main thing is to get in the stores where consumers can see it, and hope that the awareness from the theatrical film translates into sales."

Often, the translation is literal. Godzilla's Hulon notes that when "Twister" came out on video, the makers had to get the movie to the theater's front desk—about two or three years ago, when "Tombstone" and 'Maverick' were in theaters.

"But not all tie-ins work," Pagano cautions. "We find that with movies based on TV shows, the videos of the TV shows don't pick up as much as other kinds of tie-ins. Maybe it's because most TV shows sell out, but we have several."

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Anchor Bay Entertainment has released its animated "Hercules" in advance of the Disney version, due in theaters this summer.

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Sandy titles

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Joe Pagano has noticed

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It's not enough entertainment value. Even if there are two episodes, people would rather watch an entire film."
The Rainbow Fish video's second story, Pfister's "Dazzle The Dragon," features a theme of bravery. "We didn't want to pad The Rainbow Fish to make it 30 minutes," says Mancuso-Windes, "since we wanted to stay as true to the original as we could."

That has established the 'Doors Of Wonder' format. Mancuso-Windes says future releases will feature two stories with complimentary messages, by the same author. As with the inaugural release, each of the stories will feature an original song.

Mancuso-Windes stresses that turning books into video is meant "to enhance, not exploit" the original. "We want to identify the right books and bring them to life in a respectful way," she notes. "We look for animation companies that can match the illustrations, title, and tone of the original book."

Also important to Sony Wonder, she emphasizes, is the idea that literary-based videos "enhance and complement a child's reading experience, not replace it." Exposure to the video should pique kids' curiosity about certain authors and subjects, thus "inspiring them to read even more."

"The Rainbow Fish" release was launched at a Jan. 29 reception in New York, for which author Pfister was flown in from Switzerland. Publisher North-South Books is working closely with Sony Wonder to promote the tape and the book, says Sony Wonder VP of marketing Wendy Moss. "We're creating a display that houses both videos and books, so they can be merchandised together."

According to Moss, the displays, which also feature the foil effect, house 24 items. They are primarily for mass merchandisers and bookstores. "It might take a little longer" to persuade video stores to carry the displays, Moss says. She views the cross-merchandising as "an opportunity for video retailers to extend their product lines." The displays will roll out in April and May.

Moss notes that further consumer exposure is afforded by a full line of existing "Rainbow Fish" licensed merchandise, including toys, puppets, bookcakes, puzzles, bedding, and greeting cards.

In addition, each video package will contain $21 worth of coupons resealable at any Busch Entertainment theme park in the U.S. on-pack burst will alert consumers. "We're also doing television advertising in the top five or six markets in the country," says Moss, "with 10-second spots tied into local retailers."

Sony Wonder had considered running print ads, but Moss says plans were discontinued when it was found that the shader effect could not be elicited in magazines.

Mancuso-Windes expects to ship two or three titles a year. "The children's book world is an unbelievably rich source for material," she says.

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**SONY WONDER OPENING KID VID DOORS**

(Continued from preceding page)

deful and would translate incredibly well to video, we'd do it."

"The Rainbow Fish" video's second story, Pfister's "Dazzle The Dragon," features a theme of bravery. "We didn't want to pad The Rainbow Fish to make it 30 minutes," says Mancuso-Windes, "since we wanted to stay as true to the original as we could."

That has established the 'Doors Of Wonder' format. Mancuso-Windes says future releases will feature two stories with complimentary messages, by the same author. As with the inaugural release, each of the stories will feature an original song.

Mancuso-Windes stresses that turning books into video is meant "to enhance, not exploit" the original. "We want to identify the right books and bring them to life in a respectful way," she notes. "We look for animation companies that can match the illustrations, title, and tone of the original book."

Also important to Sony Wonder, she emphasizes, is the idea that literary-based videos "enhance and complement a child's reading experience, not replace it." Exposure to the video should pique kids' curiosity about certain authors and subjects, thus "inspiring them to read even more."

"The Rainbow Fish" release was launched at a Jan. 29 reception in New York, for which author Pfister was flown in from Switzerland. Publisher North-South Books is working closely with Sony Wonder to promote the tape and the book, says Sony Wonder VP of marketing Wendy Moss. "We're creating a display that houses both videos and books, so they can be merchandised together."

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Hey, I Can't See The Sign! Motown solo artist and New Edition member Johnny Gill, left, points at you during a recent visit to the studios of SW Networks' "Urban Music." Gill is pictured with producer Ken Simmonds.

‘El Super Top 10’ Counts Down Latin Hits Syndicated Show Features Rock, Pop Acts

By DOUG REECE

LOS ANGELES—Far from the traditional salsa and merengue programmed during most of its affiliates’ broadcast hours, JC Enter-prises’ “El Super Top Ten Latino Rock And Pop” is providing stations an opportunity to crank up the volume and blast a modern, more aggressive breed of Latin music.

Bands such as Cafe Tacuba, Zapato Trees, King Chango, and Maná contribute to a sound that’s part hard rock and part pop, an unusual hybrid that signifies the shifting musical tastes of Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. and abroad.

Produced and hosted by José Carlos Ortiz in Miami, the 60-minute, 10-act countdown show has 13 affiliates, nine of which are located in the U.S. The show is delivered weekly on CD.

This January, the syndicator celebrated its first anniversary, a milestone that Ortiz says reflects the influential tastes of two types of listeners.

“It’s like an evolution,” he says. “Out of the top 10 songs in Central America, there are many that are pop and rock songs. So there are two reasons shown like ours are becoming more popular.

First, you have many people from those countries living here. And second, there are a lot of Latin kids that were born here and grew up listening to modern rock, that happens to be similar to Latin rock.”

Ortiz adds that the topical lyrics in many songs by these bands help inform Spanish-speaking people about political and social issues in Central America.

Still, the show does not completely separate itself from its English-speaking rock counterparts. By adding a single English-song rock track to each show’s top 10, Ortiz is able educate his listeners about many of the acts that influence the show’s core artists.

This idea is also reflected on WBRQ Puerto Rico, an “El Super Top Ten” affiliate that IDs itself “La Casa Del Rock Latino.” Listeners will hear some decidedly non-Latin bands peppered into the station’s Latin rock and pop format.

FCC Chairman Is Denied Bid To Open DARS Auction

WASHINGTON—Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed Hundt lost his bid to open an auction for providers of Digital Audio Radio Services (DARS) in a two-to-two deadlock commission vote March 3.

Hundt wanted the auction opened to allow any additional satellite entrepreneurs to take part. That would have also allowed any terrestrial broadcasters to join in, although most are still pursuing an in-band approach.

The auction would have potentially added years to the selection process.

Commissioner Susan Ness said the commission should hold another DARS auction, perhaps as early as May. She also noted that at this point, terrestrial broadcasters cannot show more success with the persistently delayed in-band digital, thus “we need to explore other options” to get them to the digital world.

The DARS service would allow radio stations broadcasting to homes and cars over satellite instead of today’s traditional terrestrial broadcast technology.

The National Assn. of Broadcasters deeply fears the competition DARS would bring and has consistently opposed it.

With Hundt’s defeat, the commission will instead proceed with an auction for only two 125 megahertz DARS licenses that will be limited to four satellite companies that submitted applications five years ago.

This story was prepared by Top 40 Airplay Monitor manager Kevin Carter and Rock Airplay Monitor managing editor Marc Schiffman.

What happens to an act at modern rock after it has crossed its modern base to top 40 or even hot AC?

That question has haunted labels ever since modern records began crossing on a grand scale in 1993, but it’s really an issue now as modern and top 40 draw away from each other. That threatens to leave some of those artists with a problem with which the two formats are as much in triple-A as they are in modern—considered “too pop” by modern radio and “too alternative” by top 40.

Historically, the answer for some bands has been to release an album that’s harder rocking than their follow-up. But the key may lie less in the music than in how it is handled.

Modern PDs say that timing releases carefully to avoid overexposure—and efforts by both a station and a label to protect an act’s image—can keep the home fires burning at modern rock. And, as long as labels keep the modern rock place in mind for their acts’ follow-up sets, they’ll be able to maintain modern credibility.

Although some modern observers feel that the format has historically had a problem with giving up the acts it breaks, crossover doesn’t always equal backlash. WBCN Boston PD Oddie says that for his listeners, No Doubt, despite its mass multiformat success, is “still considered a very hip band. It’s important to be seen how they’ve been imaged. The Cranberries have maintained a very desirable image at alternative, in spite of being embraced by top 40. Other bands have not had that luxury.”

Similarly, Atlantic Records senior VP of promotion Danny Buch cites Alanis Morissette. “She had very high multiformat exposure, sold over 10 million albums, and is obviously still considered cool,” he says.

Morissette proves that modern acts can have a long string of hits at mainstream and even adult top 40 without encountering problems at home. But sometimes, one mega-hit is enough to worry PDs. KFOX Austin, Texas, PD Sara Trelxer cites Natalie Merchant, who has crossed successfully to top 40 on several occasions but “has been able to maintain a hipness credibility.”

Yet Buch recalls a recent conversation with a modern PD who told Buch he had “ruined” Jewel with the PD’s audience by exposing her to top 40 radio, even though Jewel is working on only her second top 40 and hot AC hit.

As Buch notes, “Everyone has become so hyper-concerned about artist imaging lately.”

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Trelxer thinks this is all a matter of timing. She blames the rapid banishment of Hootie & the Blowfish from modern—without ever being fully embraced by that format—on the speed with which the band followed up “Cracked Rear View.” “It’s almost like if you get overexposed too quickly, the burn just won’t set for alternative,” she says.

Similarly, the Goo Goo Dolls’ “Name” was played so heavily at so many formats that the prospect of new music from the group is “not something I’m really excited about,” Trelxer says. “If somebody told me in six months there’s a new Goo Goo Dolls track, I would be like, ‘Great, I’m ready for it.’ Right now, I just...”

newsline...

A LITTLE BIT LOUDER NOW. It’s cool in D.C., but this probably isn’t the kind of news Federal Communications Commissioner Chairman Reed Hundt is looking for. On the heels of an accusation from Sen. Conrad Burns, R-Mont., Rep. W.J. “Billy” Tauzin, D-La., is also charging the commission with ignoring the mandate of the Telecommunications Act. He then urged it to “cease performing these evaluations of competitive impact” on radio group sales.

With a week of Tauzin’s attack, Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., took his turn with a letter to Hundt asking how he is implementing Telecom Act changes.

The JUSTICE DEPARTMENT reached an agreement Feb. 27 with American Radio Systems (ARS) allowing the company to go forward with its $655 million merger with EZ Communications as long as ARS loses two FM radio stations—KSSJ Sacramento, Calif., and WRPX Charlotte, N.C. The department intervened as part of its monitoring of radio company mergers since the passage of the Telecom Act; the concern is that such mergers might lead to anti-competitive market share based on percentages of ad revenue. The deal, that also includes a $25 million penalty, also allows EZ’s and ARS’ radio stations in Charlotte were abandoned “in the face of antitrust concerns.”

The action stems from Justice Department estimations that under the original deal, ARS would have 56% of station ad revenue in Charlotte; without WRPX, it would take about 49%. In Sacramento, the figure would have been 36%; without KSSJ, it would be 33%.

KICKING COUNTRY. Jones Satellite Network launches its 10th 24-hour music format with Classic Hits Country, which also marks its third country format. Already kicking are the mainstream U.S. Country and “hot country format” CD Country. Those formats boost more than 400 affiliates.
think that's it's got to rest. When somebody has huge mass-appeal, if they don't want to go for long time, you've got to rest before you're excited about it again. I think Green Day's there, too. I don't think this has to go any more, the glamour of the artist, but it has a lot to do with the pacing of the releases.

**ROCK ME AGAIN AND AGAIN**

It also has to do with the nature of a group's follow-up releases. When not every record, there isn't much of a group coming off an album with a harder-rocking single has worked, some PDs still appreciate the gesture.

Oedipus suggests that in the case of Jewel and Atlantic, "I would like to see some new material, even if an alternative that they never take it to top 40 or AC, even a song that might not cross, but a really solid song for our format that would really continue to solidify Jewel with this format."

Counting Crows, Oedipus notes, "came off with a lead track that really didn't work in our format, but appropriate for top 40 or for AC. Clever move, and I'd like to see something like that for Jewels."

Modern KFRF Fresno, Calif., PD Don O'Neal praises Garbage for mixing exclusive and mass-appeal tracks. "Stupid Girl" crossed immensely in the top 40 world," O'Neal says. Then the band "turned around with Crush," which is almost going soothing, right back to the alternative roots where, if we didn't play that record, top 40 probably wouldn't have."

**HAPPY NOW?**

Some modern PDs would also like to see more from Doubles Don't speak "like Maybe" even though Don't Speak" has been clearly embraced by the format, because saying that is what me. [It's] a song that is uncharacteristic of what No Doubt does. So, as long as they don't follow that directory, just the good song to throw in a ballad every once in a while, because that's kind of the thing that gets people mass appeal that was more the exception than the rule with them, then they'll be fine with counting."" Ran (the End) New Orleans PD Vince Richards didn't play "Don't Speak," which thought "sounded too much like Madonna," but still considers No Doubt "an alternative band that had a pop single [rather than a band whose image has changed]. I think more and more, you're going to find it's not so much going to be band for band. Now it's going to start being cut for cut. These artists are more and more becoming disposable to alternative. I think a lot of stations will play it for a while and then get off and move on."

But WRXZ (K108) Indianapolis PD Scott Jamieson says his station can't seem to get "Rock in Spain" in a way that will enhance an artist's image and not dent it. "Top 40 stations just cannot play on and throw these artists on, and they may be on for six weeks and never resurface again," he says, "If we know an artist like No Doubt is going to have some tenure with us, we try to get comments from Gem off the network, and we'll have our voice-over announce say something like, "Gwen Stefani's solo debut."

We talked to X103 about her new song, "Don't Speak." And then we have 10 seconds of Gwen talking about her new hit, an ID, and we roll into a record. It's really how you position your station with the artist you're going to play another song that's right in the heart of your core. You still want to play hit records, and if you can do that by surrounding those songs with real core-friendly records, you should be OK."

So, even if Morissette is seen and heard everywhere these days, "it was important two years ago when she first came on the scene that we played her songs," he says, "Now we own it. We brought her to town. We interviewed her on the radio. We got little comments from her off the network. All the cool things that you do between the records and before the records, we can still do with artists that have overexposure."

"Alannis Morissette is a modern rock artist," he adds, "She can go over to top 40. But she began in our format, I'm a big believer in claiming an artist and then taking credit for all the other things she does."

KFRF's O'Neal agrees, "When people get in their car and turn on their ignition and the first sound they hear is a modern rock song. if they had it set on, when they get out of the car."

**PROTECTING THE BLOODLINES**

That was what Maverick seems to have had in mind for Morissette. Although she has performed live twice, but the tour's success was explosive. Alannis Morissette's debut album does have a radio show last year: KROQ Los Angeles, WHTZ (Z100) New York, and WQKX (Q101) Chicago.

Terry Anzalone, head of promotion at Maverick, says that Morissette's stage-managed appearances were done to prevent overexposure. "We've had so much fun with her."

Soon we knew there was so much meat to this record, it was just a matter of maximizing the album. You can do this with a band who has the piano in a 3- or 18-month to two-year life span on one album.

It is a little bit of a challenge to develop one base at a time, he says, "which is not to say we would streamline the Adult and alt formats. Alannis started at college-jock, on college stations, and then it was more commercial, where we took her as far as we could. She then spread to rock radio and finally pop and adult, and we've been able to use our program to explosive enough that we could have conceivably gone to pop radio a lot sooner than we did," Anzalone admits. However, the older MORISSETTE is played on the radio, says of Maverick's gradual rollout process, the longer she sells.

**PROTECTING YOUR JEWELS**

Meanwhile, Atlantic's Bach is trying to claim his own prize, and still support all stations that have stepped out to support his artists. "Jerk" is doing fairly well on modern rock [KROQ and WHFS Washington, D.C., as well as top 40 WXXS-FM (Kiss 108) Boston and Hot AC KHMX Houston], he says. "Artists and their records take their own path," Bach says. "We're not as mighty as or diabolical as people would believe us to be. We don't have that kind of control. If the mood of the consumers in alternative, rock, top 40, or even modern AC dictates [support for a band], we certainly can't keep the music away from them."

"There's no sense trying to control it; we can't change the program where we have those involved, too much music and you can't tell a consumer they can't buy a certain song because it was designed for an 18-24 male," Bach adds.

"I realize it's a double-edged sword, but as much as people want to support the good of a particular format or artist, I feel the programmer derives the most value out of this. He's the one that decides who is on stage or off or his audience," he says. "The bigger we make them, the more valuable they become. Look at Smoking Pumpkins, their huisan. Sure some of their PI listeners may complain, but isn't radio supposed to be about cumming, about having the most people listen? And isn't that what the biggest hits do for your station?"

**EL SUPER 10 COUNTS DOWN LATIN HITS**

(Continued from preceding page)

making inroads in the U.S. Los Angeles, the superlative Spanish radio market in the nation, already has a full-time Latin rock format."

On the front line, one needs first look at adventurous companies such as H.O.L.A. and Sarvo Music, both of which has Rhone Records, too, has joined in with its "Reconquista! The Latin Rock Invasion." Ortiz says that the quality and Latin rock has increased, has seen an interesting phenomenon. Some of "El Super 10" will find that there are a few songs on our show that they can actually put into [regular rotation]," says Ortiz. "They're not as hard as they thought they would to fit in the format."

Spanish station KXSS Sacramento, Calif., PD Victor Garcia says the program has meshed well with the station's self-produced Sunday Latin rock program on the air.

Garcia also notes that his competitors seem to be jumping on the Latin rock invasion bandwagon. "When we came to Sacramento three years ago, we were the only station that was playing some of this kind of music," he says. "Now there are three stations that have special programs for 'Rock En Espanol.' That tells you something."
The song first appeared last year in an earlier version on the "Safe & Sound" compilation by Big Rig/Mercury project, in which both Boston acts join together to benefit several nonprofit health care organizations for women and children. Recalling the sad impetus behind the benefit—the murder of two women and the injuring of several other people in attacks on two Brookline, Mass., women's health clinics—Gittelman says that the sentiments in "I've Got That"
apply just as well to individual as they do to
energized acts of fortitude. "As much as anything, the
song has always made me think of those women's
families and what they went through. Rising above that sort of tragedy is a real test of the human spirit."

Shak's sense of strength through community,
emphasized by the 2-Done echo of such pianists as
the Specials and Madness, is what drew Gittelman to the music as a teenager. On the road more often than not for the past 10 years, the Bosstones have striven to spread the gospel—and it has been a pleasure, she says: "It astounds me when bands say how hard it is to be on the road. To me, it's a pleasure. Anyone who
thinks otherwise needs a little perspective."
**Just Add Water: Savage Garden Finds Itself With A-Fast-Growing Global Hit**

By Chuck Taylor

Savage Garden

"Success in your own country is a wonderful thing to have," echoes instrumentalist Jones. "But success in America, being the entertainment capital of the world, is quite a bonus.

Last issue's band, the positive karma helped "I Want You" romp to No. 17 on the Hot 100 as the Greatest Gainer/Airplay. In this issue, it moves to No. 16, with 71% of its popularity from airplay and 29% from sales.

The uptempo pop song, with its sing-along chorus and runaway stream-of-consciousness verses in the vein of Reunion's 1974 hit, "Life Is A Rock (But The Radio Rocks Me)," is indeed infectious, despite the fact that it's a tough one to decipher, much less comprehend.

Take, for example, the opening lines: "Anytime I see your face / I just close my eyes and I am taken to a place where your crystal mind and magenta feelings take up shelter in the base of my spine like cherry cola bottles."

It's an engaging metaphor I use to describe all of this—like a deep-sea diver in a raincoat—and lots of pop-culture references.

The story of Savage Garden (named for the beautiful yet savage world of vampires, per the writings of Anne Rice) is a quickly paced series of short chapters opening in the band's native Brisbane Australia about four years ago.

"I had been in a cover band ripping off other people's songs to make a living," says Jones. "It had come to a point where we had publishing interests in those songs and a publishing company suggested that we needed a front man." So he put a "musicians 180 singer" ad in a local newspaper and was impressed with Hayes' parallel methodology on musical styles and success. "I knew he was right," Jones says.

But when the band's publishing deal failed to lead to a recording contract, the three songwriters began to fragment. "During that period, Darren and I talked about what kind of music we would like to make," Jones says. "Hayes and I sat down at the piano, knowing the band's days were numbered, and wrote 'A Thousand Words.'"

At first, the group began to think that a fragment would be the group's salvation. "We then agreed to put everything on hold for a year to write some songs."

From that came a demo, which the guys randomly sent to some 100 record labels, industry executives, artist managers, and the like. "We sent them to everyone in the world, because we wanted to be heard," says Hayes. "Then we just sat back and waited."

No labels called, alas, but Savage Garden did get responses from a number of record companies, including veteran Ausie artist manager John Woodroof, who took the pair under his wing and put them through the many years of trying to get a recording contract.

"Boy, was that a learning experience," recalls Hayes. "We were taken to Kings Cross, one of the seedy areas of this country, where we basically recorded the album in producer [Charles Fisher's] bedroom. It was blissful, and as I lay there, there were lights around the room and do back flips."

Then I want to make the next album great, write new tracks, get involved in the artwork, everything. You have to constantly readjust for what you want next."

**Hicks, Ginsburg Fly Under Radar With Megamerger**

It seemed deceptively simple. Evergreen Media's Scott Ginsburg and Chancellor Broadcasting's Tom Hicks talk; they agree to merge their companies. Later, over dessert, Ginsburg has a thought: "Hey, Tom, let's go buy Viacom.

OK, maybe it wasn't quite that easy, but the recent megamerger of Evergreen and Chancellor, and the subsequent moves of Viacom's radio properties, was a deal that caught much of the industry by surprise.

The newly named Chancellor Media Corporation, with Hicks chairman and Ginsburg president/CEO, "were actually having preliminary discussions for about three weeks prior, centered around the possibility of merging our companies," says Ginsburg. "At the same time, we knew that several companies were independently bidding for the 10 Viacom properties.

"Once we basically shook hands on our deal, we thought it prudent to contact First Boston and Viacom, to notify them of our intention to bid jointly for the properties," he adds. "We submitted our bid [01.7 billion] to Viacom at noon Central Time; we had a signed deal back in our hands five hours later."

Everyone involved had to sacrifice something, Ginsburg's case, it was the longtime Evergreen name. "That was a highly emotional issue, nothing more," he says. "The name had nothing to do with how we treat our people or operate our stations; the Evergreen name was only a matter of corporate pride.

Evergreen's ability to act quickly on new acquisitions was accomplished by "our ability to take any moving parts and integrate them into a well-defined business plan," Ginsburg says. "That's our secret: Our business plan always contains moving parts in the form of mergers and acquisitions.

That gives us the opportunity and the ability to move quickly, because we knew how to approach it."

Ginsburg believes in what he calls "anticipatory management. "In a world of constant change, the opportunists that cannot get ahead of the curve of change will be enveloped and swallowed," he says. Successful operators are those who are always preparing for this, new, fast-moving environment. "I see many operators with their eyes as big as an orange with the ability to see the future."

"Our job is to help minnows, who can't keep any competition healthy, but you just don't talk to people how they're supposed to act."

Ginsburg has a message to those who claim radio isn't rocket science. "It's every bit as difficult as anything else in life because of the passion involved. This isn't an eight-hour or even a 12-hour day—radio is in your system 24 hours a day. It's an association."

That raises another issue—whether Ginsburg will be a long-term player in broadcasting. He admits that there were those who figured he was "just visiting," would make a quick killing, and then jump out. "This business is my life, it's my work. This is where I belong," he says.

"It's a new day for us to learn how to manage this thing," says Ginsburg. A &R," he adds. "We may stumble and fall in some areas, excel in others. Remember, we're still inventing this business as we go along."

Ginsburg adds, "We have already prepared to learn or two things we can make it work. However, if you center your decision on how you treat your people, that now's not so hard to deal with."
and R&B adult formats, leading consumers to seek out new works by these well-established artists.

Ernie Isley of the Isley Brothers, just one of the storied acts finding current success, believes his group’s music and performances resonate with younger and older listeners alike with a sweet reminder of things past.

“I think we made music that can withstand the test of time,” Isley says. “People have an emotional connection to different music. Certain songs you hear, they touch you. It reminds you...I think that’s why I heard ‘That Lady’ that summer. The same thing repeats itself for those in the present, those coming of age.”

For the lyrics of a batch of songs from the Isleys’ current million-selling album sums up the audience’s feelings well: “I’m taking you into this way/ I want to keep you here/I got to have you near.”

NEW JAMS, OLD BOTTLES
The old-school stars currently seeing renewed action include:
• The Isley Brothers, whose chart success in the ‘60s, ‘70s and R&B smash like “Shout” (1959), “Twist and Shout” (1962), and this Old School rerelease of “It’s Your Body” (1966); they launched a string of smash hits on their T-Neck imprint in the ‘70s and charted through the ‘80s and into the early ‘90s, primarily soul and R&B, and Marvin Isley are riding high with “Tears,” which peaked at No. 12 on the Hot R&B Singles chart, and the platinum-selling album “Thank You, Please,” currently No. 30 on the Top R&B Albums chart and No. 127 on The Billboard 200.
• Luther Vandross, who made his first chart mark in 1976 and won and went on to produce a stream of top 10 R&B hits through “Here and Now,” his current epic single, “I Can Make It Better,” rose to No. 15 on the Hot R&B Singles chart. His platinum album “Your Secret Love” stands at No. 35 on the Top R&B Albums chart this week after rising as high as No. 2; it is No. 74 on the Top R&B Albums chart.
• Curtis Mayfield, the legendary R&B singer/songwriter and former leader of the Impressions, who last year received the visas to perform his first full-length album since he was paralyzed in a 1990 concert mishap. The Warner Bros. album is currently at No. 18 on The Billboard 200 and re-enters The Billboard 200 No. 167; its latest single, “No One Knows About A Good Thing (You Don’t Have To Cry),” is No. 78 on the Hot R&B Singles chart in its second week.
• Chaka Khan, an R&B star for two decades, has found her recent work propelled the group Rufus through the ‘70s and ‘80s. “Miss Never Mind The Water,” a duet by Khan and Me'Shell NdegéOcool, was No. 16 on the R&B chart this week; the album from which it is drawn, Reprise’s “Epiphany:The Best Of Chaka Khan Volume One,” is No. 66 on the Top R&B Albums chart and No. 197 on The Billboard 200.
• Roger Troutman, whose rubbery, vocoder-laced hits under the names Roger and Zapp helped define funk in the late ‘70s, recently re-emerged with “Twist and Shout” on the Vandross’ release “R&B Classics” (Kapp Records). Troutman says such “cold, calculated” tracks can be heard in today’s charts. “It’s the same formula I used on my songs like ‘Go Down Right’ and ‘The Chronicles of Funk’,” he says.

R&B & ADULT RADIO FINDS TREASURE IN YOUNG ACTS (Continued from page 5)

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their musical tastes. "They're growing up and want more [adult-ori-ented] music from mainly younger forms," he says. "Other than sports, nothing influences kids more than music, and I think this new crop of tal-ent is bringing back the music of the previous generation. "Not all of it is charting high, but enough to let us know there's increasing interest in the music of younger demos."

Key to the R&B explosion is a collection of avant-garde artists whose creative styles often aren't familiar. Open melodies often border on a sub- genre tagged "alternative soul." Included among these renovation souls are D'Angelo, Maxwell, Eric Benet, and RaBhann Patterson.

The most recent force in renaissance soul artist Erykah Badu, whose debut Kedar/Universal set, "Baduizm," debuted on June 13 and has sold 398,000 units since its Feb. 11 release, according to SoundScan (see page 15). Other R&B projects that stormed from the gate during the last 12 months include Toni Braxton's "Secrets," which hit No. 1; Whitney Houston's "My love Is Here," topped by Columbia; and D'Angelo's "Brown Sugar," released by Virgin.

Of the 31 R&B-rooted albums (excluding rap) currently on The Bill- board 200, 21 have been certified gold or better, and 14 peaked in the chart's top 10. Among them are New Edition's "Home Again," Mariah Carey's "Day- dreams," Kelly's eponymous set, and the "Waiting To Exhale" soundtrack—which of all hit No. 1.

Credited for assisting traditional R&B's critical growth is Kedar/Universal, a black radio, a conservative medium that is embracing the burgeoning talent pool of new artists and their fans with ever-increasing frequency. Says KKB/T Los Angeles music director Mariana Suder, "We're being introduced to a lot of new and exciting artists, and we're playing them around the clock, not dayparting them. These new R&B sounds have a new dimension to radio, and we hope that the trend continues." (see story, page 5).

Most observers attribute the rise of R&B to the critical growth of the music business. However, Michael Mauldin, Columbia Records Group senior VP and Columbia black music division executive VP (U.S.), says, "The person for R&B's return run deeper.  "A few years ago, R&B seemed to be something that wasn't hip for younger kids," he says. "But the sampling of [vintage R&B] music by rappers over the years has penetrated their psyche and influenced this phenomenon. And the advent of young debut acts like Maxwell and Kenny Lattimore allows this genre to add what more established artists like Babyface, Luther Vandross, and Toni Braxton are doing."

Independent Chicago rapper George Daniels, owner of George's Music Room, says the first generation of rap consumers is maturing, so rhythm streams to produce an updated and quality sound. "Some R&B artists are trying to sell a lit-tle like rap records by coming strong out of the box," says Violet Brown, urban buyer for the 240-store, Tor-rance, Calif.-based Ray's "We're looking for a new generation. "Not all of it is charting high, but enough to let us know there's increasing interest in the music of younger demos."

WCGI Chicago assistant PD Don E. Considine says the Ray's R&B Sound was a hard sell at radio because the sound was so different, but the street marketing campaign that was used established a core of fans that made the artist's debut single, "Brown Sugar," hard to ignore. "There may have been other success stories, but D'Angelo's campaign broke down barriers," EM's overall plan of working from it the first time, then to radio, set the tone for how much R&B is working today," he says. "Credit (EM) senior VP of R&B Donna Grant has been a key player in setting up the project." "Brown Sugar" peaked at No. 5 on Billboard singles, and sold 1.3 million units, according to SoundScan.

Ross, who says it was initially an up-tempo R&B track, says that it was for not giving up on that project." "Brown Sugar" was among the top of the week on Billboard R&B singles, and sold 1.3 million units, according to SoundScan.

Radio, expects the artist's sophomore set to be an easier sell because of the growing demand for more eclectic R&B sounds among consuming listeners. At press time, D'Angelo's follow-up album had not been scheduled.

LEADING THE CHARGE

With consumer thirst for quality R&B ever expanding, expect an increas ing number of duvertive soul acts. "From a publishers' point of view, this whole phenomenon remains about building catalog sales, and my roster of writers, publishers, and songwriters is in a great place," says Warner/Chappell creative services senior director Denise Weather- man, who has supervised the career of after more self-contained acts—that can write, produce, and perform. Among these multitalented acts are Y'Yam's Laurens, whose May 20slated debut album features an assort ment of pop, jazz, and R&B musical elements. "The most important aspect of my music, though, is the lyrics," says the Atlanta resident, who wound up with a recording deal while seeking a publisher. "Lauryn calls her style "Ghettovelva," and she's been recognized for four years for her creative re-ments were met with the buzzed ears of consumers, who were more interested in the sampled beats of hip-hop and R&B radio. "Black and white, alternative acts, this is a great oppor tunity for them, as well as all R&B acts that have been "unbounded quality," Rodriguez says."

WAL-MART'S AEROSMITH EP DRAGS CRITICISM

(Continued from page 12)

WAL-MART'S AEROSMITH'S "SECOND ROUND" turns heads and raises eyebrows with a seemingly anachronistic release by one of the biggest bands of the late 1970s. The CD, which was released on May 31 and sold 78,000 copies, according to SoundScan.

The band's 1993 album, "Get A Grip," released through Geffen Records, debuted at No. 1 on The Bill- board 200 and sold 4.4 million copies, according to SoundScan. In 1994, "Big Ones," a greatest-hits collection, peaked at No. 6 and sold 2.3 million units, according to SoundScan. In 1999, "Pandora's Box," released by Columbia, has sold 386,000 copies.

"Columbia is really opening them-selves up for a lot of criticism," says Terry Currier, the owner of Music Millenium in Portland, Ore. "But the way the business is going, if a big retailer approaches a label with a major promotion, 'they'll grab it without really (Continued on next page)
“I think Erykah is what every programmer likes to listen to,” says Eric Lee, music director and air personality for WCXD, an R&B adult station in Rich-
mond, Va. “She has the perfect fit for our audience,” says Jamilah Muhammad, assistant PD and music director at WZAT, Charlotte, N.C. “On & On” is a great, smooth-sounding adult ballad, midtempo song.”

Both stations have reported consistently heavy caller response to the sin-
gle and have already added additional Badu tracks to their rotation, includ-
ing the second single from the album, “Next Lifetime,” and a remix of “Cer-
topia.”

Badu, who says her influences are the people she grew up listening to: Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Chaka Khan, Prince, James Brown, The Emotions, and Earth, Wind & Fire—hopes that radio is opening up to sounds like hers. “I think that people are looking at music like mine where often the audience is underserved by the programmers of radio stations,” she says. “I’m just one of the many artists who have never gotten to do music. But it’s changing—but hopefully children will start to be true to what they like. It’s very important for people.”

Even in markets where Badu received no airplay, rotation of “The Color Purple”-inspired video on BET and the Box alerted consumers to her presence and led them into stores in search of her music, retail sources added.

The single debuted at No. 1 in Tower Records (New York) with no airplay, says Marc Offenhack, VP of sales (U.S.) for Tower, which has distributed Badu’s label, Kedar Entertainment.

“A week later, Hot 97 (WQHT New York) started to play the record. So somehow, somehow, some way, the people in New York knew about Erykah.”

In addition to keeping the “On & On” video in heavy rotation on BET’s “Planet Groove,” a package that aired the week the album arrived, Badu said: “We finit the BET special to coin-
cide with the release of the album so people could be exposed to more than the single. I’m just happy that senior director of promotion (U.S.) at Universal.

It also served to formally introduce consumers to Badu, who, to point, had maintained a certain myste-
tique via ads focusing on the mood of her music and not on visual images of her.

Sony Askey, urban buyer for the Camelot Music chain, believes Kedar Entertainment is “smart” for having focused the work also poned the way for high con-
sumer awareness. “People were requesting the single very early,” Askey observed. “That lets me know that the street was on it,” she says. “You usually only get a strong buzz like that on a rap release, so to come out of the box so strong is something an R&B artist is notable. I expect Erykah will keep selling well through the year.”

According to Kedar Massenburg, president of Kedar Entertainment and senior VP of A&R at Universal, street support for the label has come from throughout the music business, including the label’s 1996 Soul Train Awards, almost a full year before “Baduizm” was released. “We went where the cream of the crop went,” says Massen-
burg.

Early exposure for Badu also includ-
ed a good appearance on D’Angelo’s “Lady” remix and a duet between the two on the “High School High” sound-
track, released last summer.

“I know it was important to create a strong foundation in the streets, because the urban market is her base,”

WAL-MART’S AEROMAT EP DRAWS CRITICISM

(Continued from preceding page)

EMI-CAPITOL FORMS ARMS FOR CATALOG SALES

(Continued from page 13)

EMI-Capitol Catalog Management Group (ECMG) has been absorbed into the new company, fo-
cused on special markets and the company’s midprice and budget lines, Pro-
ings for the move were made independ-
ently (Billboard, April 13). The new arm includes a large portion of the company’s front-line catalog. In addi-
tion, it is planned that all new and existing catalogs will be distributed through channels beyond the tradi-
tional music account base. EMI- Capitol Music Group North America declines to specify anticipated vol-
ume for the new company.

Charles Koppelman, chairman/CEO of the EMI-Capitol Catalog Management Group, North America, says the creation of EMI-
Capitol Entertainment Properties “is all about focus” and not just as it con-
cerns catalog businesses, but as to how the various labels fulfill their goals.

This Monday, when someone picks up Billboard, they will see 16 of our new releases in the top 100 (of The Billboard 200). Each of our various labels are strategic in the title categories and in the positions, says Koppelman. “The al-
tel labels can continue to focus on devel-
opping new artists while the new company focuses on catalog, he says.

In most instances, EMI-Capitol Entertainment Properties will work catalog titles for acts on no longer on the company’s labels. Acts signed to EMI-
Capitol labels will continue to be mar-
keted under the auspices of their respective labels, with the exception of EMD. Koppelman says: “That’s how we see the relationship to the new company. Other labels can assign the catalog of current artists to the new company on a royalty basis. It is up to the labels to choose. Already, the Brooks catalog falls into that category.

Although the new company will be mar-
keted by EMI-Capitol Entertainment Properties, each label will retain its identification with its artist. “This is only a channel,” Koppelman stresses, “not a shifting of the heritage of the different labels,” says Koppelman.

Terri Santil, executive VP/GM of EMI-Capitol Catalog Management Group North America, says that “everyone major label has experienced a decline in catalog sales this year and there is still there, but you have to be much more visionary in managing the process. The old days are gone. Com-
panies can no longer squander invest

in the U.S. and Puerto Rico this year.

Sony, which came in a distant second at 15.6%, was followed closely by EMI Music Distribution at 15.2%. Round-
ing out the top three were BMG, WEA (12.4%), PolyGram (10.4%), and Uni-
verse (6.8%).

Sony Discos is the lone major that is self-distributed, except for joint-vent-
ure releases in which the company distributes its own major chains. The remaining Latin majors are distributed by their domestic coun-
ty in the market. Of the independent labels, Fonovisa was No. 1 with 12.11% of the market. Market-share information for the other indices was not made available by SoundScan.

While two of the top-selling Latin titles in 1996 were related to los Del Rio’s inanithetical sound "Macarena," the best-selling Latin album in 1996, by far, was the English/Spanish hit "Dreaming Of You/Amor" by the band slay Taroni studio Selen. That set sold 455,000 units.

Sales of the following four titles ran over 200,000 units: At No. 2, Los Del Rio's "Macarena/MBG album "Macarena Non Stop" sold 275,000 units. The No. 3 best seller was "Macarena Mix" (256,000 units), a various-artists pack-
age on A&R/MBG whose songs were propelled by "Macarena." In fourth place was "Los Del Rio’s barita la
tu Elsa’s Spanish/English Enrique Irie-
sis (250,000 units). The Gipsy Kings’ "Cancion Para El Dia de los Muertos" (Nonesuch/AG) placed third with 220,000 units sold.

Each of the top-five-selling titles, except for "Non Stop," was released in 1996. And apart from Igle-
rios’ record, which generated a record five consecutive No. 1 hits, no album benefited from its airplay on radio airplay

INDEXS NO. 1 IN LATIN RECORD BUSINESS IN U.S.

(Continued from page 5)

in 1996. While SoundScan’s market-share report offers a first official look at the sales activity of the U.S. Latin record industry, it is important to note that SoundScan’s coverage of the U.S. Latin record industry is inade-
quate. The industry consensus is that SoundScan is registering only around 35% of the annual sales activity in the U.S. Latin market.

Retailers and industry observers note that the percentages of sales by cross-cul-
tural pop acts such as Iglesias and Una, the Latin superstar Lila Mileg are usually better covered by SoundScan (about 40% to 50%) of which are registered at SoundScan reports) than sales by retail, private-label and sales and salesa-
merengue artists (about 25% to 30%).

Label executives assert that most product by Latin pop acts is sold at U.S. retail chains, which are Sound

Scan retailers, while the major of regional Mexican/tropical titles are sold primarily at non-SoundScan reporting locations such as swap meets, label offices in small markets, and independent Latin retailers.

Such nontraditional points-of-sale, says Guillermo Sanz, CEO of Fonovisa, make up the heart and soul of his business, particularly for regional Mexican artists.

The Latin pop format is a strong, stable format that has seen a cover swap meets and small stores, where we do much of our business, but it does not give an accurate picture of the market in the [Latin] market," says Santies.

Fonovisa’s internal research sup-
ports Santies’s claim. For example, only 25% of all sales by Iglesias’ regional Mexican stars Los Tigres Del Norte are registered in U.S. stores. By contrast, 45% of all sales by Igle-
rios are recorded in U.S. stores.

SoundScan does monitor about 50 Latin independent retail outlets, led by Los Tigres Del Norte’s La Luna (19 stores) and Puerto Rico’s Casa de los Tapes (16). The vast majority of reporting stores, however, are part of a state or regional retail chain.

SoundScan executives insist they are eager to evidence their label’s coverage of the Latin indie retail industry, yet most Latin retailers have repeatedly praised SoundScan’s requests to sign on as reporting outlets that large Latin retailers’ resistance is their fear of divergent of sales figures.

Retailers are constantly stressed by the fact that sales figures from participating retailers are not revealed to the public. He acknowledges that SoundScan does not cover nontraditional Latin points-of-sale, but he is quick to point out that “SoundScan stands ready to accept data from any Latino account that is capable and willing to supply the data.”

112 BILLBOARD MARCH 15, 1997

www.americanradiohistory.com
DEATH ROW'S KNIGHT SENTENCED TO NINE YEARS
(Continued from page 12)

may soon multiply, for the label is the target of a federal investigation and a U.S. Justice Department inquiry into perpe-
trations pertaining to the operation of the company (Billboard, March 8). Cuzleger declined to return Knight to court, citing recent comments by B-Boy Rup and Tupac Shakur about the justice system and rappers Lynwood and George Stanley.

The planned strategy in that case was suspended, and he was placed on pro-
tection for a year in 1995 in a bleak bar-
gain. He was jailed in October and his previ-
sionary trial was scheduled to start last year, after it was learned that he participat-
ed in a Sept. 7 ambush at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Two hours af-
af rear, Knight was in a fight with Tupac Shakur was mortally wounded while riding in Knight’s car; to, no one knew if he was going to live or die.

Courtroom observers believe that Knight, who was credited with 375 days already served, could end up being sentenced to 15 years or more.

(Continued on next page)

MCDONALD’S TO OFFER DISNEY COMPILATIONS
(Continued from page 5)

Testimony during Knight’s hearing by a representative of the state attor-
ney general’s office indicated that
Longo’s activities may be the subject of a criminal investigation.

A DANGER TO THE COMMUNITY’
At the Feb. 28 hearing, after a round of defense motions on the label’s behalf
by Cuzleger—and testimony that sought to portray him as an asset to the African-American community, Knight was arrested in May 2002 for
omiting and often-incoherent 15-minute
There was no indication at that time that the old, dis-

critique of Death Row’s gangsta rap
releases. Tucker was seen warily
assuring Knight’s mother in the
courtroom.

Tucker said of the rap exec and the late Shakur, “This [music] industry
is a business of greed.” He then

said his name next to eight (from MGM Entertainment) that were to be launched in seven cities at $24.98 suggested list beginning the week of March 24.

Columbia TriStar is the only video
studio participating. Its four titles are being delivered to retailers nation-
ally and will also be packaged with the Sony PlayStation video game system.

Until Warner goes national, probably by the end of June, Ingram’s sales are contractually restricted to the launch sites of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, Seat-
tle, and Washington, D.C. F. C. Ross
acknowledges that the distributor can’t

speak with the sameولد on the De-
ney-McDonald’s premium product
are reacting with guarded optimism.

Says Ruas Solomon, president of 164-store, West Sacramento, Calif-
inated Tower Records, “In the stock
market world, something like this is
could help energize the children’s market.”

Vicky Marshall, music co-op man-
ger for the 158-store, Ann Arbor, Mich-
ated Borders Books & Music, is also optimistic about the promotion. “I
think it will drive people to stores

(Continued on next page)

Two More Studios to Issue Titles on DVD
(Continued from page 12)

The “Aladdin” soundtrack, released in 1992, has sold more than 2.4 million;
1994’s “The Lion King” sold more than 7.1 million; and 1995’s “Pocahontas” has sold more than 2.3 million copies domestically.

The label also has a rich history of

catalog it hopes to highlight with the

Walt-Mart’s exclusive Aero-

Smith EP premium has angered other retailers (see, page 12), those
same names will make the De-
sney-McDonald’s premium product
are reacting with guarded optimism.

Yet Warner calls Ingram is rein-

forcing its commitment to the

For now, Big Idea has

opened a lot of doors for people to reju-

(Continued from March 15, 1997)

BILLYCIOUR MARCH 15, 1997
NEW YORK—Viacom reports strong financials for MTV last year but lower profits from its Blockbuster Video operation.

In the fourth quarter, Viacom took a $83.3 million charge against profit to cover restructuring costs for the troubled music web. Of that amount, $88.9 million is for the closing of 50 unprofitable music stores and the move of Blockbuster headquarters from New York to Los Angeles, Calif., to Dallas, and $8.4 million is for a write-off on music inventory.

Viacom's fourth-quarter cash flow (earnings before inter- est, taxes, amortization, and depreci- ation) fell to $4.1 million from $16.9 million in the year before, as revenue rose to $203.1 million from $201.3 million. For the full year, there was a negative cash flow of $7.5 million on $775 million in revenue, compared with a cash flow of $33.1 million on $585.2 million in revenue the year before. The number of stores decreased to 495 at year's end from 522 the year before.

Viacom's Blockbuster Video fared better than the company thought it would. During that period, cash flow rose 3.4% to $193.6 million from $187.1 million, as revenue increased 2.2% to $3.4 billion from $3.3 billion. For the year, though, cash flow fell 1.5% to $773 million on a 2.9% rise in revenue to $13.9 billion. The company attributes the decline to "increased rental tape amortization costs."

Revenue for worldwide video stores rose 6.3% on a 5.2% rise for the year. The total number of global franchised and company-owned video stores increased from 3,517 from 4,513 the year before.

MTV Networks proved to be a cash cow for Viacom. Cash flow for the quarter rose 15.8% to $171.3 million, with revenue up 11.5% to $641.2 million, due in part to Nickelodeon, rose 45.1% in the quarter to $176.3 million and 29.8% for the year to $522.2 million. Revenue rose 29.6% to $389.2 million for the year, compared with a 25.5% rise to $1.13 billion for the year.

The company indicates that earning- before-interest, taxes, amortization, and start-up costs of MTV offshore M2 and international expansion had not been factors. At year's end, 967 million U.S. households received MTV, 56.1% more than the year before, and MTV Asia jumped to 47 million households from 26.6 million. MTV Europe increased to 151 million subscribers from 153.1 million the year before, and MTV Asia's 47 million households from 26.6 million. MTV's reports a strong domestic home video perfor- mance of "Mission: Impossible," "The First Wife Club," and "Star Trek: First Contact."

Overall, New York-based Viacom reports a whopping $237.4 million in revenue for the quarter, and Warner Bros. reported $544 million write-off on its video game publisher, Virgin Interactive Entertainment. The company is try- ing to refocus Warner Bros. on video game publishing, Virgin Interactive. Viacom says the write-offs "include the anticip- ated loss on the disposition and operating losses of the interactive game operations...and costs to refocus Virgin Interactive on the more profitable segments of the game business."

For the full year, Viacom reports net income of $1.2 billion on $12.1 billion in revenue, compared with $222.5 million on $10.9 billion in reve- nue the year before.

After the year ended, Viacom announced the acquisition of the radio station group to Evergreen Media for $1.07 billion cash.

U2 TOUR TIX, ALBUM OFF TO GOOD STARTS

(Continued from page 12)

As strong as sales of "Pop" appear to be, some retailers said they would have difficulty taking the "Pop" with the CD and H suburban distribu- tor PolyGram provided price- and-positioning support Billboard, Feb. 15. "Certainly the move has an impact," says the manager of a major retail chain who asked not to be identified. "To what extent will it become much more of a pattern? That's what record labels are really key to the record. We put it on sale, and we located it in the front of our stores, but we need to be very aggressive in pricing it so as we would have if we had the dollars."

In the U.K., HMV head of rock and pop Jonathan Rice was pleased with the early performance of "Pop. "We did as much on Monday [March 3] as we had hoped to do in March," he says. "In fairness to Island, they don't seem to have gone too heavily on the shipment, and the drop-off from Mon- day was not too great. It was only an indication that they're probably looking at [total first-week U.K. sales of] something like 175,000. It's on a par with 'Zoomops,' not an outstanding debut."

As expected, "Pop" debuted to great excitement in U2's hometown of Dublin. Eight of 19 record stores opened at midnight on Sunday, March 2, to sell the set: three in Dublin, two in Limerick, and one each in Tallaght, Galway, and Sligo. In Germany, within two days of the March 8 release of "Pop" on Mercury, the album hit No. 1 on the "trend charts," and in retail early-warning system Phonom.

Early retail response also appears to be "reasonable," according to retailers selling "Pop."

This story was compiled from reports by Mary Veronesi, Digital Media Manager; Melissa Neuman in New York; Eileen Fitzpatrick in Los Angeles; Mike McGee for Video Business, and Adam White in London; Ken Stewart in Dublin; Steve McClure in Tokyo; Wolfgang Spahr in Hamburg; Mark De-Vecchio in Milan; and Cécile Tessener in Paris.

REP/PGD DEAL

(Continued from page 12)

Stay intact.

Rob Simmonds, CEO at REP, says the "primary reason for cutting the deal with PGD is, it gets us out of the frightful credit risk business, which, in the current environment, is a very big con- cern for a small company like ours. It will put us in a net-healthy position. We feel we have a great reputation to provide the services that we are contracting to buy from them."

Simmons adds that the deal allows the company to "enjoy the benefit of a large, mature information system and state-of-the-art technology. REP opened a modern distribution center in Indianapolis two years ago."

REP was formed five years ago when Rounder and Rykodisc joined forces to purchase Precision Distribution. But the deal between the two soured, and Rounder pulled out, leaving Ryko with a 50% share of the company.

In addition to sister company Ryko, REP distributes such labels as Green Linnet and Evidence. As a result of the deal, Simmonds' position will be eliminated, but he will remain aboard as a consultant to the company and will probably spend more time overseeing the company's East Side Digital imprint.

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**Viacom: MTV Profits High; Blockbuster Disappoints**

**BY DON JEFFREY**

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**WARNER BROS., REPRISE STAFFS CUT**

(Continued from page 15)

As one departing staffer says, "You find out today, you leave today." Warner Bros. Records, Inc., chairman/CEO (U.S.) Russ Thyret said, "Over the course of its history, Warner Bros. Records has been a successful, artist-oriented, and com- petitive organization. In order to refocus Warner Bros. in Hanover that we must streamline our operations, including the very difficult decision to downsize our work force...This action was not taken lightly, but rather, in a manner that is consistent with the strategic goals of the company."

Like many labels, Warner Bros. has felt the sting of industry consolidation. Only 1996 release to hit No. 1. On The Billboard 200 last year was Van Halen's highest-grossing product, "Best Of Volume I."

"It’s one of those songs that has a lot more than youth appeal," says Winston. "Sure, they are young, but the music goes far beyond a [teen-age] crowd."

"Biv 10/Moton will service the title track April 22. A clip for the song, which is being shot this month, will be serviced four weeks prior to its radio impact date in keeping with the suc- cessful strategy we used for "Get It Together."

**MCDONALD'S TO OFFER DISNEY COMPILATIONS**

(Continued from page 116)

buy the full-length albums," the label says. John Michael, music manager for Biv 10/Moton, says that "we're participating in certain markets but" declined to comment further until he received the full details on the promo- nation from Walt Disney Records.

Bessolo says the label has "no spec- ific hard-and-fast programs" for retailers related to the promotion, but the label's sales representatives will be working with the retailers "so that they can ride the crest of consumer aware- ness" generated by the campaign. But the label also points out that its plan won't generate the kind of hostility from retailers that resulted from the EMI-M1 campaign.

"This is about a brand, not individual artists," Bessolo says. "We are cel- ebrating Disney music vs. selling a particular artist's album. We think that will create great retail, not all businesses, whether it's the read-along product, sing-along product, or soundtracks.
ALISHA'S ATTIC
(Continued from page 15)

for a new act.

Christian Smith, head of music at top 40 outlet Key 103 Manchester, has plaidlisted all three Alisha's Attic singles and says the duo now has a distinctive sound. "Now that they're on the third single, it's quite obvious it's them," he says. "At the time of year the record company launched them, a lot of new things were being launched, but a few other groups had one hit and disappeared. They seem to have kept it going."

At retail, HMV head of rock and pop Jonathan Rees says of the album, "(Mercy) has done quite well with it, because they released it just before Christmas when it could have totally lost but it didn't. I was quite skeptical about them, but it carries on, and it looks like the album could have a good bit of life left in it throughout the year."

Rees reveals that sales at HMV through March 5 gave "Indestructible" a No. 12 midweek in-store position.

On Feb. 26, the sisters Poole left for a monthlong international promotional trip, taking in Japan and Australia. "Me and Shelle just want to get back on the tour bus," says Karen Poole, noting that after their initial British live dates at the end of 1995, another U.K. tour is planned.

Stateside, the single "I Am, I Feel" is going to modern rock radio April 7, to be followed by a push at top 40, according to a U.S. label executive. An import promotional CD that included nonalbum B-sides has been sent to college radio and specialty stations. The band will play some U.S. shows in May and launch a full statewide tour in the summer.

For all their record success, Karen Poole says, "I don't think people really appreciate us until they've seen us live. The album's quite produced and programmed, but we come across much more exciting onstage."

Such was the case when Alisha's Attic was featured at the time of its chart debut on Channel 4's new-discontinued live music series "The White Room," performing the album track of that name, which is slated to be the duo's fourth single.

The sisters wrote all 13 tracks on the album with Terry Martin, with publishing by PolyGram Music. Karen Poole says they are already well advanced on songs for the second album. "We knew Terry from school," she adds. "We do the programming together. Shelleie usually does acoustic guitar and the melody, and I do the lyrics. Working with Dave [Stewart] was pretty daunting. But he's a really cool guy. He made us right at home, and he sprinkled the fairy dust on top of what we'd already done." The fact has been downplayed in much of their publicity, but Karen and Shelleie are the daughters of Brian Poole, founder of '60s chart stars the Tremeloes. "I don't think the fact that dad was in music is seen much difference," says Karen. "We left home when we were 15, 16. We really wanted to do it for ourselves. We're genuinely shocked by the way it's gone for a debut album, but people don't realize we were working in pubs and clubs for seven or eight years before we got a record deal."

Adds Berman of the wide support for his protégés, "It reiterates that a record company shouldn't, and can't, impose an image on an act. That look, the whole personality of the project, is completely natural."

Assistance in preparing this story was provided by Terri Horne in New York.

Billboard MARCH 15, 1997
### Greatest Gainer

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>„THE GAP Band“</td>
<td>I Can't Help Myself</td>
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### New

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### Top Albums

1. *UFO* by Pink Floyd
2. *Dark Side of the Moon* by Pink Floyd
3. *Hysteria* by REO Speedwagon
4. *The Wall* by Pink Floyd
5. *Appetite for Destruction* by Guns N’ Roses

### Billboard 200

**March 15, 1997**

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<td>Guns N’ Roses</td>
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<td>REO Speedwagon</td>
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<td>Achtung Baby</td>
<td>U2</td>
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### Heatseeker Impact

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### Soundtrack

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### Album Sales

- **UFO** by Pink Floyd, 51 weeks at #1
- **Appetite for Destruction** by Guns N’ Roses, 44 weeks at #2
- **Hysteria** by REO Speedwagon, 39 weeks at #3
- **Dark Side of the Moon** by Pink Floyd, 36 weeks at #4
- **Achtung Baby** by U2, 30 weeks at #5

### Billboard 200

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- **Hysteria** by REO Speedwagon, 39 weeks at #3
- **Dark Side of the Moon** by Pink Floyd, 36 weeks at #4
- **Achtung Baby** by U2, 30 weeks at #5
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224 stores in two years and reported annual losses totaling more than $30 million. Its stock had sunk from $14.75 per share on its IPO last October to $8.50 per share.

But for the fourth fiscal quarter, which ended Feb. 3, Trans World reported a net loss of $14.7 million on $180.7 million in revenue compared with a loss of $10 million on $197.6 million in revenue in the same period a year before. For the entire fiscal year, net profit was $7.1 million on revenue of $481.6 million. Sales were down because there were fewer stores and days (52 weeks vs. 53 the previous fiscal year).

Sales for stores open at least a year were up 10% for the year and 4% for the quarter. Although analysts generally believe 2% same-store growth is weak, they consider it good news for the weak retailing environment.

And the stock, which trades on Nasdaq, has rebounded in recent weeks to as high as $11 a share, outpacing all other publicly traded retailers.

Trans World’s results, in fact, are in stark contrast to the weak financials released by other publicly owned music retailers, Musicland, Spec’s Music, and National Record Mart. And now Vivian, who is the last vestige of the chain Blockbuster Music had negative cash flow in 1996.

Edward A. White, analyst with M.J. Dion & Co., said, “Basically, the real story at Trans World is that their cash flow is up. It was remarkable. For the full period, their cash flow was probably stronger than it’s ever been.”

Analysts concur with this assessment. Trans World’s long-term debt has declined to over $8 million from $60 million a year ago, and interest payments have correspondingly fallen. Analysts believe the company may refinance some of Trans World’s long-term debt this year at a lower interest rate, which would boost future net profits. And last year the company had a $570,000 unit-level lending agreement, negotiating with its bankers a new $60 million working capital credit line that has an extended maturity to July 1998.

In addition, the company’s merchandise inventory declined by 16% to $185 million at year end, which executives attribute to the closing of stores, more aggressive pricing, leaner, better-managed operations.

The number of Trans World stores has decreased to 275 by year end from 479 just recently. 40 stores were relocated. But although the store count decreased by 30%, total square footage increased by only 20% to 2 million, Higgins pointed out.

The company announced a restructuring two years ago and took a $21 million fourth-quarter charge then to cover the closing of 179 stores. Last year it took its second restructuring charge, $5.5 million, including the closure of 163 more sites. Of that round, 85 have been closed so far.

However, with the planned relocations and new openings this year, it appears as if Trans World took a conservative approach to its restructuring.

Jeff Brody, senior VP of sales at Mercury Records, says, “If enough people go out of business or their stores close, [Higgins] could fill a void and cut some good leases. I told Bob he’ll have the only chain in history to open its 500th store twice.”

White says, “They’ve exited unprofitable stores, and they’ve also been very good at going to malls where somebody already has a great location has gone bankrupt. They get the spot and an exclusive, so there’ll be no other music retailers in the mall.”

Higgins, in other remarks to the distribution and sales executives, listed steps they could take to help the company sell stronger business.

He urged them not to abandon the cassette, for which sales continue to decline. “We feel there’s a great opportunity if there’s appropriate price,” he said. If prices were lowered, he asserted, demand would increase. For Trans World last year, casettes were 25% of sales, down from 28.9% the year before.

Higgins also urged record company executives to provide better incentives on buying music. To maximize catalog sales, he pressed for better discounts and “creative programs.”

For new releases, he said, “We’re seeing a malleable system. We’re seeing that deals should not end on street date. And he said manufacturers should “consider volume incentive rebates—give us a deal worth renewing.”

In addition to giving awards to labels, distributors, and salespeople, Trans World is celebrating its 25th year of business.
The Allure Of Owning Your Own Label

ARTIST-OWNED LABELS have a long history on the Billboard Hot 100. Three of the most familiar from the '60s are A&M, founded by Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss; Reprise, created by Frank Sinatra; and Apple, started by the Beatles. In the '70s, the Rolling Stones issued "Brown Sugar" as the first single on their Rolling Stones imprint, the Moody Blues transferred over to their own Threshold label, and members of Led Zeppelin sang their own songs. Recent examples include the Allman Brothers Band, who released their own label, and The Black Crowes, who signed to Virgin Records.

Over the years, artist-owned labels have enjoyed significant success. The Billboards Hot 100 chart for the week ending July 11, 1997, included several tracks from artist-owned labels. The highest-charting track from an artist-owned label was "I Want You," by Abba, which reached number 10. Other notable tracks included "Under The Covers" by the Beatles, "The Visitors" by Dr. Teeth and the Motor一张s, "Under The Cover" by the Rolling Stones, and "I Want You" by Abba.

For more information, contact Gary Krebs at 212-531-6778.

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