

DVD

Features are edited by Adam Webb

Most of the top-selling music DVDs feature men and are being bought by men, who are driving the format. *By Adam Woods*

DVD: suits you sir...

Whether because Father's Day is rapidly approaching on June 20, or simply because DVD still mainly appeals to men, last week's music DVD Top 30 gave us a glimpse into a music world where the only women are Tina Turner and the cast of *Les Misérables* and most of the men are aged 50-plus.

Either way, with AC/DC's *Family Jewels* standing proud in the number one position and Queen's long-serving *Live At Wembley*, Thin Lizzy's *Live In Concert*, *Later With Jools Holland - Even Louder* and Queen's *Greatest Video Hits Volume 1* backed up directly behind, just ahead of 23 other male-fronted releases, it appears that the music DVD chart is trying to tell us something profound.

Scanning the forthcoming releases schedule, where Brian Wilson's *Smile* (Warner, June 13) lines up against Mötley Crüe's *Red White and*

Crüe (Universal, May 30), you come away with the same impression - DVDs are products featuring men, bought by men. And even when they do feature female artists, these may still be at least partly for men's benefit.

"The market does seem to definitely increase the week before Father's Day, although it increases on the audio side too," says Derek O'Brien, Universal Music head of music DVD and new formats. "It is probably more by luck than judgement, but we have a *Girls Aloud* DVD coming out that week, which I suppose you could say is perfect Father's Day material as well."

Other markets are certainly growing; among the many male artists who made up last week's music DVD chart were Daniel O'Donnell and Will Young, whose fanbases are clearly more female than male. But the fact is that for most sections of the market, DVD is just a format, whereas for a

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Ben Williams,
Classic Pictures

significant proportion of men, it is an irresistible purchase and a perfect gift. Dads and 50 quid men may not be the only demographic out there, but they certainly seem to be the ones driving it.

"Among music DVD buyers, the biggest demographic is 35 to 50-year-old males," says Spencer Pollard, VP commercial development at Sanctuary Visual Entertainment, whose June 13 releases include a double-disc Emerson Lake & Palmer anthology entitled *Beyond The Beginning* and a compilation DVD under the *Teenage Kicks* banner.

Both products in their own way represent exemplary concepts for a male DVD-buying audience. While *Beyond The Beginning* is the exhaustive archive trawl popularised by blockbusters such as *The Beatles Anthology* and *Led Zeppelin's DVD*, *Teenage Kicks* is the DVD version of the first TV-advertised joint venture between the ever-growing indie giant and EMI. Given that the CD has shipped 112,000 copies to date, Pollard has high hopes for its counterpart, which is released, along with ELP, on June 13.

"It is a really great Father's Day present," he says. "What you see with audio should be reflected with audio-visual, just like around Mother's Day when you get those 'I Love Mum' compilations."

Given the strength of the 30- and 40-something male demographic among DVD buyers, it is little surprise that established players in the rock and catalogue markets such as Sanctuary, Eagle and Snapper have developed a correspondingly muscular presence in DVD over the past few years. Likewise, DVD specialists such as Classic Pictures have emerged to exploit the format.

"Our feeling is that all these classic rock musicians are still selling out when they play live, and their fans are the 50 quid blokes who have got a lot of cash to spend," says Ben Williams, marketing manager at Classic Pictures, whose imminent releases include a live album from *Magnum* and a first release for *Digital Dreams*, a musical fantasy film made by Bill Wyman in the early Eighties starring James Coburn and Richard O'Brien.

Eagle Vision has found success with its ongoing series of DVDs culled from performances at the *Montreux Jazz Festival* and on May 30 it adds new releases from *Joe Cocker*, *Bonnie Raitt*, *George Clinton*, the *Moody Blues* and *Chic* to the catalogue, as well as a UK DVD release for 1998's official *Beach Boys* documentary, *Endless Harmony*.

"I would say the bulk of our catalogue was aimed at males over the age of 25, with exceptions," says Eagle Vision marketing manager Ian Rowe. "It is the area we set out to work in, but in terms of music DVD it also happens to be the biggest chunk of the buying market."

Wienerworld managing director Anthony Broza recalls putting out what he believes was the first VHS compilation of music videos around 20 years ago, and the company continues to oversee a slew of new product.

"We have got an absolute ton of stuff coming out. We are so rocking, we are rolling," says Broza, awash with enthusiasm. Between mid-May and early-June, Wienerworld's releases include live documents of *Public Enemy* (see left), *Iggy Pop*, *The Stranglers*, *Nils Lofgren*, *Graham Parker*, *Rory Gallagher*, *Little Steven* and *Level 42* and, although Broza says any Father's Day tie-in is unintentional, the preponderance of heritage acts makes the fit a good one.

"It was only when I saw Father's Day was coming up that I realised Father's Day was coming up," says Broza. "But we recognise that it is a certain time of year and people want to go and find something that is of relevance."

For his part, Broza believes the music DVD

Public Enemy DVD set to hit a nation of millions

Wienerworld may not be a hip hop specialist, but it has got its hands on an authentic piece of rap history in the form of its *Public Enemy - London Invasion '87 DVD*, released today (May 23), which captures the band at the height of their powers, on their first controversial lap of Europe.

The release was recommended to Wienerworld by its US licensee MVD and the deal was signed with Chuck D himself at this year's Midem. As well as a full concert, recorded in London at what was then the *Hammersmith Odeon*, the DVD features live clips from an Australian tour in 2003, a commentary from the *Public Enemy* frontman, a discography, photo gallery and 5.1 surround sound. What's more, the band have contributed a 19-track audio CD, complete with remixes, to be bundled with the DVD. "It was a particular request of Chuck D and Flavor Flav that we released the DVD and CD together," says Anthony Broza, managing director of Wienerworld. "They wanted to ensure that the fans should be given as much value as possible, so we did it."

The release has been jointly



funded by Wienerworld and MVD from sleeve design to authoring. "It can get mighty expensive on these big projects," says Broza. Reviews so far have been highly positive and wide-ranging, from a double-page spread in *Hip Hop Connection* to

reviews in *Metro* and a variety of music magazines - thanks in part to the availability of Chuck D for interviews.

"It is a big, big title," says Broza, clearly excited. "Man, it's the countdown to Armageddon!"

Public Enemy: clocking in with a slice of rap history

DVD



market is becoming increasingly broad. "There is a huge awareness among younger generations who are discovering music they have never really been introduced to," he says. "We are not doing anything different than anybody else, but we recognise that there is a market out there if you make this repertoire available."

Just as the film industry has busied itself repurposing its history for DVD, many – although by no means all of the music DVDs which pour onto the market on a weekly basis – are drawn from the archives. Previously unreleased concerts are fair game, as are favourites drawn from VHS. Most lucrative of all, perhaps, is previously unavailable material by big-name rock artists, excavated from the vaults.

"I think it is a very big part of the market," says

AC/DC: their Family Jewels DVD proudly stands in number one position

Derek O'Brien. "All you need to do at the moment is look at the likes of AC/DC at number one and Thin Lizzy at number two to see that those kind of heritage acts are very important."

In these nostalgic times, the definition of heritage becomes broader all the time. Last year's Definitely Maybe CD and DVD set has now sold around 250,000 copies, according to Laura Trail, managing director of Metropolis, which produced the release for Sony. What is more, she believes the anniversary edition fed back to sales of the original album, which shifted a further 150,000 copies.

"I always find that really interesting, especially when we are talking to the record companies and they are looking for value for money," says Trail. "If you are trying to persuade them to invest in the format, to capture live footage and interviews and to restore the archive footage and all the rest of these things – and in the case of Oasis, it was a big financial investment – it helps when you can give them figures like that."

The fact that DVD specialists are recognising the potential of timing their releases reflects both the maturity of the market and the increasing resemblance between DVD and catalogue marketing.

"Sanctuary's music DVD catalogue is a fan-based catalogue," says Pollard. "We have Morrissey, we have The Who, we have Rush and Iron Maiden. We don't necessarily step up campaigns around particular events, but that doesn't mean we don't look to release specific titles at the right time."

Certainly, the emergence of joint ventures between labels such as EMI and Sanctuary reflects the recognition that there is money to be

made in the sector and that co-operation can be of mutual benefit. "We have got an idea what we will be working on for other audio and DVD releases [with EMI]," says Pollard, who adds that, JVs or otherwise, a movement in the direction of simultaneous, cross-promotable CD and DVD releases is the way forward for Sanctuary.

"Generally, we do actually think about the DVDs we are releasing and how best we can tie them in with all the other things that are happening," he says. "We try to do as much long-lead marketing as we possibly can."

Another company which has built itself around the DVD process while specialising in fanbase acts in the heritage sector is Classic Pictures, which even operates from Shepperton Studios, formerly owned by The Who and used by countless classic rock acts back in their glory days.

The company has converted a 2,500 sq ft space into a 5.1 recording and filming facility, specifically designed for the creation of DVD material. "It means they can come through the door and, from the conceptualisation of the idea, they can go through pretty much every stage – from recording and menu design to sound mixing and editorial," says Williams.

"If it is a live project, we can record that and then bring them into the studio to film an acoustic session, do interviews, and then you've got your extras. It is basically to get that rock'n'roll feeling back into Shepperton Studios."

Ultimately, content will be made available both on DVD and online via its rockondigital.com website, which in time is destined to showcase both pay-per-view streams, free promotional clips and outtakes from Classic Pictures releases.

Classic Pictures has yet to complete a project using its new facility, which is still undergoing final lighting checks. However, Bernie Marsden and Micky Moody, two members of the original line-up of Whitesnake recently performed an acoustic set on one of the studio's two stages for inclusion as part of a live DVD set due for release later in the year. Of its other DVD releases, Classic plans to follow up the success of 2003's Yesspeak anthology with solo projects for Yes members Jon Anderson and Steve Howe.

Metropolis is another DVD specialist taking the process in-house and disregarding the distinction between production house and DVD label. As well as forthcoming major-label projects such as a Bryan Adams live DVD, filmed for Universal by the studio's M Productions team in Innsbruck and Lisbon, the studio is developing projects of its own.

Punk Attitude, a film directed by Don Letts, which recently premiered at the TriBeCa Film Festival in New York, was commissioned and produced by Metropolis and will be released on DVD through Fremantle in the autumn. "It is a 90-minute film talking through the attitude of punk, with great interviews and great archive footage," says Laura Trail. "We are currently in production on a history of metal as well – we are working our way through the tribes."

Trail also points to the success Metropolis enjoys with highly sophisticated, interactive children's DVDs, bought by mums for their young offspring. Without a doubt, DVD has the power to convert most sections of the market to its charms, and the prospect of an entire generation coming through is clearly good news. But in the meantime, it's dad's hand which is on the controls.

Further gems from Montreux on the way

Given the variable quality of the live-in-concert footage pouring onto the market in DVD form, a rolling contract to produce DVDs filmed at one of the most venerated festivals in the world can be no bad thing. At the end of the month, Eagle Vision releases the next five in its ongoing Montreux Jazz series, bringing their total to 18 and, needless to say, down the years there have been some genuine gems.

"They have filmed the festival every year since they started back in 1967," says Eagle Vision marketing manager Ian Rowe. "One of the titles we put out earlier this year was Ella Fitzgerald from 1969, which is fabulous footage. The early ones are fairly straightforward, two- and three-camera shoots. By the time you look at last year, they were doing nine- and 10-camera shoots and the last six years have all been filmed in high-definition as well."

Rowe freely admits that not all of the big names who have played at the festival over the years are prepared to cooperate with the programme, but he also



says there is a fondness among many of the artists for Montreux, which in some cases translates to close artistic involvement in the end product. "Most of them are keen to help out," says Rowe. "They are good about checking sound and checking footage and so on. Inevitably, some of the titles we would like to get are not available, but equally, sometimes we are surprised by some of the

ones we do manage to get."

Rowe expects the series to grow to about 30 by Christmas. The five due for release on May 30 are Bonnie Raitt from 1977, the Moody Blues from 1991, Joe Cocker from 1987 and, from last year, Nile Rodgers with Chic minus Bernard Edwards, and George Clinton with the current combined incarnation of Parliament and Funkadelic.

George Clinton: show with the current incarnation of Parliament and Funkadelic is released on May 30