

dvdproduction

Filling the Pipeline with Music DVD

by Larry Jaffee

OAKS, PA—Music Video Distributors, Inc. (MVD) has been in business since 1987, doing exactly what its name implies. A few years ago, at the dawn of DVD, MVD realized that many of its VHS music video customers probably wouldn't want to go through the hassle or risk of repurposing their content for the new technology.

"We had years of established relationships," explained MVD vice president Ed Seaman, whose father Tom founded the company and still serves as president. "We told them, 'We can do this for you,'" he added.

To date, MVD has distributed more than 60 DVD-Video titles, all music-oriented, and much of it unauthorized documentaries about current hitmakers such as Britney Spears and Eminem. In 2001, it has an ambitious production slate to complete 37 titles. Currently, MVD is ranked about sixth among companies releasing DVD music product, behind heavyweights like Sony, Warner, Image and Pioneer, but it has its sights moving up to third, given what's on the drawing board.

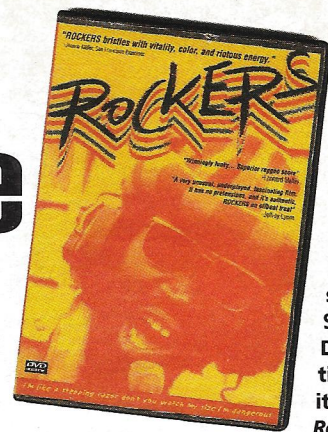
The company distributes to retailers another 30,000 music video titles on DVD and VHS, but it also obtains the rights to some music-oriented films and programs itself. These range from little-seen classics like the reggae movie *Rockers*, to Rod Stewart & The Faces' last concert with special guest Keith Richards, to vintage film student footage of Pink Floyd founder/psychedelic cult figure Syd Barrett.

For those deals that MVD is working on the behalf of other rightsholders, generally the company takes "a healthy percentage per unit sold," Seaman said, pointing out that it's up to the rightsholder to secure mechanical synch licenses for the content.

Of the titles that MVD has brought to DVD, "we've done 30 different deals," he said, noting that the splits can be worked many different ways.

Seaman also dispels the notion that DVD has to be an expensive proposition. "You can do a decent DVD for a couple of thousand dollars, including authoring and encoding," he said, qualifying his remarks by adding "not necessarily with a 5.1 mix."

Of the aforementioned *Rockers*, "we probably spent \$3,300 [on the DVD production aspects]," Seaman said. That makes the DVD even more impressive since the movie not only provides a fictional account of the unsavory Jamaican music business with a Who's Who of the genre's stars (including Peter Tosh,



Music Video Distributors spent only \$3,300 on the DVD production aspects of its impressive *Rockers* release.



Ed Seaman (left) joined by some of his Music Video Distributors staff at last month's National Recording Merchandisers Association convention in Orlando, FL.

Burning Spear, Bunny Wailer, Third World and Gregory Isaacs to name a few) contributing songs and cameo appearances, but also a digital remaster from the original 35mm film and seven bonus audio tracks, a Rasta patois glossary and a biography section of the performers. The low-budget MVD title easily rivals Criterion Collection's deluxe DVD release last year of *The Harder They Come*, which covered similar musical ground, and most likely cost much more to create.

MVD expects that its DVD titles will sell anywhere from 2,000 to 15,000 units, and most of its deals are structured "so that the company can break even around a thousand units," Seaman said.

He pointed out that most of MVD's deals are for five years, allowing it to reap the proceeds from titles for a decent amount of time.

Of the unauthorized titles, such as *Kiss Unauthorized*, which rely heavily on backstage footage and interviews with people who know the stars, MVD is not involved in the production at all, Seaman noted. "They're almost embarrassing, but they pay the bills," he commented, adding that MVD checked with its lawyers regarding the legality of such releases before proceeding.

MVD outsources its DVD production tasks to two other parties: Third Wave Media, a CD/DVD broker based in Los Angeles, which arranges for authoring replication; and Provac, a Toronto, Canada-based replicator that also has in-house authoring capabilities.

Seaman is satisfied with the service he's receiving from both, which is what he tells the 20 to 30 replication and authoring companies that routinely pitch him for his DVD business.

Music Video Distributors, Inc.
tel: 800-888-0486
web: www.musicvideodistributors.com

Commitment to Quality DVD Production
Everything We Do.

Sony Disc Manufacturing

CD-ROM / CD / Hybrid Internet Discs

Service Specialists:

Digital Authoring Graphic Design

Packaging / Distribution & Fulfillment

Procurement / Inventory Management

Sony Disc Manufacturing

800 358 7316 http://sdm.sony.com

© Sony Disc Manufacturing. All rights reserved.
is a registered trademark of Sony Corporation.

The future of DVD bonding technology is here ... NOW!

The Situation: DVD bonding requirements are growing more complex—e.g. sputtered layers of DVD-14 and DVD-18.

The Brute Force Approach: To cure multiple layers with CW, you really crank the heat. But how much longer can you push it before quality and yield are so badly compromised your customers won't accept it?

The Elegant Solution: CoolCureXL. Pulsed UV technology with lower heat. Pioneered by Xenon Corp. and acclaimed by DVD production companies like WEA (WAMO). CoolCureXL is working in more than 50 DVD installations worldwide.

100 XENON-XL

Woburn, MA 01801 U.S.A.
934 - Fax: (781) 933-8804
www.dvdbonding.com

XENON