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## MVD Entertainment Group

The Little Indie That Could

This year, the MVD Entertainment Group, which operates in the US (just outside of the great city of Philadelphia), launched an audio division entitled MVD Audio. As crazy as that sounds in lieu the diminishing amount of record stores (aka the collapse of Tower Records), it's been a great ride so far says Ed Seaman (COO).

"We are off to a great start with MVD Audio, despite being in an industry where CD sales are declining, and shelf space for the format is also reducing," said Ed Seaman. "As expected we have been able to smoothly transition into the Audio business since all of the infrastructure was in place operationally, and our sales & marketing team has been in touch with the relevant contacts all along. We have taken an organic growth approach to the division, primarily relying on existing partners to provide content."

MVD has already solidified its reputation as a world leader in the distribution of Music DVDs, and this is essentially the bread & butter of their operations. This year, MVD Visual released the second most Music DVDs in North America compared to any other label, only outdone by a little company called Universal. Overall, they are fourth on the list (DVD Release Report), and on track to overcome Image Entertainment next year to become the number three producer. That's not bad for a once small family owned & operated business... It all began 20 years ago with the hard work of Ed's father, Tom.

"My father has been in the music business since the '60s," said Ed Seaman. "His father George used to own a record store in New York called Record Hunter. My family moved from New York in the 70s to work for Sam Goody, who obtained Franklin Music. My father was brought down to run their merchandise division. In 1986, he started this company. What he envisioned with the big picture disc back in the day is that you could see music as well as hear it. Some people thought he was crazy, but that was his focus - to see the music."

Tom held on to the long-time supplier and customer list he accumulated over the early years, which proved to be extremely beneficial to the upstart of MVD.

"He had this list and when the DVD business took off, things exploded for us," Ed Seaman said. "The music DVD has more exposure than videotape. We began finding more partners, both internationally and in North America."

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Ed said he joined the family business after beginning his career as a restaurant manager in the late 80s. "My father invited me to come on board," he said. "Back then, it was four family members and one other person. I began my day unloading merchandise, and then get on the phone for orders. We started to expand in 1989 and now we have a good core group of people."

Along with Ed and Tom, other family members can be seen hard at work or walking the office corridor which boasts the DVD release posters of GG Allin, The Dwarves, NY Dolls, and other seminal punk outfits - as well as representations from all other genres. One may encounter Tom's wife, Elinor Seaman (treasurer), or Ed's sister, Eve Edwards (chief financial officer) in the middle of it all. It's a special thing to see in action really... And a rare thing.

This year MVD Visual was one of the largest producers of Music DVDs, which is quite a feat for an indie label. Their winners include "loudQuietloud - a film about The Pixies", "Bad Brains - Live at CBGB 1982", "Not A Photograph - the Mission of Burma story", "Wendy O. Williams & The Plasmatics - 10 Years of Revolutionary Rock & Roll", and so on... But what's ahead for 2007?

"For MVD Visual, some of the more exciting projects include a Johnny Winter DVD series, focusing first on his 60s and 70s performances," said Ed Seaman. "Also coming - a Stryper DVD (yes, Stryper), a new Nashville Pussy DVD, a live Moogfest DVD (featuring Keith Emerson & Jan Hammer), the Queens, Cracker & Camper Van Beethoven, a new edition of GG Allin - Hated, and much much more. As for MVD Audio, we are taking on a somewhat more aggressive approach, and expect some frontline releases. Notably, we are reissuing a batch of Roadrunner CDs through Metal Mind. Also in the works is a new release from Marillion, which will be out in early April."

By **Loaf Adams**

This release was published on 19 Dec 2006.



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