

Island's PJ Harvey **Brings** A Solo Love' SEE PAGE 11

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC, VIDEO AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT

**FEBRUARY 18, 1995** 

#### **Comedy Charts Big With** ADVERTISEMENTS **Jerky Boys, Foxworthy Sets** by the New York-based phone prank-■ BY BRETT ATWOOD

LOS ANGELES-Select and Warner Bros. are laughing all the way to the

bank as comedy albums by the Jerky Boys, Jeff Foxworthy, and Adam Sandler continue to be hot sellers.

This week, three hit comedy albums crack the top half of The Billboard 200.

In Stores

February 28th

**CYRUS** 

CHESTNUT

the dark before

the dawn the follow-up to his critically acclaimed debut album "REVELATION"

next era of jazz piano"¤

STREET DATE: FEB. 14



Classic comedy recordings also are finding new life at retail, as Warner Archives, Loose Cannon, and Rhino have reissued albums that have never before appeared on CD.

"The Jerky Boys," the first album

## Oh Boy! It's A **New Prine Album**

BY PETER CRONIN

NASHVILLE—The release of John



Prine's "Lost Dogs & Mixed Blessings" could finally bring the artist commercial success to match the critical acclaim he has received over the course of 11 albums.

Prine's career has spanned nearly a quarter century, during which he has recorded for la-(Continued on page 119)



SEE PAGE 77

sters, moves 81-75 in its 90th week on The Billboard 200, while the followup,"The Jerky Boys 2," is up 49-45 in

its 25th week. "The Jerky Boys" has sold 922,000 units, while "The Jerky

Boys 2" has moved 719,000 copies, according to Sound-

Scan.



album to the film, "The Jerky Boys: The Movie" leaps 86-79 and has sold 27,000 units, according to SoundScan.

Sandler's gold-certified "They're All Gonna Laugh At You" on Warner Bros. is No. 12 on Heatseekers in its 68th week on the new and developing artist chart. The "Saturday Night Live" comedian has sold 521,000 units of his album, according to SoundScan.

Foxworthy's platinum "You Might (Continued on page 121)

## **Falling Stocks Zap Retail** Ongoing Price War Hobbles Chains

BY DON JEFFREY

NEW YORK—A persistent price war has depressed the stock prices of music retailers, chopping more than half a billion dollars in market value from companies like Musicland Stores, Trans World Entertainment, Spec's Music, and National Record Mart. Now some of these companies and their shareholders have begun to take actions that could significantly change the retail climate this year.

On Feb. 2, Trans World, the U.S. music retailer with the second-largest number of stores (700), announced it was closing 129 unprofitable stores, relocating 14 others, and taking a \$21million pretax hit against fourth-quarter profits. This move was taken after the stock hit an all-time low of \$5.50 a share. The stock fell even further, to \$4.81, after the restructuring was disclosed.

On Feb. 1, a major shareholder in Musicland, the biggest music retailer in the country with 1,386 stores, said it had increased its stake to 8.8% and was

and labels that concentrate in the

genre, such as Harmonia Mundi and

Hyperion.

planning to meet with management to discuss ways to pump up the stock's price. This investor-a hedge fund called SC Fundamental Value Fund L.P.—also said that it was meeting with undisclosed third parties and that it might attempt to acquire the chain (Billboard, Feb. 11). Musicland's stock also had dropped to an all-time low, \$6.75, in recent weeks, before moving back up to about \$9 by press time.

These actions revived speculation that Trans World and Musicland could be takeover targets because the value that the stock market put on them was lower than the value of their assets. Possible buyers, according to speculation on Wall Street, could be bookstore or consumer-electronics chains, many (Continued on page 65)

## **Arista's Lennox** Is A 'Medusa'

BY DOMINIC PRIDE

Bob Marley, Paul Simon, and Joe



Strummer are among the great names who have helped Annie Lennox transform herself from oper-

> to the serpentheaded figure of Greek mythology.

atic prima donna

Surprised? Don't be. Lennox is preparing for the March 6

worldwide launch of her new album "Medusa," the follow-up to 1993's "Diva," which sold 5 million copies (Continued on page 120)



SEE PAGE 45

## Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion, **Others Toast Purcell's 300th**

BY HEIDI WALESON

In the U.S., which lacks the great choral tradition that has kept British composer Henry Purcell's work an integral part of mainstream U.K. classical music, interest in exploiting the 300th anniversary of his death seems mostly confined to the hardcore early-music crowd.

But significant events are planned this year by

major early-music presenters, such as the Boston Early Music Festival,

who died Nov. 21, 1695, at age 36, was astonishingly prolific. His exquisite and compelling music includes magnificent choral anthems and the first English opera, "Dido And Aeneas," to say nothing of chamber and keyboard music: dozens of songs.

This tercentenary leaves

much to celebrate: Purcell,

from the celestial to the bawdy; and (Continued on page 101)



SEE PAGE 69

You

never had a

like this





# **Brits** Around The World

GOOD NEWS Continued from page 45

"There has been such a strong alternative movement in the States that it has tended to keep a lot of other bands out of America," says Paul Burger, chairman of Sony Music U.K.

"That's the challenge that non-U.S. artists have been finding. It's a '90s phenomenon, and how long it will go on is impossible to say."

But meanwhile, back in the U.K., adds Burger, "Creatively, it is getting more exciting. You're hearing new bands who are interesting and have something to say."

The alternative-rock phenomenon in America emerged from local music scenes in cities such as Seattle where bands could nurture their talent for years in relative isolation. A similar scene is impossible to imagine in Britain. "The glare of the spotlight is on you before you can blink," observes Roger Ames, chairman of PolyGram Records U.K. "That's just a fact of life of living in a media-saturated market."

However, the British record business has finally begun to regard its own music press with a bit more perspective. The days when reading reviews in Melody Maker and the New Musical Express substituted for real A&R scouting

Much of Britain's future artist-development abroad will hinge on the success of its acts at home. "I think it's 90% down to the demographics of a country at the time," says Ames. "We have a healthy surge in the youth market now."

Among the most notable trends evident in the statistics presented at the BPI meeting is that British repertoire continues to do much better in Europe overall than in North America.

"The record companies all start with a very global view," says John Preston, chairman of BMG Records U.K.. But he and other label executives confirm that opportunities to build international careers for U.K. acts are greater across the English Channel than across the Atlantic. "And our simple logistical barriers are much lower there," he adds.

Within Britain, a good deal of the artist development continues to take place through A&R-savvy independent labels such as Creation, Beggar's Banquet, Acid Jazz, Mute, 4AD, Pulse 8, Internal and China, to name but a few. Within the U.K., each label reaches retail through independent distributors such as Pinnacle, 3MV, Vital and Grapevine. Outside of Britain, these companies also recognize the difficulty of breaking new artists.

"We've always paid a great deal of attention to the rest of the world outside the U.K.," says Daniel Miller, founder of Mute Records, noting that his label's artists hail from territories ranging from Australia to Slovenia, as well as from the U.K. Mute drew notice in Britain in 1994 with the signing of Mercury Music Prize nominees Prodigy. But the company also has bolstered its A&R operation in the U.S., and Miller describes Mute today as a British-based independent record company with a global agenda. "When we're planning artists' careers," he says, "it's very much on an international basis."

That vision is shared by Britain's music publishers, who also are involved in developing international careers of U.K. acts before a sin gle record has been cut. Peter Reichardt, managing director of EMI Music Publishing, recalls that his company signed Elastica in 1992. The band's debut album, on Deceptive Records in the U.K. and through Geffen worldwide, bows next month. "I think we have a responsibility to develop artists just like a record company," says

Publisher-led artist development in the U.K. has continued to involve links between recordings and other media with international licensing potential, as illustrated by Zomba Music's work in the past year on the soundtrack to the U.K. television series "Crocodile Shoes" featuring Zomba writer Jimmy Nail. Zomba managing director Steven Howard recounts how the company was involved in all aspects of music supervision for the series, from teaming Nail with co-writer Brendan Croker to providing incidental music from the Zomba library. The series soundtrack and title song have been hits in the U.K., and it's expected the series will be licensed to Australia and Canada in the coming year, to Nail's benefit.

Britain also continues to serve as an international launching point for artists of other nationalities signed through U.K. record or publishing companies. Dave Massey, creative and international manager for Hit & Run Music, cites the company's achievement in the past year with Marie Claire D'Ubaldo, an Argentina-born singer who is signed to a publishing deal with Hit & Run, has a record deal with Polydor in the U.S. and went to No. 1 in Italy with her single "The Rhythm Is Magic.'

Among U.K. music companies, the retail chains of HMV and Virgin also must be acknowledged for their international presence. They can play a role in building the profile of British talent abroad. For example, the Charlatans, the Proclaimers, Eternal, M People, Take That, Boy George, Del Amitri and Hothouse Flowers are among the U.K. acts who have staged in-store performances in the past year at HMV locations from North America to Australia.

"We see this involvement as an essential element in the relationship between us as music retailers [and] artists and record companies Continued on page 50

## THE NOMINEES

The following are the nominations in key categories for the 1995 Brit Awards. The winners will be announced Feb 20 at the awards ceremony at London's Alexandra Palace. A broadcast of the event, produced by Initial TV, will be shown the following evening by Carlton Television on Britain's ITV network, and syndicated to international markets by PolyGram Television International.

#### **BEST ALBUM BY A BRITISH ARTIST**



Pink Floyd's album "The Division Bell" was the blockbuster of BEST BRITISH NEWCOMER 1994 by a British act, selling more than 7 million copies worldwide and reaching No. 1 in some 15 countries, from the U.S. to Europe, Australia to

Blur - "Parklife" (Food/EMI) Eternal - "Always & Forever" (EMI) Massive Attack - "Protection" (Wild

Oasis - "Definitely Maybe" (Creation/ Pink Floyd - "The Division Rell" (FMI)

1994 Winner: Stereo MC's -"Connected" (4th & B'way/Island)

Eternal PJ & Duncan **Portishead** 1994 Winner: Gabrielle

#### **BEST BRITISH MALE ARTIST**

**Eric Clapton Elvis Costello** Paul Weller 1994 Winner: Sting

#### **BEST BRITISH FEMALE ARTIST**

Kate Bush Des'ree Michelle Gayle Eddi Reader Lisa Stansfield 1994 Winner: Dina Carroll

#### **BEST BRITISH GROUP**

**Eternal** M People Pink Floyd

1994 Winner: Stereo MC's

#### BEST BRITISH DANCE ACT

**Brand New Heavies** Eternal Massive Attack M People Prodigy 1994 Winner: M People

#### **BEST BRITISH PRODUCER**

**Ed Buller** Flood **Nellee Hooper** Trevor Horn 1994 Winner: Brian Eno

#### **BEST BRITISH VIDEO**

Blur - "Parklife" (Food/EMI) Jamiroquai - "Return Of The Space Cowboy" (Sony) The Rolling Stones - "Love Is Strong" (Virgin) Seal - "Prayer For The Dying" (ZTT/Warner) Suede - "The Wild Ones" (Nude) 1994 Winner: Take That - "Pray" (RCA)

#### VIDEO DIRECTORS Continued from page 45

seems perfectly reasonable, normal and accessible, and the [American] art director or the cameraman will be deeply shocked by what I'm suggesting," he says. (Christopherson's video for the Body Count track "Born Dead," featuring a 4,500-gallon vat of

blood, was not serviced to American outlets.)

"It's been educational for me and it makes my work stronger that I'm not tied down to convention," he says.

Unfortunately, convention often is the name of the game when it comes to video commissioning and programming, especially in the U.S., says Chris-topherson. "I've made several videos that play extensively on MTV Europe and not MTV U.S.," he explains, citing "Born Dead" as an example.

Film-to-video-to-film: Julien Temple

However, the significance of American air-

play may decline in the future, as MTV, VH1, the Box, CMT and TNN expand into international territories and adjust their programming accordingly. Meanwhile, such networks as MuchMusic in Canada, Viva in Germany, Z-TV in Sweden and Channel V in Asia,

among others, are steadily gaining viewers in their own markets. For now, "Everyone wants to make it in America," says the British

director known as Zanna, who works in the Sublime division of London's Limelight Films. "But I think the U.K. is 'where the heart is.' This is where you can do the most interesting work in the world."

Few directors are lucky enough to make it in America while maintaining a career outside the production hubs of New York and L.A. But Matthew Amos, a British director represented in the U.S. and U.K. by Propaganda Films, gained acclaim in 1991 when his video for the Jesus Jones hit "Right Here Right Now" exploded via MTV in the

Since then, Amos has been able to carve a niche directing clips for such British bands as Blur, Stereo MC's and Primal Scream, often for specific release in America.

"People working in the U.K. do have to consider there's a sort of feel for American video," says Amos. "Many American videos have tended to be more narrative-based, while British clips are more ideabased. I've been lucky to have had very successful videos in America that haven't been made for America.'

#### FORMULA VS. FUNKY

Paul Boyd, another British director with Propaganda Films who lives in the U.S., comments, "Regardless of how American or global your work might seem, people will have a prejudice and think your stuff will be more artsy fartsy because you're British."

Zanna counters that this perception is a good thing. A photographer-cum-director who has filmed videos for Simply Red, Bryan Ferry, Crowded House, the Pretenders and Francis Dunnery, Zanna describes British video as "more funky" while American clips are "formula." She credits the influence of fellow British auteur and acclaimed video director Sophie Muller, who created a strong visual identity for Annie Lennox on the 1992 album "Diva," and

Continued on page 50



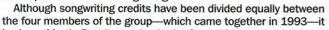
# **Brits** Around The World

A Jungle General, An Inevitable Celeb & A Punkette Quartet

# PICKS TO CLI

David Sinclair picks the up-and-coming U.K. acts likely to draw international attention in 1995. His choices in previous years have included Pulp, Therapy?, Suede, PJ Harvey and Apache Indian.

Seeking to join Blur and Pulp in the league of fashionable, fourletter bands is London-based quartet Gene. With three singles to its credit—the most recent being "Sleep Well Tonight" (Costermonger), which peaked at No. 36 on the U.K. singles chart—Gene is already being tagged in some quarters of the British music press as the Next Big Thing.



is singer Martin Rossiter and guitarist Steve Mason who dominate proceedings on stage and in interviews.

Combining indie-rock a la the Smiths (Rossiter's singing is influenced by Morrissey) with a Faces-style swagger (Mason is a dedicated student of the Ron Wood catalog of riffs), Gene fits comfortably into the current scheme of things. Even the group's well-tailored image chimes with the mod revival which began to gain ground in Britain at the end of 1994.

Young, cool, confident and with a debut album due to hit the streets early this year, Gene is a band with everything to play for in

When his recording of "Incredible" (Renk Records), in collaboration with M-Beat, charted in the U.K. last summer, General Levy became the first mainstream star of the jungle scene. But the 24-year-old General (aka Paul Levy) has long been considered one of Britain's most talented MCs.

Born in Harlesden, North London, he started DJing on the capital's reggae sound systems while still at school. He signed his first deal in 1989 with Claphambased reggae independent Fashion, and a string of well-received, underground singles ensued. In 1992, Levy signed to DJ Tim Westwood's Justice label (through Virgin) and spearheaded the rise of British raggamuffin/dancehall music with singles including "Heat" and "Breeze" and a debut album, "The Wickeder General."

His exuberant, tongue-twisting style of rap, peppered with distinctive hiccupping noises, has proved ideal for the super-fast house and hip-hop beats that are the defining feature of jungle. Watch Levy's star rise as the jungle scene explodes out of London in 1995



Having survived a publicity blitz at the end of 1993 out of all proportion to its modest achievements, four-piece punkette group Elastica is poised at last to release its debut album through Geffen Records in the U.S. March 14.

More than just a snappy name, the band has revealed its potential with three notable singles, the most recent of which, "Connection" (Deceptive/Vital), peaked at No. 17 on the U.K. singles chart last October.

Continued on page 52

GOOD NEWS Continued from page 48



Wet Wet Wet topped the charts in 14 countries with a remake of the Troggs' 1967 hit "Love Is All Around," featured on the soundtrack of the film "Four Weddings & A Funeral." The single also held the No. 1 slot on the U.K. singles chart for 15 weeks.

and our customers," says Stuart McAllister, chairman and chief executive of the HMV Group.

Overall, perhaps one of the broadest challenges facing the British music business in the '90s will be shaking off the perception of weakness in the world market, at a time when the reality of its strengths are increasingly clear.

Rob Dickins, chairman of Warner Music U.K., addressed the new attitude within the British business after announcing the nominations for this year's Brit Awards ceremony: "There's a new confidence about British music that is now manifesting [itself] in the artistic and business communities — and it's the same across

### VIDEO DIRECTORS

50

Howard Greenhalgh of Why Not Films, whose credits range from the recent Soundgarden hit "Black Hole Sun" to videos for Sting, Enigma, Suzanne Vega, Amy Grant, Basia and Pet Shop Boys.

"I have to say, the British and European contingent is winning hands down on freshness," says Zanna. "It hurts me when I see blue and tobacco-yellow videos that come out of America."

Temple is reluctant to ascribe a generalized 'British vision' to U.K. directors. But he notes that they benefit from both a cultural affinity with the U.S. and "interesting distance...that allows us to understand America, to still have a fresh eye."

#### **MULTI-CULTI POSSIBILITIES**

And Paul Boyd at Propaganda moved to L.A. three years ago, he says his British vision was affected by America's multicultural sensibilities

"A lot of my work has revolved around studies of people as a result of coming [to the U.S.]," says Boyd, whose credits include videos for the Cult, Seal, Digable Planets, Lenny Kravitz and the recent Des'ree clip "You Gotta Be," a project he

He counts fellow British director Tim Pope, the eve behind several Cure clips, as a major influence. "Pope's videos seem very personal and intimate. I've always been inspired to see how bands visually interpreted their work," Boyd says. "I like to talk to the artist before I write a concept. Making a video is a collab-

After years of collaborating with musical artists, Boyd is looking to collaborate with actors as he pursues his film project, "Ultimate American." Similarly, Temple found the music-video medium to be an apt training ground for the film business. The "Absolute Beginners" director is currently in post-production on the Mickey Rourke/Tupac Shakur movie "Bullet," which allows him little time for music-video production.

However, numerous U.K. directors continue to bring a distinct perspective to music videos, including the Medialab/Chelsea Pictures crew of Kevin Godley, Brett Turnbull and the team Max & Dania; DNA's Piers Plowden. Aidan Hughes and the director known as Brute! from H-Gun; Nick Egan and Peter Care from Satellite; Jack Scott at Black Dog; the Big TV! team at Palomar Pictures; and Wiz at the Oil Factory, to name just a few. The industry suffers no lack of talent from the U.K. as the music-video medium continues to captivate the imagination of British directors.

#### OASIS IN JAPAN

Oasis is definitely-not maybe-a hit in Japan. Release here by Epic/Sony on Sept. 18, the act's debut album, itely Maybe," has sold more than 80,000 copies thus

far, including imports. Not bad, considering the comparative lack of airplay that Oasis, like other new British bands, has received in Japan.

The five-piece rock band from Manchester is signed worldwide to Sony Music **Entertainment through its** 

licensed-repertoire division and is licensed to Creation in the U.K.. Including its tally in Japan, Oasis has surpassed international sales of 650,000, according to Sony.

Perhaps the most crucial factor in promoting a band such as Oasis in Japan is creating the sense of excitement that causes news about a new act to spread by word of mouth. Other British bands who have recently tapped into the Japanese market in this way are Primal Scream, Suede, Ned's Atomic Dustbin and Echobelly.

"There are lots of hard-core British rock fans in Japan," says Epic/Sony A&R staffer Nobuyuki Kondo. Such fans are constantly on the lookout for the latest music from the U.K., and this past summer it was Oasis who grabbed their atten

Before the release of "Definitely Maybe," Epic/Sony gave Japanese fans a sample of what was to come with a sixsong mini-album titled "Supersonic," released in July, featuring different songs than the U.K. version. One track, "Live Forever," made it to the Top 10 on FM station J WAVE's Pioneer Tokio Hot 100, which helped "Supersonic sell 25,000 units—unusually strong sales for an EP by a band few music fans had yet heard of.

However, without wider radio airplay, and with only peripheral support from TV music channels MTV and Space Shower, the most important source of information about the band has been specialist music magazines such as Rocking On, Crossbeat, Music Life and Music Magazine, savs Kondo at Epic.

Import-oriented record stores, such as Tower, HMV, Virgin and Wave, also played a key role in breaking the band in Japan, Kondo adds.

Building on the presence Oasis has established in Japan, Epic/Sony released another six-song EP, "Whatever," in December. The strong title track is a ballad which has become a Top 5 hit in the U.K.. It is packaged on the EP with a cover of the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus" made during the band's tour of Japan in September.

At that time, Oasis played the standard Tokyo-Nagoya-Osaka club circuit favored by bands performing in Japan for the first time. The tour was a resounding success, and Oasis is scheduled to do another swing through Japan this month, playing larger venues in the three aforementioned cities plus dates in such regional centers as Sapporo and

-STEVE McCLURE

#### SEAL IN THE U.S.

U.K. Label: ZTT/Sire/Warner Bros. Publisher: Perfect Songs/Beethoven Street

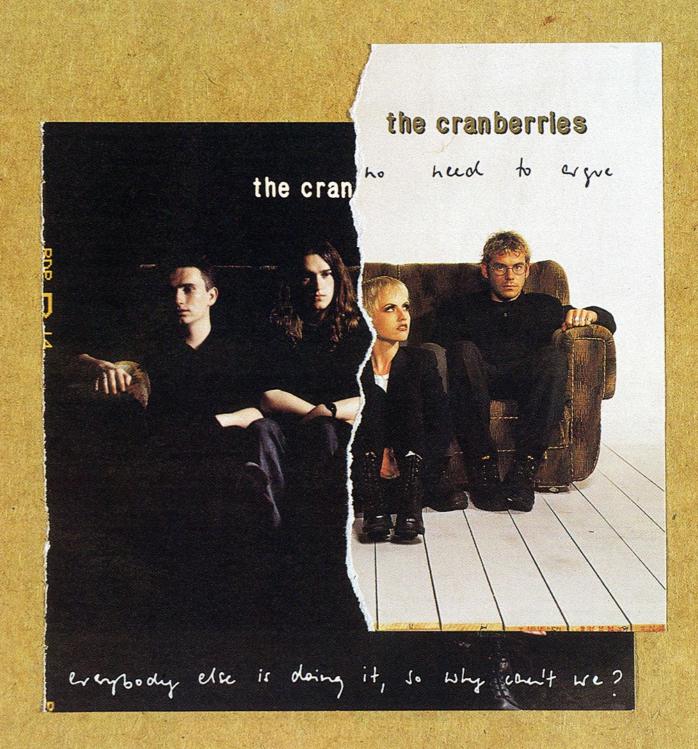
A pocketful of Grammy nomina tions, including one for album of the year, highlighted a successful return for Seal to the American market in the past year. His second, eponymous, album is also the only release by a British artist of the '90s to rank in Billboard's year-end Top 200 for 1994.



"With some artists, there's a lot of razzle-dazzle," says Howie Klein, VP of Warner Bros. and managing director of Sire Records in the U.S. However, while acknowledging the effort that the American company placed behind Seal, Klein adds, "It was so much less 'what we did' and so much more the quality of the record itself. Everything we've done to make it happen was just following the reality of the quality."

Klein credits the efforts of Warner Bros. promotion chief Stuart Cohen, who had his staff "working between alternative, adult-contemporary, adult-alternative and, of course Top 40, where we finally had the big success with [the first Continued on page 52

# 7 MILLION AND COUNTING... Who's arguing?



**EVERYBODY ELSE IS TRYING IT, SO WHY CAN'T THEY?** 

MANAGEMENT: THE LEFT BANK ORGANIZATION



Island Records Worldwide: Far from the mainland