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## THE INDIES: MVD TO SELL AUDIO

DVD Distributor Embraces The CD

BY TODD MARTENS

As much as the music DVD industry has grown over the years, it's still paltry when compared to the CD market. Music Video Distributors (MVD) senior VP of sales and marketing Ed Seaman long saw the allure of selling CDs, but held out as long as he could.

"My concern has always been that if we're doing audio as well as DVD, maybe we lose our edge," Seaman says. "Then we're just like everyone else."

Those fears have been allayed, Seaman says, at the urging of a number of the DVD companies the distributor handles. This month, MVD will be rebranded MVD Entertainment Group, and launch MVD Audio. To start, MVD will handle releases from German label Inakustic and Polish label Metal Mind.

Some initial releases include albums from Allison Bernard and America on Inakustic and titles from Behemoth, Immolation and Artrosis on Metal Mind. Long term, Seaman plans to sign some third-party U.S. labels, and will start with upstart Universal Warning Records.

"We're not looking at breaking artists," he says. "We're looking at established acts and established labels. We're going to be working with a lot of our current partners, particularly those in Europe."

Seaman isn't daunted by the challenge of a crowded marketplace. He looks forward to combining CD and DVD packages as well as securing audio content that MVD had already distributed on DVD. If the CD side of the business is slow at first, Seaman says his staff has a thick skin.

"For us, and for our sales and marketing people," Seaman says, "music video was the dog of the industry forever. It wasn't until a few years ago that music video became one of the saviors of the industry, so our staff is used to banging on doors and getting doors slammed in our faces."

**REGIONAL TERMS:** As one company enters the music distribution landscape, another newcomer just enjoyed its first success. In early May, the debut from the Terms, "Small Town Computer Crash," bowed at No. 11 on Billboard's Heatseekers chart.

Interestingly, the album, which was released via Maple Jam Records and Ken Antonelli's Icon Music Entertainment Services, has seen the majority of its sales come from the chain level. "Small Town Computer Crash" has sold 7,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and approximately 85% of those sales have occurred at chains, most notably Trans World Entertainment's FYE outlets.

"There are certainly a lot of great bands that come at the indie level," Antonelli says. "But it's not only about selling indie bands to indie accounts. A lot of the buying public shops at chains."

With a sound not too dissimilar from rock acts Matchbox Twenty and Goo Goo Dolls, the Greg Ladanyi-produced "Small Town Computer Crash" should certainly appeal to a mainstream demo. Antonelli describes Trans World as one of his "retail partners," and the direct relationship with the chain is apparent by clicking on the Terms' FYE-branded Web site.

It's not easy for an indie band to tap into a chain audience right from the start, but the Terms have been playing up their association with Louisiana State University, which some of the band members attend. The act's song "Welcome to the Now" appears in a commercial for LSU, and about 80% of the album's sales come from southern Louisiana.

In addition, the act has been promoting the set by playing high schools and talking to kids about the importance of attending college. It sounds like a tactic that could either win new fans or inspire spitballs, but Antonelli is pleased with the early results. "They do a lot of promoting and handshaking and autograph signing," he says. &bull;&bull;&bull;&bull;

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